

Hajj as a Spiritual Journey of Life: Character Education through Transcendental Rituals

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the dimensions of character education within the series of Hajj rituals, which are not merely formal-ritualistic acts, but are also rich in deep symbolic and spiritual meanings. The research employs a qualitative approach in the form of a literature study, focusing on the analysis of the symbolism in key Hajj rituals such as ihram, wuquf at Arafah, ṭawāf, sa'i, stoning of the jamarāt, and tahallul. The findings reveal that each of these rituals contains core values of Islamic character education, including sincerity, submission, self-control, patience, trust in God (tawakkul), and perseverance. The sequence of Hajj rituals can be understood as a form of tirakat a spiritual discipline of life that shapes a Muslim's transcendental character in relation to God, fellow human beings, and the universe. These findings indicate that the Hajj pilgrimage can serve as a pedagogical model for cultivating noble character, spiritually resilient, and morally grounded individuals in social life.

Keywords: Hajj, Character Education, Transcendental Rituals, Symbolism, Spiritual discipline.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dimensi pendidikan karakter dalam rangkaian ritus ibadah haji, yang tidak hanya bersifat ritual-formal, tetapi juga sarat dengan makna simbolik dan spiritual yang mendalam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi pustaka, yang berfokus pada analisis simbolisme ritus haji seperti ihram, wukuf di Arafah, ṭawāf, sa'i, lontar jumrah, dan tahallul. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa setiap ritus tersebut mengandung nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter Islami, antara lain keikhlasan, ketundukan, pengendalian diri, kesabaran, tawakkal, dan kerja keras. Rangkaian ibadah haji dapat dipahami sebagai proses tirakat laku hidup yang membentuk karakter transendental seorang Muslim dalam hubungannya dengan Tuhan, sesama, dan semesta. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa ibadah haji dapat dijadikan sebagai model pedagogis dalam membentuk kepribadian luhur yang tangguh secara spiritual dan bermoral dalam kehidupan sosial.

Keywords: haji, pendidikan karakter, ritus transendental, simbolisme, tirakat spiritual

A. INTRODUCTION

Character education in Islam is the primary foundation for developing a holistic human personality. It aims not only to hone intellectual intelligence but also emphasizes the internalization of noble moral values rooted in faith and piety. This type of education is oriented toward producing individuals with integrity, upholding ethics, and capable of making positive contributions to social, national, and humanitarian life. In Islamic teachings, character is not merely a formally learned social attribute, but rather a manifestation of a living faith embedded in one's soul. In line with this, Abuddin Nata emphasized that character formation is inseparable from the process of internalizing the values of faith, worship, and morals, which collectively shape a pious individual spiritually and socially.¹

The Hajj pilgrimage is a profound and meaningful spiritual experience for every Muslim. It requires preparation before departure, rituals in the Holy Land, and post-pilgrimage reflection. Information plays a crucial role in helping pilgrims understand the meaning of each ritual and perform it with full awareness and devotion.² In this context, pilgrimage is present as one of the important instruments in character education. Although legally it is classified as worship *maḥḥ* Although a formal ritual, the Hajj contains profound symbolic meaning and is rich in spiritual and moral aspects. Each stage of the Hajj—from the intention to enter *iḥram*, standing at Arafah, circumambulating, and *sa'i*, to throwing stones at the devils—not only serves as a complement to Islamic obligations but also serves as a medium for spiritual learning that touches the deepest layers of the human soul. Muhammad Syafi'i Antonio emphasized that the entire Hajj ritual is a means of developing a profound and sustainable character of monotheism, sincerity, discipline, and self-control.³

Most of the Hajj rituals are actually a story of a spiritual journey about two great families in human history: the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Anddam and family of Prophet Ibrandhim 'alayhimand as-salandm. From wukuf in Arafah which is believed to be the place of reunion Anddam and Ḥawwand' after being separated from heaven, until the *sa'i* between Sofandand Marwah who immortalized the struggle of Handjar looking for water for his son Ismand'il, as well as the slaughter of the sacrifice which records Ibr's submissionandhim and the sincerity of Ismand'iln facing divine trials, all depict the human journey of facing life's trials with faith, patience, and total submission to God's will. Each stage is not merely a ritual, but a reflection of the inner

¹Abuddin Nata, *Character Education from an Islamic Perspective*, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2012, 1st ed.) p. 45.

²Mudrik Al Farizi, HAJJ PILGRIMAGE: EXPLORING THE MEANING AND INFORMATION PROCESS IN SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, *Launul Ilmi: Journal of Islam and Civilization*-ISSN: 27441044X Vol. 1 No. 1 December 2023. p. 81

³Muhammad Shafi'i Antonio, *Spiritual Journey: A Spiritual Guide to the Hajj*, (Bogor: Tazkia Publishing, 2016, 2nd ed.), pp. 73–75.

dynamics of a family being tested, elevated, and made a universal example for humanity. The Hajj, in its deepest meaning, is a lesson in how a family manages trials, maintains loyalty to God, and instills noble values that foster character, steadfastness, and spirituality in life.

The outward symbols inherent in each Hajj rite actually contain transcendental messages that awaken human awareness of their identity as servants of God. The values embodied in this worship not only strengthen humanity's vertical relationship with God (*ḥablun min Allandh*), but also refines horizontal relations with other humans (*ḥl don't careands*). This is reinforced by Syamsuddin Arif's view that the symbols in the Hajj pilgrimage are not merely formal rituals, but are imbued with ethical and spiritual values that shape a Muslim's character and transcendental consciousness.⁴

In his research, Muhammad Yanis emphasized that the Hajj pilgrimage is not merely a matter of fulfilling the pillars and requirements outlined in Islamic jurisprudence texts, but also requires a deep understanding of each ritual. Through a spiritual understanding of the symbolic meaning of each stage of the Hajj, pilgrims are expected to have a positive impact on their social lives after returning home. An accepted Hajj, he argued, is one that transforms into noble behavior and a tangible contribution to society.⁵

The Hajj represents an annual social gathering, where God calls Muslims from all over the world to gather in a spirit of shared good. Each series of activities in this gathering has been systematically established and must be carried out by all pilgrims with full discipline. When examined through a philosophical approach, as proposed by Ali Shariati, each Hajj event opens up opportunities to explore deeper meanings, imbued with noble values of wisdom for human life. These values are highly urgent and must be continuously developed in order to shape a more progressive and meaningful life. A comprehensive understanding and deep appreciation of the spiritual significance of the Hajj contribute to the emergence of universal values, such as sincerity, surrender (*tawakkal*), piety, patience, fortitude, good deeds, and the rejection of all forms of evil in thought, speech, and action. These philosophical values embodied in the Hajj are expected to shape Muslim individuals with noble character and have a positive, transformative impact, both in individual life and in social interactions within society.⁶

The acceptance of a person's Hajj pilgrimage can be judged not only by their presence in the Holy Land, but also by the changes in their behavior and attitudes,

⁴Syamsuddin Arif, *Hajj: Symbolism, Meaning and Spirituality*, (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2014), pp. 87–90

⁵Muhamad Yanis, HAJJ PILGRIMAGE FROM A FIQH AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN SOCIETY, *Smart Law Journal*, Volume 2. Number 2. May. 2024, P-ISSN: 2964-2019, E-ISSN: 2964-2809. p. 65

⁶Ahmad Fauzan, The Symbolic Meaning of the Hajj Pilgrimage from Ali Syariati's Perspective, *Islamic Review: Journal of Islamic Research and Studies*. Vol. 11 No. 1 April 2022. ISSN: 2089-8142. e-ISSN: 2654-4997. 56. DOI: 10.35878/islamicreview.v11.i1.356

which improve after completing the pilgrimage. A successful Hajj pilgrimage means performing the pilgrimage with sincere and honest intentions, solely for the sake of gaining the pleasure of Allah SWT.⁷

Based on this description, it is important to examine in more depth how the symbols in the main rites of the Hajj pilgrimage, such as ihram, tawaf, sa'i, wukuf at Arafah, and stoning the devils, are understood not only from a purely Islamic perspective but also as a medium for character education in Islam. Therefore, this research aims to answer the main questions: How do the symbols in the Hajj pilgrimage rites represent the values of character education? And how can the Hajj be interpreted as a form of asceticism?

B. Literature Review

The theoretical framework in this research contains three main foundations.

First, Character Education in Islam emphasizes that character education is not merely a formal social process, but rather a process of internalizing the values of faith, worship, and morals that shape a complete personality. Abuddin Nata explains that character education in Islam combines the spiritual dimension (faith and piety), the moral dimension (noble character), and the social dimension (ethics and social contribution). Character in Islam is formed not only through a cognitive approach, but also through spiritual experience and the comprehensive understanding of Islamic values.⁸

Second, the Symbolism of the Hajj Worship views each Hajj rite not as a mere formal ritual, but as a symbolic language that shapes spirituality and character. Syamsuddin Arif and Muhammad Syafi'i Antonio emphasize that the symbols of the Hajj, such as ihram, wukuf, sa'i, tawaf, and jumrah, contain the values of *uswah hasanah* such as sincerity, self-recognition, patience, monotheism, and self-control, which become a means of spiritual transformation used to understand the Hajj as a peak spiritual experience (*peak experience*).⁹ Research by Uswatun Hasanah, using an Islamic educational philosophy approach, confirms that the ihram ritual and the entire series of Hajj contain content. *mujahadah al-nafs* (struggle against lust) and *riyāḍah* (spiritual exercises) that contribute to the formation of self-control and the depth of the congregation's spiritual experience.¹⁰

⁷Indria Fadhilatul Latifah, Nurul Maisya, Semiotics of Interpreting Failure in Umrah and Hajj, JOURNAL of Science and Islam. Vol.4 No.1 (2024). e-ISSN 2964-4941, 30-36. <https://jsr.ums.ac.id/jkk/article/view/159/320>

⁸Abuddin Nata, *Character Education from an Islamic Perspective*, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2012, 2nd ed.), pp. 37–41.

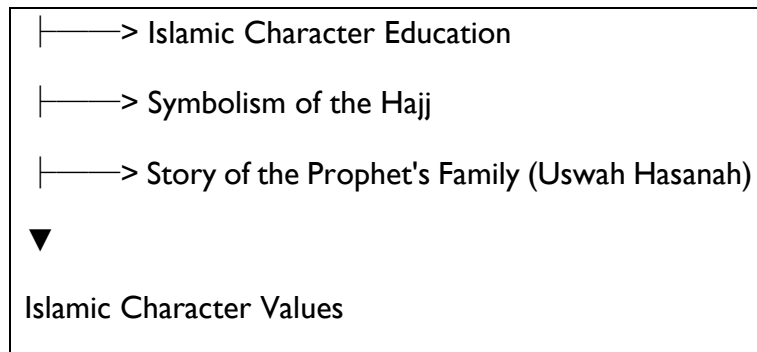
⁹See: Syamsuddin Arif, *Hajj: Symbolism, Meaning and Spirituality*, (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2014), pp. 52–65. See also: Muhammad Syafi'i Antonio, *Spiritual Journey: A Spiritual Guide to the Hajj*, (Bogor: Tazkia Publishing, 2016), pp. 41–59.

¹⁰Uswatun Hasanah, "Nurturing Self-Control through Spiritual Journey: Analysis of Islamic Educational Philosophy in the Hajj," *Multazam: Journal of Hajj and Umrah Management*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (2023), ISSN 2746-1234, DOI: 10.32332/multazam.v3i2.8122.

This encourages transformation of personality and behavior. Figures such as Imam al-Ghazandliemphasizes that profound spiritual experiences can shape a more noble personality, free from selfishness, and filled with empathy. In this regard, the Hajj becomes a moment of "spiritual asceticism" that carries the meaning of cleansing, testing, and self-enlightenment. It highlights the spiritual significance of the Hajj in a legal context: that the Hajj tradition embodies the legacy of Adam, Abraham, Ishmael, and Muhammad, related to the values of sacrifice, love of God, and ritual commitment.

Third, the Exemplary Life of the Prophet's Family (al-Uswah al-Hasanah) explains that the story of the Prophet's familyAnddam and Prophet Ibrandhim, which underlies most of the Hajj rituals, contains exemplary character values: awareness and repentance (Anddam & Hawwand'), struggle and surrender (Handjar & Ismand'il), as well as sacrifice and total slavery (Hebandhim). Hajj in this context is not only an individual act of worship, but also a family spiritual narrative as a center for character education. It highlights the spiritual meaning of Hajj in a legal context: that the Hajj tradition embodies the legacy of Adam, Abraham, Ishmael, and Muhammad, related to the values of sacrifice, love of God, and ritual commitment.¹¹

Table I
Theoretical Framework



C. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study type (*library research*).¹² This approach was chosen because the object of the study is conceptual and philosophical, namely the symbolic meaning and values of character education contained in the rites of Hajj. The analysis is done in a descriptive-analytical way, by highlighting the main symbols in Hajj worship, such as ihram, tawaf, sa'i, wukuf, and throwing jumrah, and then interpreting the character values contained in them, such as sincerity, equality, struggle, contemplation, and moral courage.

¹¹Suci Wulandari, Salman Daffa Nur Azizi, Rifqi Thariq Hidayat, Hajj and Umrah Pilgrimages Studied Based on the Perspective of Islamic Law and Positive Law in Indonesia, *Comparative: Journal of Comparative Islamic Law and Thought*, Volume 3, Number 2, December 2023. E-ISSN: 3026-1643. 171

¹²Lexy J. Moleong, *Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2019, 38th ed.), pp. 6–10

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Character Education in the Hajj Rites

a. Intention of Ihram

The Hajj pilgrimage begins with aligning one's intentions in the heart, so that every movement and silence in the ritual has special spiritual value. Without a sincere intention for the sake of Allah alone, each stage of worship will be merely a physical activity, like a mere exercise. Intention is the primary distinguishing factor between devotion (*ubuhdiyyah*) and habits (*andalready*), as explained in various Islamic jurisprudence literature.¹³ Beginning with the intention, a pilgrim wears unstitched ihram clothing, does not cover the head for men, does not cover the face for women, does not part or shave the hair, does not cut the nails on all the fingers, does not wear perfume, does not kill game animals, does not enter into a marriage contract, does not make love with sexual impulses, and does not have sexual intercourse. All of these prohibitions symbolize asceticism, as a form of spiritual repentance to return to the pure and original human nature.

b. Wukuf 'Arafah

Wukuf etymologically means "stopping" or "staying still" (al-wuqu'uhf), while 'Arafah referring to the location of the wukuf implementation itself. Said 'Arafah comes from the root word 'Arafah which means "to know" or "to acknowledge".¹⁴ This place is believed to be the location of the first meeting between the Prophet and Adam and Hawwa' on earth, making it a historical and spiritual symbol of the process of self-recognition and recognition as a human being.¹⁵ Wukuf in Arafah, which is held on the 9th of Dzulhijjah from the zenith of the sun until dawn on the 10th of Dzulhijjah, is a universal moment where pilgrims from various social backgrounds, races, skin colors, and nations gather in uniform ihram clothing as guests of God. The famous saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) "*Hajj is Arafat*" (HR. al-Tirmidhi) asserts the central position of wukuf in the entire chain of pilgrimage.

This ritual opens up a space for deep contemplation on the ephemeral and limited nature of humanity. In silence and togetherness, the realization emerges that humans are truly mere objects before God, like all other creatures. Therefore, all beings must be seen as equal subjects in the interconnected system of life.¹⁶ The

¹³Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Fiqh al-Ibadah*, (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 2002, Volume 2), h. 489.

¹⁴Ibn Manzūr, *Lisandn al-'Arab*, (Beirut: Dandr Sirdir, tt.), juz 9, h. 239.

¹⁵al-Azraqi, *Akhbandr Makkah wa Mand Jand'a Fhandmin al-Andthand*, (Makkah: Maktabah al-Asadi, 2004), juz 1, h. 326.

¹⁶Abuh Ḥāmid-Ghazalandli, *Iḥandand' 'Uluhm al-Din*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005, volume 4), p. 287.

relationship with others and the universe is not a subordinate relationship, but rather a mutually supportive partnership relationship.

The grand gathering at Arafat creates a solemn atmosphere, evoking silent contemplation of existential equality before God. Amidst the white expanse of the ihram that equates appearance, all pilgrims, regardless of rich or poor, commoner or ruler, are confronted with the reality that humans are not judged by their worldly status, but by their piety and sincerity of deeds, as affirmed in Q.S. al-Ḥsaidant [49]: 13.

Standing in Arafah is not merely a ritual, but rather a profound character-building space, teaching acknowledgment of one's own mortality, an awareness of equality among others, and the importance of building mutually supportive partnerships with humans and nature. In this spiritual silence, pilgrims are encouraged to shed all social attributes and cultivate noble character traits such as humility, inclusivity, and responsibility as equal and interconnected creatures of God.

c. **Muzdalifah and the Stone Throwing**

After wuquf, the pilgrims spend the night in Muzdalifah until the appointed time, collecting small pebbles on the vast expanse of land. After midnight, at exactly 12:00 a.m. Saudi time, the journey continues to Mina to perform the stoning of the Aqaba Jamrah, a ritual of throwing seven stones as a symbol of the initial exorcism. Following the stoning, a preliminary cleansing ceremony is performed, with the shaving of part of the head, as a sign of the resumption of activities previously prohibited during ihram.¹⁷Afterward, the pilgrims return to their tents in Mina and spend the night there for two nights (early nafar, 11–12 Dzulhijjah) or three nights (late nafar, 11–13 Dzulhijjah). During the day, the stoning of the devils takes place at three locations: Ula, Wustha, and Aqabah.

This activity is not only a symbolic ritual, but also a form of contemplation and self-reflection in fighting the whispers of Satan and the lusts inherent in humans.¹⁸In the history of the ritual of throwing stones at the devil, the great story of the Prophet Ibrahim is reflected. *Allah's peace and* mand his family. When ordered to slaughter his son, Ishmael, Satan tried to influence Abraham to ignore God's command. However, the beloved of Allah (*Khalilullah*) unshakable. When Satan appeared before him, he took a stone and threw it, which is now remembered as the location of Jumrah Ula.¹⁹

Not stopping with Abraham, Satan then tempted Hajar, assuming that a mother would not bear to witness her child being slaughtered. However, Hajar demonstrated

¹⁷Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Guidance for Hajj and Umrah Rituals*, (Jakarta: Directorate General of Hajj and Umrah Organization, 2019), pp. 88–90.

¹⁸Muhammad Amin Kurdi, *The Secret of the Hajj*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2017), pp. 142–144

¹⁹Sayyid Sa'īd bin Musfir al-Qaḥṭānī, *Man and just like-Hajj wa al-'Umrah*, (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'andirif, 2005), h. 67–69.

extraordinary strength of faith, resisted the temptation, and stoned Satan. This location was later designated as the site of the Jumrah Wustha. When the final temptation was directed at Ishmael, Satan again failed. Ishmael instead demonstrated complete submission to God's will.²⁰ These three great figures, Ibrahim, Hajar, and Ismail, together stoned Satan, and the place is now called Jamrah Aqabah.²¹

The ritual of stoning the devil symbolizes humanity's eternal resistance to Satan's temptations, a form of rejection of destructive impulses that undermine the purity of the soul. Reflections on this history provide an important lesson: humans must always be righteous and Hadah to not submit to the devil's impulses, maintain self-neutrality in receiving divine information, and continue to cultivate clear self-awareness so that one can recognize the true nature of one's existence and that of God.²²

The core of character education in this text lies in the instilling of muj values and Hadah (spiritual struggle) to fight lust and Satan's whispers through the symbolism of the throwing of the Jumrah stones. The story of the Prophet Abraham, Hajar, and Ishmael teaches steadfast faith, moral courage, submission to God's will, and clear spiritual awareness. Through this ritual, the congregation is taught to have a resilient, neutral, and self-aware spirit in the face of inner temptations, making the throwing of the Jumrah stones a means of internalizing the values of self-control and strong faith.

d. **Ṭwellandf Ifāḍah**

After throwing the Jumrah of Aqabah and spending the night in Mina, the pilgrims continued their journey to the city of Makkah to perform the pilgrimage ṭwellandf ifāḍah, that is, circling the Kaaba seven times. Ṭwellandf this is not just a valid condition of Hajj, but also a form of glorifying the Oneness and Greatness of Allah Swt., the Being who is the center of orientation for all creatures. The Kaaba is not only seen as a physical building, but also as the central point of the spiritual presence of the entire human soul and body in the bond of ubudiyah covenant to the Owner of the universe.²³

Circling the Kaaba in seven circles is a manifestation of the total submission of creation to its Creator. Within the framework of rational logic, it can be understood that everything created should glorify and honor its Creator. Therefore, ṭwellandf is a

²⁰ Abuh al-Ḥasan 'Alial-Nadwi, *Qishashal-Anbiyand'*, (Beirut: Dandr al-Qalam, 2004), h. 186–187.

²¹ Wahbah al-Zuhsecondi, *The whole of Islamandmiand Adilatuhu*, (Damascus: Dandr al-Fikr, 2001), juz 3, h. 52.

²² Abuh Ḥāmid-Ghazalandli, *Ḥandand' 'Uluhm al-Din*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005, Juz 3), pp. 60–61.

²³ Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Psychology of Spiritual Communication in the Hajj Pilgrimage*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), p. 132–134.

symbolic form of existential awareness that creatures have no power without God's will. Each cycle begins with the phrase "Bismillah" and "Hu Akbar", which signifies that the beginning of every activity must be accompanied by an awareness of total dependence on Allah SWT. This awareness is expected to destroy arrogance and foster a sense of humility.

The number seven that colors the *ṭawāf* holds a rich symbolic dimension. These seven turns resonate with the seven verses of Surah Al-Fār. *ṭawāf*, which is the center of spiritual energy for Muslims in every rak'ah of prayer. In universal law, the number seven also appears in the recommendation to shave the head and slaughter an animal for *aqīqah* on the seventh day of birth. All of this demonstrates that the number seven possesses cosmic wisdom and harmony that cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence.²⁴

Several scientific sources state that all objects in the universe, from atoms to galaxies, rotate counterclockwise. This is also true of human blood circulation, the solar system, and the Earth's rotation. This pattern is not only a physical phenomenon but also generates a harmonious energy that supports the sustainability of life's ecosystems. *ṭawāf* which is carried out in this direction is a reflection of the connection between humans and the larger universal system.²⁵

From reflection on the rite *ṭawāf*, it's implied that every creature has an orbit, a role, and a task in life. Each individual, with their unique abilities and potential, is required to continually move within the axis of their assigned mandate. When this orbit is lived with awareness and sincerity, positive energy emerges, bringing blessings to all beings around them. *ṭawāf* not only surrounds the physical building of the Kaaba, but also becomes a symbol of spiritual movement towards the center point of God's oneness, where all directions converge and all meanings unite.

e. Sa'i

After completing *ṭawāf* the Hajj pilgrims continue their pilgrimage by performing the *sa'i*, a seven-minute walk between the hills of Safa and Marwah. This ritual is a spiritual reconstruction of the steadfast and faithful journey of Hajar, the wife of the Prophet Ibrahim. *Allah's peace and mercy*, who, with great hope and perseverance, circled the two hills in an attempt to find water for his son, Ismail, who was then a baby and thirsty in the middle of the barren desert. Al-Ghazali described this journey as a symbol of a creature's endeavor within the limits of humanity, while the results remain a blessing and a gift from God.²⁶

In her surrender and struggle, Siti Hajar did not remain silent. She ran back and forth between Safa and Marwah, constantly monitoring her son's condition from a

²⁴Salman Ahmad, 7th Series of Hajj. Tawaf III. UIN Alauddin Makassar. https://uin-alauddin.ac.id/tulisan/detail/seri-7-haji-tawaf-iii-0425?utm_source=chatgpt.com

²⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane*, (New York: Harcourt, 1987), h. 154

²⁶Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005, Juz 1), p.

distance. Until at one point, from the stomping of Ismail's little feet, a spring gushed forth, which later became known as Zamzam. Siti Hajar immediately dammed the water while shouting "zamzam," which in Arabic means "gather together." The water continued to flow, becoming a source of life that has never dwindled to this day, and a symbol of the blessings of sincere struggle and prayer.²⁷

The sa'i ritual is not merely a physical ritual, but rather a manifestation of spiritual values of steadfastness, relentless endeavor, and total dependence on God's help. Sa'i teaches that under any circumstances, humans are not permitted to despair. In fact, within life's limitations and trials, there opens up space to draw closer to Allah SWT and cultivate an attitude of optimism, patience, and complete trust that all causes and effects are within His grasp.

The deepest meaning of sa'i lies in the spiritual awareness that human endeavor must always be accompanied by trust in God. For, what brings the results of every effort is not merely hard work itself, but rather the divine will that is the source of all cause and effect. From this moment, the message is implied that struggle undertaken with sincerity, prayers offered with sincerity, and surrender directed to God will always lead to blessings—just as the flowing water of Zamzam water continues to quench the thirst of millions.

f. Tahallul

The closing chain in the implementation of the Hajj is tahallul, which is the process of cutting off part of the hair as a symbol of the completion of most of the prohibitions in the Hajj ritual and the return of a pilgrim's condition to the ability of worldly activities that were previously prohibited. Tahallul is performed after completing the sa'i, and is an important pillar that marks the transition from a sacred state to a state of syar'i ability, while still maintaining the inner purity that has been forged during the ritual.

Outwardly, tahallul appears simple, simply cutting a few strands of hair. However, inwardly, it holds profound meaning. The prohibitions that apply during ihram, such as wearing perfume, shaving hair, cutting nails, and covering the head (for men), are part of the spiritual practice (*dreamād Oh, and the nafs*) to restrain oneself from various biological tendencies and worldly desires. From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence and Sufism, this restriction is not merely a ritual law, but rather a means *tazkiyah al-nafs* which aims to purify the soul from lust and strengthen self-control. As explained by Wahbah az-Zuhaili, the prohibitions of ihram are intended to maintain the purity of the body and mind during the Hajj as a form of total devotion to God.²⁸

²⁷ Muhammad Sa'id Ramadhan al-Buthi, *Fiqh al-Sirah*, (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 2003), p. 71

²⁸ Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *The whole of Islam and miand Adilatuhu*, (Damascus: Dandr al-Fikr, 2001, Juz 3), h. 55–56

Thus, tahallul is not simply the end of prohibitions, but a symbol of the neutrality of the soul that has been forged in the process of worship. A neutral soul is one that is able to see everything from a praiseworthy perspective; it thinks with conscious reason, acts with balanced instincts, and acts based on the harmony of spiritual and social values. This is the true purpose of an accepted Hajj, as stated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "*Al-ḥajj al-mabrūr laysa lahu jazā' illandal-jannah*" – "An accepted Hajj has no reward except Paradise" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim).

The interpretation of tahallul as the end of a series of self-controls and the beginning of a human rebirth into spiritual purity demonstrates how the Hajj forms ethical and spiritual awareness. It is not merely a physical journey to the Holy Land, but more than that, a process of self-purification and inner transformation, leading to a person free from lust and mature in dealing with the dynamics of worldly life.

2. Hajj: A Life of Asceticism

The series of events during the Hajj teaches us how we should approach every moment of life. Every cosmic event that occurs in our lives is not merely an ordinary occurrence, but can be a source of inspiration when contemplated with deep awareness. Conversely, if merely lamented, such events have the potential to drain our spiritual and physical energy. In this context, all life experiences can be understood as a form of asceticism, a spiritual process of living life's practices. This asceticism reflects character education, instilling the values of patience, perseverance, and fortitude in facing all of life's trials.

This asceticism demands sensitivity in observing and responding to every event in life clearly, as did the Prophet Ibrahim. And himay God bless him and grant him peace and he and his wife and children remain steadfast in accepting every scenario of life, even though it feels emotionally bitter. They do not rebel against the rules, but submit to the divine system outlined by the Creator of the universe. This illustrates the strong values of sincerity and obedience, which are key elements in Islamic character education.

This narrative represents a very essential dimension of character education in Islam, namely *al-shabr* (patience), *al-riḍā* (voluntariness), and *al-faḥḥ* (obedience) to God's commands. As Nata explains, character education in Islam not only shapes moral behavior in social relationships, but also shapes the spiritual dimension and existential awareness of humans before God.²⁹ The Exemplary Behavior of Prophet Ibrahim and his family demonstrate the integration between spiritual and moral dimensions, which in modern character education theory is also

²⁹Abuddin Nata, *Character Education in an Islamic Perspective*, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2012), pp. 25–27.

referred to as transcendent character (*transcendent character*), namely character that is built on an awareness of noble values and divine relationships.³⁰

The story of the ascetic life of the Prophet Ibrahim's family and hilt has been enshrined by God in the form of a great ritual that only has the pillars of will (*qalbi*) and action, namely the Hajj. Spiritual steps such as these are an effort to attain universal intelligence that is in harmony with the system of life full of grace. Therefore, it is important to always see the positive side and the praiseworthy aspects of all creatures and events, even though the less praiseworthy aspects are often clearly visible to the naked eye. In this context, character education teaches the importance of attitudes *ḥusn al-ẓann* (good thinking), self-control, and the ability to remain fair and behave nobly even in challenging conditions.

Emphasis on the importance of *ḥusn al-ẓann* in character formation is discussed in depth in the study by Safitri et al., which highlights that the Hajj pilgrimage, through its spiritual and social experiences, becomes a vehicle for actualizing values such as sincerity, solidarity, patience, and good thoughts towards others and towards God's destiny.³¹ This is reinforced by Al-Ghazali's opinion in *Iḥandand* 'Uluhm al-Din, which states that *ḥusn al-ẓann* is the fruit of a pure and blessed heart, a character that must be cultivated through spiritual discipline and asceticism in life.³² So, understanding the Hajj pilgrimage as a form of ritual asceticism which is... *hearti* And *'charityi* making it a strong foundation in forming noble character, as emphasized by classical scholars and contemporary education.

For example, in family and social relationships, the principles of love and compassion are the foundation for treating one's partner, raising children, and interacting with partners and the wider community. This commendable attitude stems from deep grace and love. Therefore, every event encountered is always met with praise and calm, rather than complaint. Character values such as responsibility, empathy, and compassion flourish from this attitude.

However, if attention is only focused on the negative side of an event, then it will drain inner energy. The commendable level of morals is reflected in the attitude of never saying bad comments, even to enemies, tempters, or those who have not yet obtained the guidance of Allah SWT. In such a way of life, calmness and peace are created, because love becomes a garment that covers the interaction with fellow beings. This is what is called the path to the essence of life. When a person has a commendable attitude, then every experience in life will be enjoyed and accepted with

³⁰Muhammad Shafi'i Antonio, *Spiritual Journey: A Spiritual Guide to the Hajj*, (Bogor: Tazkia Publishing, 2016), pp. 119–121

³¹Safitri, R., Huda, M., & Rahmah, N. Character Education Values in the Hajj Pilgrimage: An Islamic Education Perspective, *Al-Thariqah Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2022, pp. 47–48.

³²Abuh Ḥāmid-Ghazali, *Iḥandand* 'Uluhm al-Din, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005, Juz III), p. 144.

open arms, even towards what many people judge as failure. Because behind every failure is hidden a divine greeting that is full of meaning. From here, character education teaches people to be resilient, able to rise up, be patient, and learn from failure.

A big lesson can be taken from the story of Prophet Ibrahim's asceticism and him who obediently left Siti Handjar and her baby, Ismand'il, in the wasteland. This decision is based on the prophetic duty commanded directly by God. Siti Handjar accepted the mandate as part of her lifelong asceticism. From this asceticism, the sa'i ritual was born, a symbol of effort, hope, and determination. Full of hope and determination, Siti Handjar ran back and forth between the hills of Shafand and Marwah in their search for water to save their child. When she saw water gushing from her baby's footprints, she immediately held it back while chanting "zam-zam" (gather together), which then became a perpetual water source to this day. This story teaches the importance of character education, fostering a spirit of hard work, tenacity, and boundless hope in God.³³

This story conveys an important message: that in any situation, humans should never give up. Ascetic practices require fortitude, optimism, and relentless effort, accompanied by a prayer for help from God, the Provider of Sustenance. When an event occurs, the instinctual field and the center of the mind must be positioned neutrally to be able to clearly receive God's command. This is part of developing a spiritual character based on balanced trust and effort. Calm souls always accept whatever position God mandates, as Prophet Ibrahim did and him who obediently executes every order.

Thus, the ascetic lifestyle consciously practiced within the framework of the spiritual values of the Hajj also contains profound character education. It cultivates honesty in intention, integrity in action, patience in facing trials, and compassion in relationships with others. May the ascetic lifestyle, as exemplified by the Prophet Ibrahim, be exemplified and his family become a mirror in forming the character of a superior human being who is spiritually strong, socially moral, and aware as a servant in the divine universe.

³³Sayyid Sa'id al-Qahtāni, *Manandjust like-Hajj wa al-'Umrah*, (Riyadh: Makkah al-Ma'andrif, 2005), h. 40–41

CONCLUSION

The series of Hajj rituals is a transcendental character education process that forms sincerity of intention, existential awareness, spiritual submission, self-control, inner struggle (*myandhadah*), and tawakkal, as an effort to purify the soul, refine morals, and form a person with noble character in relationships with God, oneself, others, and the universe. The practice of asceticism within the framework of the spirituality of the Hajj pilgrimage is a transcendental character education strategy that instills patience, sincerity, hard work, and husn al-ẓAnn, and compassion, in order to form a human being who is spiritually strong, wise in dealing with destiny, and moral in social and universal relations.

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