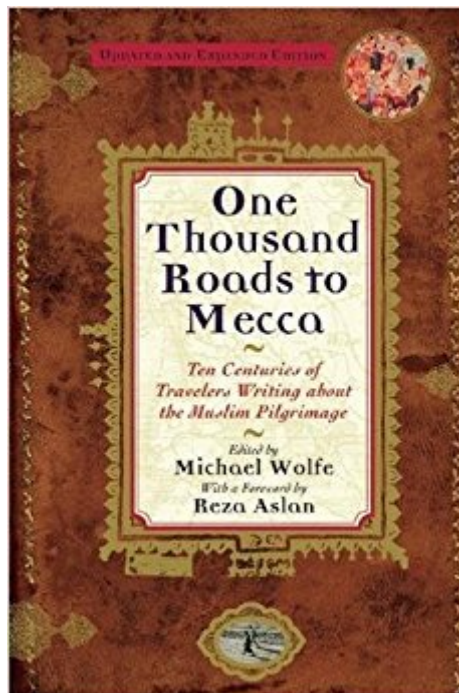


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One Thousand Roads To Mecca: Ten Centuries Of Travelers Writing About The Muslim Pilgrimage



Synopsis

Since its inception in the seventh century, the pilgrimage to Mecca, or the Hajj, has been the central theme in a large body of Islamic travel literature. Beginning with the European Renaissance, it has also been the subject for a handful of adventurous writers from the West who, through conversion or connivance, managed to slip inside the walls of a city forbidden to non-Muslims. *One Thousand Roads to Mecca* collects significant works by observant travel writers from the East and West over the last ten centuries. The two very different literary traditions form distinct sides of a spirited conversation in which Mecca is the common destination and Islam the common subject of inquiry. Excerpted works include travel narratives by Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Battuta, J. L. Burckhardt, Richard Burton, the Begum of Bhopal, John Keene, Winifred Stegar, Muhammad Asad, Harry St. John Philby, Lady Evelyn Cobbold, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Malcolm X, and Michael Wolfe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A journey to Mecca, the Hajj, is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, an undertaking that every Muslim should attempt at least once in his or her life. By leaving their homes and possessions and taking to the road to travel to the birthplace of Islam, Muslims are reminded that all humans are equal before God. It's no wonder, then, that the Hajj has been a central theme of Islamic travel-writing since the 7th century, A.D. *One Thousand Roads to Mecca* is a collection of more than 20 accounts of the Hajj spanning ten centuries. The writers collected in this anthology reflect the geographic diversity of Islam. These pilgrims come from all over the world: Morocco, India, Persia, England, Italy, and the United States. They travel by boat and camel, on foot and horseback and, most recently, by

airplane; many suffered all the hardships and dangers attached to a long pilgrimage of months or even years through deserts and over mountains, across lands populated by brigands and thieves. But along with the hazards are descriptions of Cairo and Damascus at the height of their glory during the medieval period and anecdotes and observations that render the cosmopolitan nature of the pilgrims. In addition to the writings of Muslim pilgrims, there are also several accounts by non-Muslim westerners who, by hook or by crook, gained access to the forbidden city of Mecca and then wrote about it. *One Thousand Roads to Mecca* is both classic travel literature at its best and a wonderful introduction to the tenets and practices of a frequently misunderstood religion. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An American convert to Islam, Wolfe (*The Hadj: An American's Pilgrimage to Mecca*, LJ 8/93) has collected excerpts from the accounts of two dozen pilgrims to Mecca over a span of 1000 years. Islam is the only world religion that requires its followers, if they are able, to undertake a pilgrimage at least once. Through detachment from his or her environment and travel to the birthplace of Islam, and through the subsuming of race and class during the ceremonies, the Muslim experiences a sense of the unity of all humanity and a sense of religious commonality and personal humility before God. Wolfe does an exemplary job of detailing the ceremonies performed at Mecca and the reasons behind them. The chosen excerpts give readers a sense of how the hajj has changed over time as well as how constant the central ceremonies have remained. Works like this help both the student and the general reader gain a better understanding of this remarkable faith. Highly recommended for academic and large public libraries. ?Robert J. Andrews, Duluth P.L., Minn. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a great book, rich in history. Gives going to Hajj a historical perspective

An amazing chronical of the battle to reach Mecca.Highly recommend.

I found this book to be wonderful. I enjoyed it alot. It really has shown change in the pilgrimage. I would recomend the book for Muslims, like my self and non- Muslims alike.

This is easily one of the most splendid and accessible English-language works on the hajj in recent years. For Muslims about to undertake the hajj, Wolfe's thousand-year history of the great hajj narratives of men like ibn Jubayr and years later Malcolm X will offer the richness of the pilgrimage,

which was often as much a picaresque travel adventure as spiritual rite. Non-Muslims will get a great swath of Muslim intellectual history, freed of the sometimes needless formalism and apologia of recent hajj narratives and a wonderful encapsulation of Islamic civilization at its height, and of course the great beauty of the pilgrimage itself. Wolfe's introductions to the many narratives serve, perhaps unintentionally, as an excellent summary of Muslim history to the present.

The scope of this book is incredible spanning nearly 1000 years of people making a pilgrimage. It also demonstrates how life-changing the experience could be. Michael Wolfe is a great writer and does a splendid job introducing each piece. Some of participants are simply incredible people- especially the Spanish Muslim from the 1700s (my memory escapes me as to his names). Each piece shows something new. Its definitely a book I'll be looking into again.

Michael Wolfe is an excellent writer. He is also a very convincing writer. For years my parents have been asking me to go for Hajj. I compromised and went for Umra. Mr. Wolfe's preface and the introduction convinced me that I should make this journey. I am preparing for the trip in year 2003. Inshallah. This is an excellent book. Equally enlightening to Muslims and Non-Muslim. I recommend it.

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