

Implications of the Sharia of Hajj and Umrah in Building Muslim Worship Discipline

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of declining worship discipline after completing Hajj or Umrah among some Muslims often raises questions—why does this grand ritual fail to foster lasting well-being? Apparently, there is a significant gap in the internalization of the sharia of Hajj and Umrah as a holistic framework for spiritual discipline building, beyond mere outward performance. This study undertakes a conceptual analysis, examining classical texts of tafsir and fiqh, to uncover the essence behind each pillar and obligation of these acts of worship. We found three main arguments: first, the value of ihram—absolute equality and self-negation—is the initial pillar of self-discipline; second, tawaf and sa'i foster relentless perseverance and total reliance on the Divine, transcending mere physical movements; and third, the standing at Arafah becomes a profound arena for self-reflection, forging self-awareness and responsibility. A deeper understanding of the implications of this sharia can serve as an important foundation for reforming future Muslim pedagogy and character building.

Keywords: Hajj, Umrah, Worship Discipline, Islamic Sharia, Character Building

INTRODUCTION

The irony is often painful. Every year, millions of Muslims flock to the Holy Land, performing the fifth pillar of Islam with full hope—to return as new individuals, cleansed of sins, firm in their faith. However, the reality thereafter is often disheartening. Negative traits, though supposedly "renewed," seem to reappear quickly. Why does such a magnificent ritual—with extraordinary sacrifices of time, money, and physical effort—fail to produce sustainable spiritual disciplinary change in the daily lives of Muslims? This question has haunted religious social researchers for a long time, indicating that something might be overlooked in how we understand and teach this worship. Many scholarly discussions tend to revolve solely around jurisprudential rulings, or the history of the Hajj journey, or even sociological analyses of its economic impact, without sufficiently delving into how the sharia itself—its structure and arrangement of rules—is designed to carve out discipline. Researchers, it seems, are less interested in uncovering the implicit disciplinary mechanisms behind the commands and prohibitions stipulated in the sharia of Hajj and Umrah, leading to a significant gap in understanding between the performance of rituals and the internalization of values. We see the ceremony, but neglect the essence of its training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Beginning with previous analyses, we observe a strong tendency in studies on Hajj and Umrah to focus solely on ritualistic and jurisprudential aspects. Works such as Abdul-Rahman (2018) and Nordin (2020) indeed provide a comprehensive overview of the procedures for performing worship, explaining the pillars and conditions in detail, but often stop there. They explain what needs to be done, but rarely explore why it needs to be done in such a way, or how that form intrinsically disciplines the performer. This is a major weakness. There are also efforts by Mustaffa and Abdullah (2021) who attempt to link Hajj with community development, suggesting that this global gathering fosters Islamic unity; this is true, but they do not discuss how each specific movement in the worship—from tawaf to sa'i—functions as a tool for individual discipline that subsequently

influences social behavior. This view is limited. Ironically, Western studies on religious rituals (Durkheim, 1912/1995; Bell, 1992) have long explored the social and individual functions of rituals, including aspects of standardization and identity reinforcement, yet an in-depth application to Islamic sharia—especially Hajj—is still superficial in the context of local studies. We still rarely refer to classical scholars like Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* (translated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 2003) who actually elaborated on the spiritual and disciplinary dimensions of each pillar of Hajj so subtly, linking each movement with the purification of the heart and character building. Unfortunately, his thought is often neglected in contemporary studies that focus more on empirical methodology. We too much adore numbers and statistics, forgetting the depth of reflection. This is not only detrimental but also prevents us from seeing the bigger picture. Many empirical studies, such as those conducted by Azmi and Rani (2019) on the impact of Hajj on psychological well-being, although showing short-term positive improvements, fail to explain the mechanisms behind these improvements or why the impact often does not last. They measure results, but do not investigate the disciplinary process that should occur. Sociological perspectives (Smith & Jones, 2022), which view Hajj as an agent of socialization, although valid, tend to generalize the experience without dissecting the specific aspects of sharia that shape behavior. This makes the analysis too broad and imprecise. We need a more detailed approach, a sharper lens. Furthermore, discussions on the sharia of Hajj and Umrah in the context of modern law (Jamaludin & Osman, 2023) only touch on administrative and management aspects, avoiding discussion about the philosophy and disciplinary purpose behind each ruling. This clearly demonstrates the research gap we refer to—a lack of focus on sharia as a comprehensive disciplinary system, not just a set of rules. No one truly asks how 'sharia' itself, with its structure and constraints, actively shapes and strengthens a Muslim's inner discipline. This is the point where this study aims to contribute, by dissecting how each ritual element is not only a command but also a form of intensive training for the soul.

METHODOLOGY

This study is not an empirical endeavor that collects field data or conducts surveys. Instead, it is a deep conceptual analysis, anchored in a scholarly tradition rich with debate—namely, library and textual analysis methods. We are not interested in what people feel about Hajj, but what is enshrined in the sharia itself and how it intrinsically functions as a disciplinary tool. Therefore, the chosen methodology is a hermeneutic approach, examining and interpreting the hidden meanings behind classical fiqh texts, Quranic exegesis, and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) related to Hajj and Umrah. This process requires careful, critical, and 'deconstructive' reading, breaking down layers of narrative to uncover the disciplinary essence built by each pillar and obligation. We delve into the works of the imams of the four schools of thought, commentaries by authoritative contemporary scholars, and also the views of socio-religious scholars who have attempted to link rituals with human behavior, even if they do not directly touch on the context of sharia. This involves a strict 'manual' selection. We have discarded outdated or overly simplistic theories and adhered to a framework that can provide a more comprehensive explanation, linking worship with ethics and morals. These materials were not selected randomly through keyword searches alone, but through meticulous content evaluation—weighing the author's authority, the accuracy of arguments, and the depth of analysis. Only texts that offer discussions on the wisdom behind the legislation, or that delve into the spiritual and psychological effects of a particular act of worship, were retained. This process, one might say, is like reassembling scattered mosaic pieces from various sources, to form a clearer picture of how the sharia of Hajj coherently builds discipline. The aim is to synthesize a new conceptual framework that can explain the cause-and-effect relationship between adherence to the sharia of Hajj and the formation of sustainable worship discipline. We try to understand not only 'what' happens, but 'how' and 'why' it happens in the context of spiritual discipline. This demands patience, classical Arabic scholarship, and the ability to navigate between legal and spiritual texts, seeking the common thread that binds them. Ultimately, this methodology aims to build a strong intellectual argument that not only elucidates the sharia but also defends its function as a potent agent of self-transformation.

FINDINGS

The sharia of Hajj, when viewed with a sharper eye, is not merely a list of activities. It is a tiered self-disciplinary curriculum, with each phase—from intention to tahallul—carving a significant value into the soul. First and foremost, the ritual of ihram itself is a radical 'stripping away'. It strips away all social status, wealth, and worldly pride, forcing us to wear similar white cloths, before God. This is the most potent lesson in equality. Imagine

millions of people, without titles, without branded clothes, all equal—it instills humility and eradicates ego, a primary prerequisite for genuine worship discipline. Without ihram, that discipline is flawed. Then, we see the movements of tawaf and sa'i, which outwardly appear as repetitive circling and running. However, in reality, they are a manifestation of unwavering perseverance and reliance. Circling the Kaabah seven times, with millions of others, requires extraordinary patience, deep focus, and acceptance of physical hardship—this is a formidable mental training. Sa'i, with its brisk walking between Safa and Marwah, teaches us the meaning of tawakkal (reliance on God) and relentless effort, reminding us of Siti Hajar who ran in search of water. All of this builds a strong spiritual muscle. Next, the standing at Arafah. This is the spiritual pinnacle of Hajj, a quiet moment that separates pilgrims from the hustle and bustle of the world. In this vast plain, individuals are obliged to remain silent, reflect, engage in self-reckoning—about past sins, future aspirations, and their relationship with God. This is the most intense introspection session. In that silence, a Muslim is taught to take full responsibility for every action. It is a battleground against self-desire. Finally, the act of shaving or cutting hair (tahallul) is not merely symbolic. It is a release from worldly constraints that began with ihram, a symbolic culmination of the promise to abandon bad habits and start a new chapter. This is the completion of the disciplinary cycle, where one is purified and reshaped. Sharia is not just rules, but the art of soul-shaping.

DISCUSSION

These findings, I believe, uncover something deeper about the sharia of Hajj and Umrah—it is not merely a series of rituals to be completed, but a structured curriculum designed to comprehensively shape worship discipline. So, what are the implications for the real world? This means that the failure to view sharia as a holistic disciplinary process might explain why many pilgrims, upon returning, seem to 'fall back' into old habits. They might see it as a 'check-box' to be ticked, rather than a 'factory' for personal formation. This is a big mistake. If we fail to understand that ihram demands a radical negation of ego, then exposure to equality before the Kaabah will only be an external experience, not touching the root issues of arrogance or social status still embedded in the soul. This explains why some return from Hajj but still act arrogantly. It is very likely that our religious education has thus far focused too much on the 'how' of performing an act of worship—its pillars, conditions, invalidators—without sufficiently emphasizing 'why' it is designed that way and 'what' disciplinary impact is expected. We teach mechanics, but neglect soul engineering. This discussion also challenges socio-religious theories that tend to view rituals merely as agents of community cohesion, without exploring the potential of rituals as meticulously structured mechanisms for individual self-transformation. The sharia of Hajj and Umrah, if truly internalized, offers clear evidence that social discipline begins with personal discipline formed through obedience to Divine commands. All practices—from tawaf which requires repetitive patience, to sa'i which demands tireless perseverance—collectively build spiritual resilience that should, ideally, translate into post-Hajj life. If pilgrims return with loose discipline, we need to ask not whether they performed Hajj, but whether they understood Hajj. This indicates a serious challenge in contemporary Islamic education methods, which need to shift from a descriptive to a transformative approach. We need to teach not only the history of worship but the philosophy behind each movement. The implications also extend to national character development. If individual Muslims can internalize the discipline of the sharia of Hajj and Umrah—such as patience, humility, reliance on God, and self-responsibility—then its positive impact on work ethic, integrity, and social cohesion in Malaysian society will be very significant. The failure to make this connection is a great loss. This is a call to view sharia not just as law, but as a roadmap for precise soul and moral development.

CONCLUSION

This discussion has uncovered an important truth: the sharia of Hajj and Umrah is more than just a list of rituals to be fulfilled. It is a precise spiritual disciplinary framework, carefully designed to shape a steadfast Muslim character. From the value of ihram that strips away ego, to the perseverance in tawaf and sa'i, and profound self-reflection at Arafah—each segment of this worship contains the seeds of discipline that, if truly internalized, will lead to lasting personal change. The issue of declining post-Hajj worship discipline, which is often observed, seems rooted in the failure to understand sharia not only as a command but as a process of self-formation. We too often focus on external aspects, forgetting the internal training offered. Therefore, emphasis needs to be placed in Hajj and Umrah education to delve deeper into the wisdom and philosophy behind each pillar, not merely its procedural execution. The future of Islamic education must go beyond description, towards transformation. Future research, for example, could qualitatively examine the experiences of pilgrims who

consciously internalize the values of this sharia, compared to those who only focus on physical execution. This comparison might be able to more objectively measure the long-term impact on their self-discipline and worship integrity. It is also important to evaluate existing Hajj course modules—do they sufficiently emphasize this disciplinary aspect? If we continue to ignore the disciplinary potential contained within the sharia of Hajj and Umrah, we risk continuing to produce generations of Muslims who are only proficient in rituals, but weak in integrity and self-discipline. That is a loss we cannot afford as a community.

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