

garb of a pilgrim and performing the legal ablutions, the pilgrim visits the sacred mosque and kisses the Black Stone. He then runs around the Kaaba seven times, next he offers a prayer: "O Allah, Lord of the Ancient House, free my neck from hell-fire and preserve me from every evil deed; make me contented with the daily food thou givest me, and bless me in all thou hast granted." At "the place of Abraham" he also prays; he drinks water from the sacred well of Zemzem and again kisses the Black Stone. Then the pilgrim runs between the hills of Safa and Marwa near Mecca. On his return he stops at Mina and stones three pillars of masonry known as the "Great Devil," "the middle pillar," and the "first one" with seven small pebbles. Finally there is the sacrifice of a sheep or other animal as the climax of the pilgrim's task. The whole pilgrimage is, as some Moslems confess, "a fragment of incomprehensible heathenism taken up undigested into Islam." And as regards the veneration for the Black Stone, there is a tradition that the Caliph Omar remarked: "By God, I know that thou art only a stone and canst grant no benefit or do no harm. And had I not known that the prophet kissed thee I would not have done it."

**Kaaba and
Black Stone**

The Kaaba and its Black Stone merit at least a paragraph, since they are the center toward