tallbiya, chanting in Arabic ‘Labbāyq allāhummā labbāyq . . . ’ ‘Here I am, Lord, responding to Your call [to perform the Hajj].’ This is constantly repeated during the Hajj, especially when meeting other pilgrims, moving from place to place, and after the daily prayers. The pilgrims are unified by chanting in the same language and also by their simple clothing, worn by people of every status, colour, language and background.
talbiya, chanting in Arabic ‘Labbaik allahumma labbaik...’ ‘Here I am, Lord, responding to Your call [to perform the Hajj].’ This is constantly repeated during the Hajj, especially when meeting other pilgrims, moving from place to place, and after the daily prayers. The pilgrims are unified by chanting in the same language and also by their simple clothing, worn by people of every status, colour, language and background.

Abraham prayed that God would make Mecca secure. Pilgrims must not hunt, kill any animal or cut any plant. Pilgrims must also refrain from indecent speech, misbehaviour and quarrelling. All very fitting, considering the huge crowds in the limited spaces. The Prophet emphasized that those who performed the Hajj without committing these forbidden acts would return home as free from sin as on the day their mother gave birth to them.

Throughout the Hajj period and during the different rituals, there are special dhu’ra prayers for pilgrims to say, many of which were spoken and recommended by the Prophet Muhammad. There are handbooks of these prayers, written in Arabic, and also transliterated (but still in Arabic) with translations for non-Arabs. Pilgrims prefer to recite them in Arabic, in the words uttered by the Prophet himself, and consider them more effective than any other prayer. Each group, large or small, has a guide (mutawwif) who chants, and they repeat the prayers after him, interspersed with the talbiya. All this intensifies the spirituality of the Hajj season and makes it very special indeed.

Most of the pilgrims arrive by air and sea at Jeddah and travel by road from there to Mecca. All this is arranged through the mutawwif, who takes the...
Sacred Geography

The Ka'ba with respect to the inhabited parts of the world is like the centre of a circle with respect to the circle itself. All regions face the Ka'ba, surrounding it as a circle surrounds its centre, and each region faces a particular part of the Ka'ba.²⁴

The requirement to pray in the direction of Mecca (or rather, the Ka'ba) was not a problem for Muslims living in close proximity to Mecca. However, as soon as communities sprang up in areas further afield, the determination of the qibla became a major challenge. Initially this challenge was met by means of so-called 'folk astronomy': traditional knowledge about the

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**Fig. 33 Right**
World map (fol. 98b) pasted into a copy of the Ta'if-i Hidr-i Ghari, the 'History of the West Indies', a Turkish work on the discovery of the Americas, compiled c.1580 by anonymous Ottoman author.
Ottoman naskh script, illuminations and illustrations, dated 3 Muharram 1069 AH/AD 1658
Manuscript on burnished European paper
33.3 x 13.6 cm
Leiden University Library, Leiden

The projection of the world as shown on this map can already be seen in the earliest surviving world maps of the Muslim geographers which date from at least the twelfth century. The map shows south at the top, north at the base: it has legends in naskh script and is a paste-in, for which space was reserved by the copyist. The Ka'ba at the centre is characteristically shown with its kiswa and haram.

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**Fig. 34 Opposite page**
Nautical atlas of Ahmad al-Shariff, Al-Sharif, dated 979 AH/1571-2
Drawing on paper
26.8 x 20.7 cm
Bodleian Library, Oxford

Al-Shariff belonged to a family of cartographers living in Sfax in Tunisia. The map shows a series of cities or regions in groups of three within ovals in a ring around the Ka'ba, for example, Jazan, Juiyana and Zara in Egypt (at 3 o'clock), and al-Nuba, al-Maghreb and Tadrus in Africa on the opposite side. These placings were not scientifically computed. In the centre are the Ka'ba, the Meqam Ibrahim and the well of Zamzam. In Maghrebi script, the text above the map reads: 'A circle for ascertaining the right direction towards Mecca for each country and a guide for facing Mecca', and below: 'God the exalted says in the text of his wise book, and wherever you are face towards it (the Ka'ba)'.

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64 SPIRIT AND RITUALS
Additionally, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 led to an increase in the numbers arriving in Jeddah or Yanbu from North Africa, Turkey and elsewhere by steamship. (It also led to a strengthening of Ottoman control over the Hijaz.)

The pilgrim ships from India were packed and customarily carried some passengers who were too poor to pay their own way but depended entirely on the charity of other pilgrims. The Sharifs of Mecca and the British government in London pressed the government of India to take steps to impose quarantine controls, enforce minimum standards of accommodation on the ships and deter the indigent from going on the Hajj, but the Indian government was extremely reluctant to do any of these things, correctly fearing that any such measures would be fiercely resented by the Muslims of the subcontinent who were suspicious of infidel control of any aspect of their religious obligations. Not until the 1880s did the government of India bring in various regulations to control the number of pilgrims and their conditions, and Thomas Cook was briefly appointed sole agent for their transport. Before this, reaching the Hijaz by sea was for most Indians a dangerous and unpleasant ordeal.

Until the 1870s, when the Dutch started to compete, the transportation of pilgrims by steamship was practically a British monopoly. Joseph Conrad's
Hajj

journey to the heart of Islam

Edited by Venetia Porter
with
M.A.S. Abdel Haleem
Karen Armstrong
Robert Irwin
Hugh Kennedy
Ziauddin Sardar
This publication accompanies the exhibition Hajj journeys to the heart of Islam at the British Museum from 26 January to 15 April 2012.

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