THE HAJJ AND UMRAH ACCORDING TO THE QURAN

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This article has been divided into 5 main sections below:

(1) Abrahamic Hajj Rites Reinstituted at the Kaaba and the Quran's Requirements for Hajj
(2) Pre-Jahaliyya Rites of Worship Allowed to Continue in the Name of One God (Part of Hajj)
(3) Prohibitions During Hajj
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(6) Unquranic Rites - Practices which find no scriptural support
(7) Ihram (Hajj Garments or a Pilgrims Sacred State)

It is indisputable that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would have remained the best example of one who followed the Quran for guidance, the very inspiration sent to him by God. The Quran is what he would have used not only to guide himself, but to teach and remind others with (50:45). The Quran would have remained the criterion to discern between right and wrong (furqan - 25:1) and the clarification of all matters necessary for the right 'deen' (tibiana lekulli shayin 16:89).

Satan is committed to lead mankind off the right path and to instil alien practices not sanctioned by God's word. Sadly, many of today's practices performed in the name of Islam are no different and have not escaped Satan's guile. Satan's attack is unrelenting and his assault is from every place (7:17). He introduces rituals, superstitions and confounds man into believing in them.

(Please see related articles [4], [5] and [6] below)

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" [1]
Today's Hajj has unfortunately become heavily focused on pedantic rituals which have no support from scripture. At times one becomes so focused on the rituals that the very spiritual essence of the Hajj (pilgrimage) seems to be compromised. Muslim clerics make elaborate claims of what is and what is not required for Hajj. For example, the focus on what shoes one should wear, what part of the foot one should reveal, whether or not to make use of a pin to tie up the white garbs of the pilgrim men etc., quoting different Islamic secondary sources to make the case. At times, these debates are endless.

The Quran details the requirements for Hajj as we will note below, God willing.

**1) ABRAHAMIC HAJJ RITES REINSTITUTED AT THE KAABA AND THE QURAN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR HAJJ**

Many Muslims today make an unwarranted connection between the requirement of Hajj with the vision of Prophet Abraham (pbuh) to sacrifice his son (37:102) which constituted his personal 'test'. There is absolutely no linkage in the Quran of Prophet Abraham’s (pbuh) personal 'test' and the need to perform Hajj, or to perform animal sacrifices during Hajj to commemorate the particular incident. It is not the concept of the Quran to perform practices in the memory of others and their 'tests'. This would be a contravention of the Quran’s following verse.

002.134
"Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do"

Similarly, many Muslims today run the lengths of Safa and Marwa in the memory of Hagar (Hajar). There is absolutely no mention of the Hagar-Prophet Ishmael (pbuh) narrative in the entire Quran. Nor is any 'story' linked to the Safa Marwa narrative in the Quran, which only refers to them as symbols (Shar‘airi) and not mountains. The circumambulation of Safa and Marwa was clearly an existing pagan practice which was allowed to continue (2:158). (*Please see related article [7] below*)

002.158
"Indeed! Safa and Marwah are among the symbols (Arabic: sha‘airi) of God. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House or visits it, to go around them (Arabic: Yattawwafa). And he who does good of his own accord, (for him) lo! God is Grateful, Aware"

**PURPOSE AND PROCLAMATION**

The Hajj was established through Prophet Abraham (pbuh) and had a particular purpose. It was to call people from the furthest locations to an appointed place at a particular time to commemorate and praise the Lord and fulfil certain rites in the name of the Lord.

002.196
"And complete the Hajj and the Umrah for God..."
022.026
"Behold! We gave the site, to Abraham, the site of the House, (saying): "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer)"

022.027
"And proclaim to mankind the pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine"

022.028
"That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of God, through the days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat from them and feed the distressed ones in want"

022.031
"Turning unto God (only), not ascribing partners unto Him; for whoso ascribes partners to God, it is as if he had fallen from the sky and the birds had snatched him or the wind had blown him to a far-off place"

022.032
"That (is the command). And whoever honours the offerings consecrated to God, it surely is from devotion of the hearts"

Therefore, the purpose of the Hajj is to worship, commemorate and to magnify God alone. Hajj is not performed in the memory of any one great personality, people, or indeed in the name of what tests they may have personally endured.

HAJJ IS A DUTY

003.097 (part)
"...Pilgrimage (Arabic: Hijju) is a duty men owe to God, those who can afford the journey; but if any disbelieves, God stands not in need of any of His creatures"

It is clear by the reference above in context of the ancient sanctuary, that the principle of 'Hajj' (pilgrimage) has been established since the time of Prophet Abraham (pbuh). Hajj has been a practice that has been followed by successive generations of Prophet Abraham (pbuh). It was even known to the father in-law of Prophet Moses (pbuh) before Prophet Moses (pbuh) received his Prophethood from God. In the following verse, we note the use of Hajj as a marker to signify a contractual period.

028.027
"He said: "Indeed I intend to marry you to one of these two daughters of mine on condition that you hire thyself to me for (the term of) eight pilgrimages (Arabic: Thamaniya Hijajin). Then if you complete ten, it will be of your own accord, and I would not wish to make it difficult for you. God willing, you will find me of the righteous"
**PREPARATION - RIGHTEOUSNESS**

002:197 (part)
"...And take a provision (With you) for the journey, **but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, o ye that are wise**"

**THE NEW MOON SIGNIFIES THE START OF HAJJ**

002:189
“They ask thee, (O Muhammad), of new moons. say: They are fixed seasons for mankind **and for the pilgrimage**”

**THERE ARE FOUR MONTHS OF HAJJ**

Unknown to many Muslims, there are actually four sacred months of Hajj. Today's Muslims and authorities have whittled it down to specified days in one month with no support from the Quran. Today's practices are dependant only on Islamic secondary sources.

002:197
"**For Hajj are the months (Arabic: Ashurun - plural) well known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein, Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj. And whatever good you do, (be sure) God knows it. And take a provision (With you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, o ye that are wise**”

009:036
“Lo! the number of the months with God is twelve months by God's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. **Four (Arabic: Arba'atun) of them are sacred:** that is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them. And wage war on all of the idolaters as they are waging war on all of you. And know that God is with those who keep their duty (unto Him)”

005.097
"God made the Kaaba, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for men, **as also the Sacred Months, the animals for offerings, and the garlands that mark them:** That you may know that God has knowledge of what is in the Heavens and on Earth and that God is well acquainted with all things”

See related article [1] below.

**TAWAAF (CIRCUMAMBULATION) IS AN ANCIENT RITE INSTITUTED AT THE KA'ABA**

Please note there is no mention of the requirement for 'seven circuits' around the Ka'aba. One should do as many circuits as one is able in complete with complete devotion to God. (Please see related article [3] below).

022.029
"Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and circumambulate the Ancient House (Arabic: bil'bait-il-ateeq)."
HONOUR THE SACRED RITES IN THE NAME OF GOD

022.030
"Such (is the Pilgrimage): whoever honours the sacred rites of God, for him it is good in the Sight of his Lord. Lawful to you (for food in Pilgrimage) are cattle, except those mentioned to you (as exception): but shun the abomination of idols, and shun the word that is false"

EACH RIGHTEOUS NATION HAD THEIR OWN RITES TO PERFORM

022.034
"To every people did We appoint rites (of sacrifice), that they might celebrate the name of God over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food). But your god is One God: submit then your wills to Him (in Islam): and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves"

ANIMAL SACRIFICE IS A PART OF HAJJ

022.033
"Therein are benefits for you for an appointed term; and afterward they are brought for sacrifice to the Ancient House (Arabic: bait-il-ateeq)

022.036
"The sacrificial camels / cattle We have made for you as among the symbols from God. In them is (much) good for you. So mention the name of God over them as they line up (for sacrifice): when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), then eat from them and feed the needy who do not ask and the needy who do ask. Thus have We made them (animals) subject to you, that you may be grateful"

God is not in need. The reason for the sacrifice is so that one can glorify God for the bounties He has granted, the guidance He has given and to proclaim good news. It is only one's piety that reaches God, not the meat or its blood.

022.037
"It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches God: it is your piety that reaches Him: He has thus made them subject to you, that you may glorify God for His Guidance to you and proclaim glad tidings to all who do right"

ASK NOT ONLY OF GOOD IN THIS WORLD BUT ALSO OF THE HEREAFTER AND PROTECTION FROM THE FIRE

002.201-202
"And of them (also) is he who says: "Our Lord! Give to us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good; and save us from the punishment of the fire. To these will be allotted what they have earned; and God is quick in account"

HAJJ TAKES A CERTAIN NUMBER OF DAYS TO COMPLETE

002.203
"And remember God during certain number (Arabic: Madudatan) of days. But if any one hastens to leave in two days, there is no blame on him, and if any one stays on, there is no blame on him, that is for him who wards off (evil). Be careful of your duty to God, and know that to Him you will be gathered.
(2) PRE-JAHALIYYA RITES OF WORSHIP ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THE NAME OF ONE GOD (PART OF HAJJ)

TAWAAF OF SAFA AND MARWA

Safa and Marwa are never mentioned as an 'ancient rite' within the Quranic context. Safa and Marwa have been mentioned as 'symbols' of God (Not necessarily connected with Prophet Abraham (pbuh)) and the circumambulation of them is allowable if desired. This is a pagan practice which was allowed to continue in the name of God alone. (Please see related article [7] below)

002:158

"Indeed! Safa and Marwah are among the symbols (Arabic: sha'airi) of God. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House (Arabic: hajjan) or visits it (Arabic: i'tamara), to go around them (Arabic: Yattawwafa). And he who does good of his own accord, (for him) lo! God is Grateful, Aware"

ARAFAT AND THE SACRED MONUMENT

It seems clear from a study of the Quranic verses that Arafat and the 'Sacred location' (Mash'ari-lharami) was a place where the Pagans used to perform their rites before Islam was revealed to them. Instead of remembering one God, true remembrance of One God and its purpose was possibly compromised. This is supported by the fact that the Quran confirms that they had previously gone astray. However, the practice itself was allowed to continue but in the name of the One True God alone and for a correct purpose. There is no mention of picking up stones at Muzdalifah to cast at the 'Jamaraat' or any other such rite. This will be picked up later in the article.

Please note the following verse.

002:198-200 (part)

"It is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your Lord. And when you depart from Arafat, then remember God near the sacred monument (Arabic: Mash'ari-lharami). Remember Him as He has guided you, although before you were surely of those who went astray. Then depart from wherever the people depart and ask forgiveness of God. Indeed, God is Forgiving, Merciful. Then when you have completed your acts of worship, then remember God as you remember your forefathers or with greater remembrance....."

The Quran acknowledges a practice involving the movement of multitudes from Arafat to specific locations. The historical relevance has not been deemed appropriate by the Quran to elaborate bar the purpose which is to remember God. Whatever traditions have reached us, there seems to be sanction for it in the Quran by virtue of the above verses.

Some commentators equate the sacred monument with Muzdalifah, some infer a particular place near Arafat, whilst others take a more generic meaning. However, the historical relevance of these places should not be the focal concern. The purpose should be to remember and worship God alone.

SHAVING OR CUTTING OF THE HAIR

There are two main verses which address this topic: 48:27 and 2:196.
In verse 2:196, we note that the shaving of the hair is by implication only and not by way of an explicit instruction i.e. the Quran does not say 'shave your heads after the completion of Hajj or Umrah'. It merely prohibits shaving until a certain condition is met in the context of an expiation of one who is prevented from completing their Hajj or Umrah.

002.196 (part)
"And complete (Arabic: atimmu) the Hajj and the Umrah for God. but if you are prevented (or held back from completing it - Arabic: uh'sirtum), then send such gifts as can be obtained with ease and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination..."

The above interpretation seems to be supported by verse 48:27, which given the mention of security (amin) after fear (takhafuna), indicates that the believers were being prevented from entering the Sacred Mosque. In this context, shaving and the shortening of the hair are mentioned which seems to be in tandem with the advice given in verse 2:196. The additional 'cutting' (wamuqassirina) is mentioned along with 'shaving' (muhalliqina) which is not mentioned in verse 2:196. Therefore 48:27 would be an elaboration which confirms both the practice of shaving and cutting of the hair as permissible rites.

048.027
"Certainly did God fulfil the vision for His Messenger in truth. Surely, you shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if God wills, secure, having shaved your heads (Arabic: muhalliqina) and (hair) shortened (Arabic: wamuqassirina) and without fear. For He knew what you knew not and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory"

It can be argued that shaving the hair is implicit as a part of both Hajj and Umrah or that it is explicit (and hence required) only in the case of an expiation and is not required if one is not prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah. However, given the expiation required for breaking the prohibition for one not to cut hair until the sacrifice has reached it's destination, it is strongly suggested that shaving / cutting of the hair was a norm and an integral part of marking the end of the pilgrimage.

Another important point to note is that the shaving ('tahliqu' 2:196, 48:27) and cutting ('wamuqassirina' - by implication of verse 48:27) has been prescribed for both men and women by virtue of the instruction to all believers. The verb 'atimmu' (complete) in reference to Hajj and Umrah is in the masculine plural form referring to both men and women, as is the verb 'uh'isir(tum)' (if 'you are held back / prevented').

Traditionally, men proceed to shave their hair while women only cut a few strands of their hair. The absolute restriction which only makes it permissible for men to shave their hair and allows women to only cut a few strands of their hair is based on Islamic secondary sources and not the Quran.

There are no such restrictions found in the Quran. If verse 48:27 which allows for cutting in addition to shaving is seen as an elaborative verse to the directive in verse 2:196, there is a valid argument that based on 2:196, shaving of the hair would be the 'preference' as it was the primary directive received in 2:196. However, there may be men that would incline for the cutting option (48:27) as there are no doubt many women that would prefer not to have their heads shaved (2:196).
Therefore, one can understand and appreciate how tradition has developed given the options granted by the directives of the Quran.

Albeit shaving of the head and cutting of the hair is a practice that has been acknowledged by the Quran as part of Hajj and Umrah, there is no mention in the Quran that it guarantees the removal of one's sins which is a prevalent belief in Muslim thought.

(3) PROHIBITIONS DURING HAJJ

NO LEWDNESS, NO ANGER, NO WICKEDNESS, NO ABUSE

002:197
“For Hajj are the months well known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein, Let there be no obscenity (Arabic: rafatha), nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj. And whatever good you do, (be sure) God knows it. And take a provision (With you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, o ye that are wise”

The Arabic word ‘rafatha’ includes sexual conduct, sexuality, to have intimate relations, to be lewd in conduct or speech and to behave in an obscene manner.

NO HUNTING

005:001 (part)
"...game being unlawful when you are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram)"

005:095 (part)
"O ye who believe! Kill no wild game while ye are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram)"

005.096
"To hunt and to eat the fish of the sea is made lawful for you, a provision for you and for those who travel; but to hunt on land is forbidden you so long as ye are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram). And be conscious of your duty to God, to Whom you will be gathered”

(4) EXPIATIONS

IF YOU CANNOT COMPLETE THE HAJJ OR UMRAH FOR SOME REASON

If you cannot complete the Hajj or Umrah, then a sacrifice is compulsory of whatever can be obtained with ease (is’taysara). Furthermore, one cannot shave their heads until the sacrifice reaches its destination. If there is a sickness or an ailment of the head which has necessitated the cutting of the hair before the sacrifice reaches its destination, then a ransom (fidya) is due in one of the following three ways:
(i) Fasting  
(ii) Charity  
(iii) Sacrifice

**IF ONE IS ABLE AND CAN COMPLETE THE HAJ AFTER THE UMRAH**

Then sacrifice whatever sacrificial animal can be obtained with ease. If you cannot find a sacrificial animal then:

Fast three days during Hajj and seven days when you return (total 10 days)

*(Please note that the restriction of not shaving one's head until the sacrifice reaches its destination applies only if one cannot complete the Hajj or Umrah as mentioned in the above section).*

**002.196**

"And complete the Hajj and the Umrah for God. But if you are prevented (From completing it), then send such gifts as can be obtained with ease *(Arabic: is’taysara)* and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. And whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head must pay a ransom *(Arabic: fidya)* of fasting or charity or sacrifice (offering). And when you are secure, then whoever took advantage of the Umrah followed by the Hajj then he must make an offering of whatever (can be) obtained with ease of the sacrificial animal. But whosoever cannot find (such offerings), then a fast of three days during the Hajj and seven (days) when you have returned; that is, ten in all. That is for him whose folk are not present at Sacred Mosque *(Arabic: Masjid al-Haram)*. And fear God and know that God is strict in punishment"**

**(5) UMRAH**

Hajj is performed within the sacred months. Umrah is a visit to the Sacred Mosque to complete certain rites outside these sacred months. The rites required for Umrah can be deduced from the Quran which require a pilgrim only to complete the circumambulation of the Kaaba and the 'tawaf' of Safa and Marwah. All other rites pertain to Hajj including sacrifice which is only required in Umrah if expiation becomes due (2:196).

**AN ANCIENT RITE - CIRCUMAMBULATION OF THE HOUSE**

**022.029**

"Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and circumambulate the Ancient House *(Arabic: bil'bait-il-ateeq).*"

**PRE-JAHALIYYA RITE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THE NAME OF GOD**

**002:158**

"Indeed! Safa and Marwah are among the symbols *(Arabic: sha'airi)* of God. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House *(Arabic: hajjan)* or visits it *(Arabic: i'tamara)*, to go around them *(Arabic: Yattawwafa).* And he who does good of his own accord, (for him) lo! God is Grateful, Aware"
(6) UNQRANIC RITES - PRACTICES WHICH FIND NO SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT

Sadly, a multitude of pedantic rituals have been instituted in the name of Hajj which find no support from the Quran. They serve little but to provide unnecessary distractions and debates focusing on completing pedantic rituals whilst compromising the spiritual and commemorative element of performing Hajj.

All manner of debates ensue during Hajj. For example, what type of sandals to wear, what part of the foot must be visible, what type of ihram, whether a pin can be worn to tie up the ihram or not, whether a prayer can be combined in Arafat, what types of stones to pick up from Muzdalifah and all manner of unnecessary distractions and rituals which find no support from the Quran.

Muslim preachers garner much support for these unwarranted claims based purely on Islamic secondary sources. For example, grave claims are made by preachers such as one is forgiven all their sins at Arafat, or after the hair is cut (like a new born baby) etc. Only God knows whose sins will be forgiven and from whom the Hajj will be accepted. One can only ask for forgiveness with sincerity and humility. No mortal can force the will of God.

The following are beliefs and rites which find no support from the scripture of God but have become the mainstay of Muslim tradition and practice.

- Stoning of the Devil (Rami Jamarat). There is no such story of Satan appearing to Prophet Abraham [pbuh] 3 times in the Quran or any other previous scripture. if one visits this location, it is a choice. There is nothing in the Quran to support this practice in which many lives are potentially compromised every year.
- Holy water superstitions - Zam Zam (Please see related article [4] below).
- Hajj by proxy (Performing Hajj on another's behalf). Each soul is responsible for their own deeds and actions.
- Visit to Madinah - This is not part of Hajj but a choice.
- All manner of superstitious rites with no support from the Quran. Unwarranted superstitions are a guile of Satan (Please see related article [5] and [6] below).
- Unwarranted beliefs - Running between Safa and Marwa in the memory of Hagar. There is no Hagar and Prophet Ishmael [pbuh] narrative in the entire Quran. (Please see related article [7] below).

The Quran provides detailed requirements of what is expected from Hajj. This is the guidance the Prophet followed. It is inconceivable that a Prophet of God would have invented practices in the name of Hajj not sanctioned by the Quran.

069:044-48

“And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath). But verily this is a Message for the God-fearing”

(7) IHRAM (HAJJ GARMENTS OR A PILGRIMS SACRED STATE)

While women remain free to wear whatever suitable garments they choose, men wear specific garments during Hajj. There is no mention of the requirement to wear any specific garments for men or women. The Quran only mentions a 'state' of 'huruman', a condition of a pilgrim's sacredness.
The word 'hurumun' comes from the root word 'HRM' which means to prohibit, deprive and in this context, to be in a state of prohibition.

005:001 (part)
"...game being unlawful when you are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram - Arabic: hurumun)..."

005:095 (part)
"O ye who believe! Kill no wild game while ye are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram - Arabic: hurumun)...

005:096
"To hunt and to eat the fish of the sea is made lawful for you, a provision for you and for those who travel; but to hunt on land is forbidden you so long as ye are on the pilgrimage (state of ihram - Arabic: huruman). And be conscious of your duty to God, to Whom you will be gathered"

Albeit hunting is usually an action performed by men, we note in the above verse 5:95, a directive to all believers not to kill game while they are in a state of 'hurumun'. If an 'ihram' was a reference to a particular garb exclusive to men, then by virtue of the above verse, this interpretation would become problematic which assumes 'hurumun' for both genders.

To assert that with respect to women, their 'ihram' is simply a reference to any appropriate clothing is unpersuasive. Such an assertion is merely an attempt to reconcile an existing practice which requires men to be clad in specific clothing in contrast to women, who can wear what they desire whilst conforming to expected decency.

Unfortunately, today many unnecessary discussions ensue with regards the ihram garments for men with a view to ascertain what is and what is not allowable. Lack of pins often finds men losing their garments exposing themselves to others while having no recourse to any undergarments.

Satan no doubt, would find any opportunity to cause lewdness. Not only has he stripped man of wearing any undergarments during Hajj, but also of any other safety nets to protect one from exposing themselves to others. Such vulnerability remains in tension with the spirit of the Quran which encourages precaution and encourages modesty.

In my own personal experience in Hajj, I have seen men become stark naked in the open when their ihram has become unravelled in front of men, women and children.

"Corrupt doctrines are embraced as the very truth of God by the deluded; and one way or other, directly or consequentially, they lead on practice, and that with the highest security and confidence, as if they were very truths indeed.
The devil then hath this great advantage by error, that if he can but corrupt the minds of men, especially in the more weighty and fundamental points of religion, then by a great ease and without any more labour he hath gained them to the practice of whatsoever these corrupted principles lead unto.

... Thus he conquers parties and multitudes, as a victorious general takes cities and whole countries, by surrender ..."  [2]

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Quran provides comprehensive details with what is required during Hajj. Unfortunately some of today's pedantic focus on rituals are unrecognisable in the light of the Quran but are blindly followed.

The Quran remains the only guidance to man which can distinguish between right and wrong for matters of true deen.

025.001
“Blessed is He Who has revealed to His slave the criterion of right and wrong (Arabic: Furqan), that he may be a warner to the peoples”

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(6) Satan's Guile
(7) Did Prophet Abraham (pbuh) Really Send His Wife Hagar and Son Ishmael (pbuh) Away Alone to a Barren Land?

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