

THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE  
*Journal*

**Makkah Declaration:  
Calls for consolidating peace  
and security in Afghanistan**

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No.12

Managing  
**Hajj**



**MWL boosts its international agreements with  
Morocco-based Muhammadiyah Association of Scholars**



# Letter From the Editor

## Hajj: Management and organizational dimensions

Hajj is the first and foremost a religious ritual; however, it is also a season when various social, cultural, organizational and management activities take place. Enormous numbers of Muslims of diverse backgrounds come together in one place covering 40 square kilometers in area to perform the same rituals, in a unique religious mass gathering like no other in the humankind history.

Everything one does to serve pilgrims and ensure their convenience is regarded a righteous deed. In the “Book of Hajj”, Al-Bukhari mentioned the following hadith: The Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Zamzam well and some people were offering water to others and working at it (drawing water from the well). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to them “Carry on! You are doing a good deed.” Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “There are no days during which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these days,” i.e. the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah.

Similarly, all efforts exerted to improve the management of Hajj activities as well as health, security and accommodation services provided to pilgrims fall under righteous deeds, as long as they are carried out with good intention and for the sake of Allah alone. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur’an: (*Say, “Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds”*) – Al-An’am, Verse: 162

The Hajj is of unique importance as regards theoretical and practical aspects of management, and likewise of significant impact in building up the organizational and management experience and expertise of everyone in Hajj-related work.

The same level of management can also be found in Hajj missions and local committees that operate all over the world.

The management of Hajj achieves the objectives of what is called nowadays “Governance” – these objectives are: Transparency, Responsibility, Accountability and Equality.

For transparency, there is full openness and zero ambiguity/secrecy. People all over the world can see and question any conduct or activity.

Hajj authorities have a heightened sense of responsibility when performing their official or executive tasks because they are subject to constant accountability and monitoring from senior departments and pilgrims themselves. And most importantly, they are responsible before Almighty Allah.

The greatest meaning of equality manifests in its purest form in Hajj rituals and clothing; all pilgrims perform the same rituals and dress the same way with no discrimination. They all aspire to one religious goal.

The experts studied some successful models of crowd management, which provide a framework for management lessons and the application of quality standards that include (performance improvement, continuous development, streamlining processes and procedures, user satisfaction, best service provision, etc.).

The way the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia manages the Hajj season sets a great example of how integrated the functions of security and service agencies get and how they all operate based on common vision and strategy: Achieving the maximum levels of security and safety.

The same level of integration can also be seen inside Hajj guidance establishments (known as tawafa) and in Hajj volunteers. Both implement the highest quality of management and the best models of public relations and human relationships.

These great efforts exerted by the government of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz are highly appreciated by pilgrims. The Saudi government works day and night to make pilgrims feel comfortable, safe and secure. Besides, it makes sure that pilgrims return home with feelings of love, brotherhood, security and peace from this blessed journey.



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*Prime Minister of Morocco during his meeting with the Secretary General of MWL.*

## SG of MWL discusses with Moroccan PM ways to promote moderate discourse and fight extremism

### **Rabat-MWL**

The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco Dr. Saadeddine Othmani, received H.E. the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and held discussions during which they stressed the importance of cooperation in supporting moderate discourse in order to counter extremism. They also explored the most effective ways to promote moderate discourse.

H. E. MWL Secretary General visited the

House of Representatives in Morocco and met with its President Mr. Al-Habib El-Maliki, and discussed with him areas of coordination and cooperation in issues of mutual concern.

Dr. Al-Issa also met in the capital Rabat with the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Nasser Bourita and discussed with him issues of mutual concern.

Dr. Al-Issa met with the Moroccan Minister of Justice and Freedoms Mr. Muhammad



*A commemorative photo of Dr. Al-Issa with Dr. Othmani.*

Aujjar and discussed with him a number of topics regarding the concepts and controlling principles of freedoms and their due relevance to the intellectual discourse. Dr. Al-Issa and the accompanying delegation attended a lunch banquet held in his honor by the Minister.

The MWL Secretary General also met with Moroccan Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mr. Ahmad Toufiq, and discussed with him areas of mutual coordination and cooperation. They also explored the Shari'ah and intellectual frameworks for the moderate Islamic discourse. The Minister then hosted a dinner in honor of Dr. Al-Issa and the accompanying delegation.

His Excellency visited Al-Husseinia Dar Al-Hadith as well as met with its Director Dr. Ahmad Khamleichi. He later visited the

headquarters of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in Rabat, and met with its officials who briefed him on the ISESCO programs.

Dr. Al-Issa held several meetings with a number of leading Moroccan scholars and thought leaders in which he explored means of cooperation and exchange, especially with regard to Islamic community members residing outside the Muslim world, focusing on their different ethnic origins as well as intellectual backgrounds.

The meetings highlighted the need to enhance the dissemination of religious and intellectual awareness among them in a manner that reflects the high values of Islam and to continue guarding them from the danger of infiltration of extremist and terrorist ideas.



*Signed the agreement between the Muslim World League and the Muhammadiyah Association of Scholars in the Kingdom of Morocco.*

## MWL boosts its international agreements with Morocco-based Mohammadiyah Association of Scholars

### **Rabat-MWL**

The Muslim World League (MWL) has given a boost to its increasing involvement in international collaborations with a new agreement for a cultural, scientific and intellectual partnership with the Muhammadiyah Association of Scholars in the Kingdom of Morocco (MASM).

Established by a Royal decree and enjoying the full backing of the King of Morocco, the MASM is a governmental body with extensive influence throughout West Africa. Its first convention was attended by more than 300 Moroccan scholars.

The partnership agreement with the MWL will establish cooperation in research and intellectual work and allow for data and

information exchange, with the aim of promoting an enlightened Islamic discourse to counter extremist ideology and groups that seek to categorize and exclude people.

The agreement was signed during H.E. Dr. Al-Issa's visit to the MASM at Al-Shu'ada Square in the capital Rabat, where he met with the MASM's Secretary General Dr. Ahmad Abbadi before attending with his delegation a dinner held in his honor.

The agreement covers several areas of cooperation between the two parties and their affiliates, comprising conducting and evaluating scientific research on topics of mutual interest for publication. It also covers invitations to take part in events held by each party such as symposia, conferences,

seminars and cultural programs that involve lectures, discussions, training courses and workshops related to the development of their joint work.

Areas of cooperation are also to include documentation, information exchange and sharing of material, while maintaining compliance with intellectual property rights. Added to that will be an exchange of all publications whether in print or audio-visual form. The agreement further covers the exchange of scientific and academic publishing opportunities as well as contributions to activities, programs and publications in the respective periodicals, pamphlets and websites, while it also encourages the exchange of experience in studies as well as legal and management consultations.

In order to achieve organized institutional work based on observable, measurable and evaluative data, the agreement approved the two parties' formation of a follow-up committee to draw up an annual executive program defining the projects and fields of cooperation and mutual benefit between the two parties. This work is to be supported by an execution and follow-up mechanism body comprising representatives of both the International Organization for Muslim Scholars, an affiliate of the MWL, and the Coordination Committee of the MASM. The proposed body is to submit agreed-upon programs approved by both MWL Secretary General and MASM Secretary General.

The MWL/MASM agreement is the fruit of deliberations at the International Conference on "Dismantling Extremist Discourse", organized by the MWL in cooperation with the MASM under the patronage of His Majesty King Muhammad VI of Morocco. It also comes in the framework of strengthen-

ing the interactive international programs of the MWL, which is now at the forefront of religious and cultural institutions across the world, particularly in regard to its capacity as the umbrella organization of the Muslim peoples based on its constitution, its pivotal interactive international role, and its influential relations.

The conference, was held 03-04 July 2018 in Rabat, was attended by an elite group of intellectuals and researchers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Mauritania, Guinea Conakry and Eritrea. It aimed to promote initiatives that reflect the pure essence of the true Islamic religion and cleanse the impurities that extremists and followers of falsehoods seek to attach to it, given the tense regional and international context and the escalation of violence, extremism and terrorism. The objective is to methodically understand and explain pan-continental, cultural, national and religious extremism by monitoring its various determinants and dimensions and formulating the mechanisms required to minimizing at all levels its destructive effects.

The conference looked at six main themes: framing interventions to dismantle the discourse of extremism; the intellectual foundations of extremists and their refutation; the danger of sectarian extremism at the center of scientific approaches to confronting and dismantling extremism; the role of scientific in dismantling extremist discourse, and strategies to protect against extremism. This was followed by two workshops, the first on "The strategy of countering extremism and relevant recommendations", and the second on "Extremism: obstacles and ways of confronting it."



## MWL condemns ratification of so-called “National Israeli Law”

### **Makkah - MWL**

The Muslim World League condemned, rejected and disapproved the Israeli Knesset’s ratification of the so-called “National Israeli Law”, which was a blatant challenge to the will of the international community, its laws and its legitimate resolutions.

The Muslim World League stressed and pointed out in a statement that this law is racist and illegitimate. It ignores the historical rights of the Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian and represents an extension of Israeli settlement. This law also contradicts with provisions of the international law, principles of the international legitimacy and also obstructs international efforts, aimed at

finding a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The MWL has called upon the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and confront such a law and other Israeli attempts to discriminate and distort Palestinian people national identity.

MWL called on the international community to reject and condemn this racist law and to confront all Israeli racist laws and policies aimed at undermining the vision of a two-state solution and to shoulder all their political and legal responsibilities and demand that Israeli authorities should abide by United Nations resolutions and halt the implementation of this racist law.

# 4,054 patients undergo surgeries in Nigeria, thanks to MWL



*Waiting to remove bandages and restore sound vision.*

## **Nigeria - MWL**

The Muslim World League (MWL) last month arranged- through its medical program - surgeries, clinical examinations and the provision of medication and medical checkups to 4,054 Nigerian patients in the state of Kaduna, Nigeria.

The International Organization for Relief, Welfare and Development (IORWD), an MWL affiliate, carried out the medical program in cooperation with Nigeria's Ministry of Health and under the direct supervision and follow-up of MWL Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, who instructed that the schedule should be met with as many patients seen as possible.

Governor of Kaduna Mr. Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai expressed appreciation to MWL, welcoming its continuous efforts to provide Nigeria with more much-needed medical programs. El-Rufai also lauded the medical team who took part in the program.

IORWD Secretary General Dr. Abdulaziz Sarhan said the program was carried out for the sixth consecutive year at the IORWD-run Shifaa Hospital and Orphans Polyclinic.

“The medical team provided consultations to 1,550 patients, health checkups to 1,137, dispensed medications to 1,409 and performed 50 inguinal hernia surgeries and 50 cataract surgeries,” said Dr. Sarhan.

All surgical operations were a great success, leaving patients overjoyed. Due to their impoverished circumstances, none would have been able to access such procedures without the program.

The MWL has in recent years spent around SR 6 million on health projects in Nigeria alone, helping in the process over one million people. Procedures have ranged from sight restoration and cataract removal, to treatment of patients at the Shifaa Hospital and the Orphans Polyclinic.

Director of the MWL Office in Nigeria Abdullah Al-Huwairini said Nigerian officials hailed the MWL's efforts while patients and the needy expressed their gratitude to MWL for alleviating their pain and harsh living conditions.

The MWL medical program received extensive media coverage in Nigeria from newspapers and TV channels, which interviewed the blind and captured their moments of joy after having their sight restored and recovering from cataract treatment. Some patients wept tears of joy, and thanked the MWL for everything it has done for them.

# MWL drills 54 water wells and eases suffering of 18,000 Afghans



*Clean water arrives next to homes for the first time.*

## **Kabul- MWL**

The Muslim World League (MWL) has drilled 54 surface wells in Kabul and Parwan states, Afghanistan, ending the suffering of 18,000 Afghans.

At a total cost of around half a million Saudi Riyals, the project comes in line with the MWL newest programs aiming at achieving sustainable development in impoverished countries.

The residents of both states are known to have been suffering from acute water scarcity for a long time and hardly can they find potable water nearby.

The drilling program was carried out after MWL Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa instructed the officials of the MWL Afghanistan-based office to conduct a field study and identify the areas with absolute water scarcity.

The study, which was conducted according to reliable criteria, took into consideration the location, area and population of each state. The results showed that Kabul

and Parwan were among most water-scarce states.

The International Organization for Relief, Welfare and Development (IORWD), an MWL affiliate, implemented the program.

IORWD Secretary General Dr. Abdulaziz Sarhan said these projects aim to alleviate the suffering of the poor and needy in these areas, who have to walk long distances to collect drinkable water.

Dr. Sarhan said 32 surface wells were drilled in Kabul and 22 in Parwan, benefiting 18,000 people.

The Muslim World League has carried out various water projects over the past years, improving the living conditions of 72,500 people, at a total cost of six million Saudi Riyals.

Afghan officials lauded the MWL humanitarian efforts to ease the suffering of impoverished Afghan families. Because of these projects, the families are no longer have to take a long walk searching for drinkable water.



*Dr. Al-Issa receives a video presentation of the facilities of the Rohingya refugee service center.*

## **MWL launches Integrated Refugee Services Center of Rohingya in Bangladesh**

### **Jeddah - MWL**

The Secretary General of the Muslim World League Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa launched the Integrated Services Center for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which will be established soon possible in accordance with the best standards set by the MWL. The Secretary General of MWL called for abiding by the highest practices related to the humanitarian work of relief, care and development. All this aims to transform in the relief work for the Rohingya refugees who live in difficult conditions in unsuitable camps that lack the most basic necessities of life. He also added that the MWL's International Organization for Relief, Welfare and Develop-

ment (IOR) is keen on establishing a small community of refugees Rohingya equipped with full services that include social facilities providing basic education, vocational training and primary health care, which will give them an environment similar to that of their normal life. This will help them co-exist with their new reality especially children, female and male students.

Dr. Al-Issa praised the strenuous efforts exerted by (IOR) for planning for the establishment of the Rohingya Refugee Services Center in Bangladesh. He watched a presentation about the utilities and integrated services of the center, reflecting the MWL keenness to support and relieving Rohingya displaced people who have recently



*Dr. Al-Issa directed the Commission to make more efforts to help the affected Rohingya.*

suffered from brutality by racist terrorism.

In a statement issued earlier, Dr. Al-Issa said that the MWL highlighted the whole world's organizations and peoples the brutality and genocide Rohingya Muslims suffer from in Myanmar-Burma. This historic disturbing chapter in the UN's humanitarian record will, he said, be a witness to the magnitude of world weakness for stopping these atrocities which represent one of the worst terrorist and bloody crimes. These crimes and massacres are similar to the ones committed by the most dangerous terrorist organizations like Daesh. Silence in the face of such brutal crimes is silence in the face of truth and this gives strong pretexts of the negative concepts on the weakness of the international justice system and its will to fight and eradicate terrorism

Dr. Al-Issa confirmed that the MWL is keen on economically empowering Rohingya refugees to be able to depend on themselves and become self-sufficient, thus achieving sustainable development that represents a key objective of the Humanitarian work of the MWL.

The Secretary General of the MWL also

stressed the importance of raising the health awareness of Rohingya Muslims through the focus on and attention to women's personal, psychological and health needs as women constitute an important pillar of survival and coexistence

Meanwhile, Dr Al-Issa stressed the need to focus on mitigating the effects of physical and psychological violence suffered by Rohingya refugees through implementing specialized psychological programs of reuniting Rohingya family members and caring orphans and widows in addition to other similar specialized programs.

Dr. Al-Issa also said that these important actions taken by the MWL's International Organization for Relief, Care and Development support and reinforce its international presence as a major influential global organization that harnesses all its potentials to spread everywhere of the world. Narrated by Abu Hurairah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was asked: "Is there a reward for us in serving any human beings?" He replied: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any living being . (See Hadith No. 551)



*After receiving a delegation of scholars participating in the international conference for Muslim scholars on peace and stability in Afghanistan.*

## **‘Makkah Declaration’: Calls for consolidating peace and security in Afghanistan**

Makkah (UNA-OIC) – The International Ulema Conference for Peace and Security in Afghanistan, held in Saudi Arabia’s cities of Jeddah and Makkah on July 10-11, respectively, called on Islamic countries, organizations and elites to join efforts toward the establishment of peace and security in Afghanistan. The following is the full text of the Makkah Declaration adopted by the conference.

In compliance with the injunctions of our Lord in His divine wisdom in support of stability and peace in Muslim societies and in shunning strife and dispersal, and in line with the sage law that calls for fellowship among the believers and their assembly around the Word of Truth and Justice and for due refer-

ral to the divine Shari’ah in case of dispute or difference, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held the “International Ulema Conference for Peace and Security in Afghanistan”, in the two cities of Jeddah and Makkah Al-Mukarramah, on 26 through 27 Shawwal 1439 H (10-11 July 2018), in the gracious hospitality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and under the kind patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, Advisor to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Governor of Makkah Al-Mukarramah, may Allah grant him long life, all based on the OIC’s anticipated role in looking after the interests of the Member States and as an extension of its endeavors towards spreading

prosperity and consolidating peace and security in the Islamic societies in accordance with the teachings enshrined in the Holy Scripture and the tradition of our noble Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon Him.

In pursuance of the resolution issued by the OIC Foreign Minister's Conference at its Fortieth Session in the Republic of Guinea Conakry in 2013, which was further reiterated by the 45th session of the Foreign Minister's Council held in the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

The participants reviewed the sufferings endured by the Muslim Afghan people with the shedding of innocent blood, the loss of sacred lives, and the wasting of the Muslim state's resources in a prevailing environment that is in no way approved by the noble Islamic faith which accords prime value to security and which offers a whole range of texts calling for concerted action to establish peace in the Muslim societies and to encourage reconciliation among Muslims, a reconciliation which Islam places on a high pedestal as a prime act to please Allah, Mighty and Sublime be He.

**The participants in the Conference issued the following Declaration:**

•Afghanistan forms a Muslim state. Its citizens are Muslims whose life is sacrosanct and who all aspire to peace and security, and the perpetrations it has been undergoing in terms of the killings of innocent lives are contrary to the principles and formal teachings of Islam and run counter to the principles of unity, solidarity and social coherence among Muslims.

•We hereby call on Muslim states, organizations and elites to join efforts and pull their weight towards the establishment of peace and security in Afghanistan, using all their potential and influence towards this no-

ble goal to ensure a peaceful and decent life where Muslims cooperate towards building up and developing their nation in harmony with the will of God and His Prophet.

•Based on the texts of the Qur'an and the Tradition that Islam is a religion of peace and mercy, that the believers should all be merciful towards one another, and that their blood, property and honor are inalienable and should be protected against aggression, we hereby affirm that the suicide attacks targeting innocent people, and that intestine killings among Muslims are all acts that are prohibited by Allah and His Messenger under texts that are conclusively clear and well-established, whereby Allah says: *"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it, and Allah will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement."*

•Based on the above we hereby express our condemnation of the intestine killings in Afghanistan and call upon all parties to the conflict to abide by Allah's injunction, end this strife and resort to reconciliation among brothers and put down the flames of animosity. We call upon Afghanistan's government and the Taliban movement to conform to a truce and cease-fire and set on a track of direct Afghani negotiations. Reconciling between battling Muslims is one of the greatest and most honored acts of worship, for the spilling of innocent blood is among the greatest sins and an abominable deed that splits the ranks of the Ummah, fragments it and weakens its fabric. We hereby call on Muslims at large, and on the scholars among them in particular, to persist in their steadfast against the advocates of violence and extremism, in defense of their religion and in preservation of their Islamic Ummah's unity. A national dialogue is an optimal way to end the conflict between the Afghan Government



*King Salman in a group photo with a delegation of scholars participating in the conference.*

and the Taliban Movement, and the solution to the cause of the Muslim Afghani must particularly go through mutual understanding and direct peace negotiations. We, in this respect, endorse and support the recent efforts of the Afghani scholars towards a successful Afghani reconciliation. We pay tribute to the efforts put in by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, H.E. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Ghani, and praise him for his invitation to the Taliban Movement to engage in a direct, peaceful and unconditional dialogue, and for his recognition of the Movement as a political party whose goal shall be the predominance of security in Afghanistan. We also call on the Taliban Movement to respond to the invitation made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to eschew violence, end the mutual killings and sit together around the negotiating table. We further reiterate the substance of para (4) of the resolution issued by the OIC's International Islamic Fiqh Academy under reference no. (195-204) dated 15-19 Muharram 1435H, at the 21st session of the Academy's Council stipulating that "laying stress on dialogue approach in line with Resolution no.182 (8/19) as a means to resolve political differences and disputes and in managing relations between the governing bodies, the masses, and the various political parties, on nonuse of the force or weapons between the children of the

shared Ummah and country, and on steering away from fanaticism, sectarianism and narrow-minded dogmatism."

•We hereby extend our grateful appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman, for their interest in the causes of Muslims everywhere as well as for their gracious hosting of this conference. We praise the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for his follow-up and interest in the truce reached during the Eid Al-Fitr between the Afghani Government and the Taliban Movement, and we appeal to all parties to respond to the call for the extension of the truce. We also highly appreciate the Kingdom's stances and efforts in favor of establishing peace and security in Afghanistan, in a drive to ensure an environment conducive to peaceful negotiations and to an end to the fighting and bloodshed.

•We hereby extend our deep thanks to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for having arranged for this important meeting and we highly appreciate its commendable efforts, wishing it full success in its ongoing noble role in favor of a peaceful solution to the issue of the Muslim state of Afghanistan.

•We request H.E. the Secretary General to dispatch to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, may Allah preserve him, as well as to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, may Allah preserve him, and to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia a cable of gratitude and appreciation for the generous hosting of the conference and for the excellent arrangements and sincere efforts deployed by the Kingdom to support national reconciliation in Afghanistan.



## MWL is the sole legitimate authority for issuing Halal Certificates

### Makkah - MWL

The Muslim World League (MWL) is the sole legitimate authority for issuing Halal Certificates, according to the Kingdom's Permanent Committee for Issuing Fatwas, chaired by the Mufti of the Kingdom

The Muslim World League (MWL) has stressed that it is the sole legitimate authority for issuing Halal Certificates to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Higher Royal decree was issued, restricting the issuance of Halal Certificates to the MWL due to its international relations and expertise in coordination and cooperation with local and international bodies, companies and institutions and because it complies with the Islamic religious rules

in producing, manufacturing and marketing Halal products.

The MWL has also reiterated its commitment to apply the highest Shari'ah and disciplinary standards and has recently stopped many abattoirs and companies that violate Halal slaughtering around the world.

The Saudi Supreme Council of Scholars has issued a fatwa, through the Permanent Committee for Issuing Fatwas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia chaired by His Eminence the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom Sheikh Abdulaziz Al Al-

Sheikh, stating that the body responsible for Halal slaughtered meat imported by the Kingdom, is the MWL.

The MWL is considered the oldest Islam-



ic organization working in the field of Halal food and has a history of more than 30 years in this field through its offices, partners and Islamic centers around the world.

The MWL has recently got the certificate of (ISO9001) related to the quality of work, a matter that makes it the only organization in the world that has been issued this certificate in the field of «Halal» products.

The MWL is also in the process of finalizing the establishment of the largest Shari'ah center for Halal products in the world at its headquarters in Makkah. The mission of the Center is to control and supervise the Halal slaughtering and manufacturing methods and the granting of Halal certificates (directly or through the offices and representatives of the MWL abroad), according to the process applied for issuing the Halal Certificates and in accordance with the international standards for issuing such certificates. The center provides the Halal Certificates and legal and technical consultations, defining Halal food, providing informational, brand-aware and marketing consultations, besides supporting the manufacture and technology of Halal food.

The MWL has gained the confidence of exporters and importers of Halal meat in the world for its experience in this field exceeding thirty years.

It is worth mentioning that the MWL has established several international conferences in the field of Halal products in the different meat-exporting countries around the world, exporting meat, such as Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Europe, Asia and Africa. The MWL depends in its work for issuing Halal Certificates on the Gulf standards and its standard specifications that follow the «Standardization Organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GSO) with regard to the Halal food conditions and its suitability. The MWL depends on issuing Halal Certificates on the opinions of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, regarding fatwas concerning Halal food.

The MWL is a global Islamic organization that is, concerned with Muslims affairs in general, and the Islamic religion in particular, as Islam wishes goodness for all and communicates with all for the benefit of all humankind.





King Abdulaziz efforts to ease Hajj:

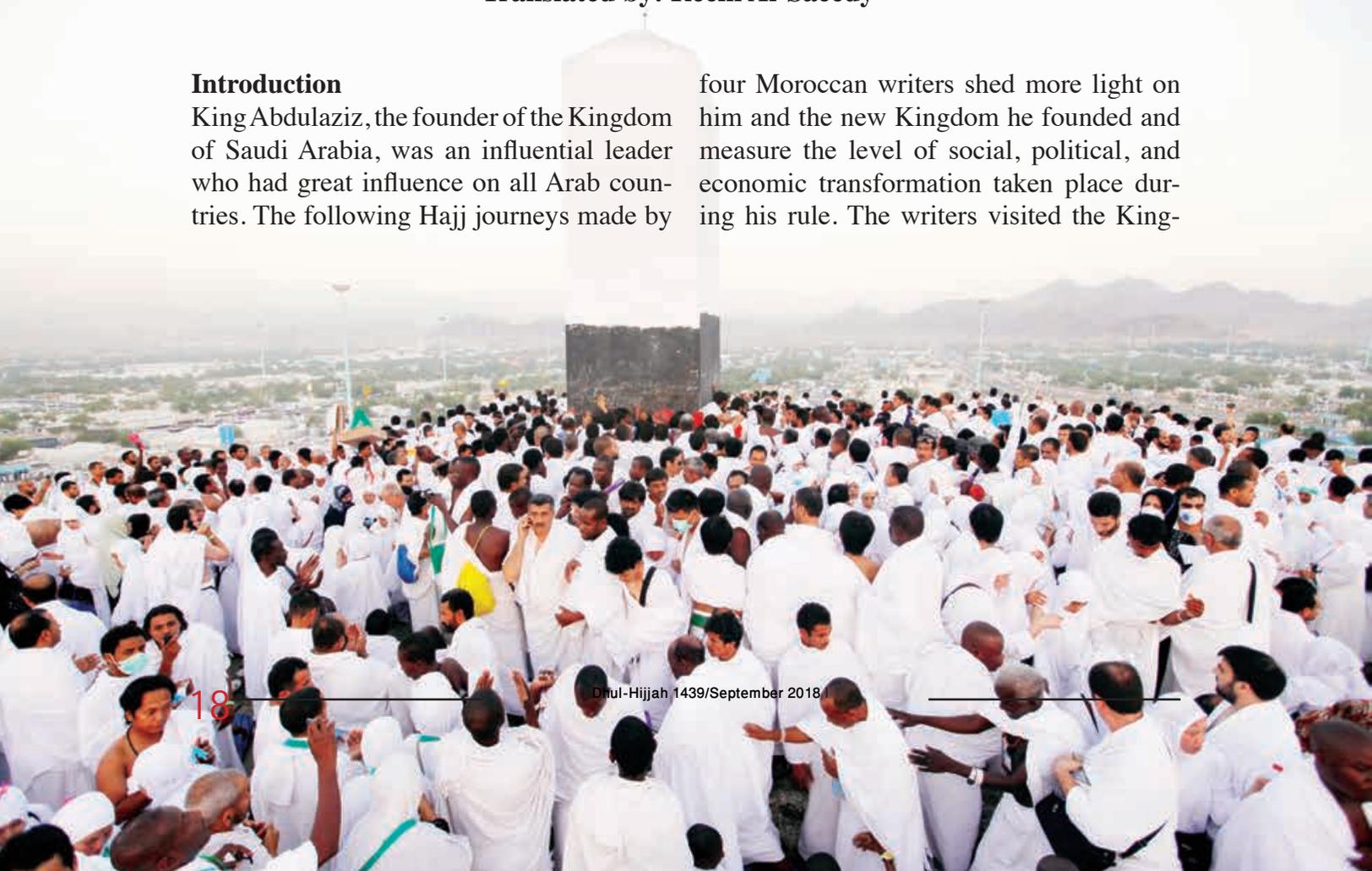
# Testimony of four Moroccan travelers

**Al-Zubayr Mihdad**  
**Translated by: Reem Al-Saeedy**

## **Introduction**

King Abdulaziz, the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was an influential leader who had great influence on all Arab countries. The following Hajj journeys made by

four Moroccan writers shed more light on him and the new Kingdom he founded and measure the level of social, political, and economic transformation taken place during his rule. The writers visited the King-



dom of Saudi Arabia in his era and wrote down their accounts and views.

The writers were:

1- Idris bin Muhammad Al-Jaidi, judge; he traveled to the Hejaz in 1930 and published his travel memoirs in the “*As’sada*” or “*Happiness*” Newspaper.

2- Muhammad bin Ahmed Al-Hawari, Chief Editor of the “*As’sada*” Newspaper; he traveled to the Hejaz in 1934 and authored “*Guide to Hajj and Tourism*”.

3- Ahmed Al-Rahouni Al-Tatwani, scholar, judge, and minister of justice during the colonialism era; he traveled to the Hejaz in 1937 and his trip was published in *Tatwan Newspaper*.

4- Muhammad bin Al-Hassan Al-Hajawi Al-Thaalabi, an Islamic jurist, reformer and minister; he performed Hajj in 1946 and wrote a manuscript about his trip.

The four travelers share several things in common; for example, they were all scholars who held judiciary and administrative positions in their own country and they all documented their trips and had them published in a book or newspapers. The travelers were amazed by the development and progress the Kingdom had witnessed in the era of King Abdulaziz and wanted to share their Hajj experiences with the public and reflect their viewpoints.

### **Hajj is a great responsibility**

King Abdulaziz was aware of the enormous responsibility on his shoulder and on the Kingdom, being the cradle of the Two Holy Mosques. He, therefore, exerted great efforts to serve pilgrims and take care of all Hajj affairs, doing all he could and going to great lengths to make pilgrims feel comfortable. These efforts reflected his loyalty and love to Islam and Muslims. Everyone

at the time witnessed first-hand the rapid development and improvement of all Hajj services and the special care given to the Holy Mosque, its facilities, and sacred sites. Pilgrims were provided with premium services whereas their safety and security were safeguarded.

### **Taking Care of the Grand Mosque**

Al-Jaidi performed Hajj and traveled to Makkah when the new Kingdom was going through so much development. He admired the Kiswah Factory at Ajyad neighborhood. Al-Rahouni gave a detailed account of his Hajj experience and talked about the holy Kiswah history, noting that the Kiswah used to be made in Egypt until 1926. Afterwards, King Abdulaziz decided to construct a Kiswah factory in Makkah; he allocated money to the factory from the treasury and built it in Makkah in 1937. This proved the strength and power of the Kingdom and its capability to take care of Hajj and pilgrims.

Al-Rahouni mentioned that the Holy Mosque had several restorations and renovations with a new lighting system installed all over the Grand Mosque. The King ordered that one thousand lamps should be installed in addition to lux light bulbs. Later on, the King ordered to install another lighting system and more light bulbs. In 1935, Hajj Muhammad Khan Al-Hindi gifted a 34-kilowatt machine to the Grand Mosque which improved lighting inside the Grand Mosque during day and night.

Al-Hawari said King Abdulaziz ordered to set up tents on a wooden pole outside the Grand Mosque to protect people who performed prayer against the scorching heat of the sun.

Zamzam well is located at Haram Al-Makki; Muslims everywhere in the world



hold it so dearly in their hearts. Al-Hawari said all pilgrims wanted to drink Zamzam from the well but because of their enormous number they could not. Zamzam water tanks such as Qaitbay and Ain Zubaidah helped meet the pilgrims' need and provided them with Zamzam water. Al-Hawari said pilgrims in the past used to face great difficulty in drinking Zamzam water but this problem was solved by the Saudi government. He lauded the way the government managed Ain Zubaidah, which helped solve this problem, reducing overcrowding and maximizing pilgrims' safety and security. Al-Hawari highlighted the efforts exerted to help pilgrims get access to Zamzam water as easily and safely as possible.

Al-Rahouni wrote down in his trip's notes that King Abdulaziz (provided two accesses to Zamzam well, renovated a pathway and wrote his name on it.)

Al-Rahouni said King Abdulaziz was the first to bring a clock to the Hejaz (nowadays, there is a clock whose handles can be seen and ticking can be heard from a long distance. The clock perches on top of a tower, overlooking the Grand Mosque and the city of Makkah. The King ordered to install it in 1935.)

Regarding As-Safa and Al-Marwah, Al-Hawari was dissatisfied with the condition of the Mas'a as it was difficult to walk there; besides, pilgrims complained many times about the location of the souk on both sides of the Mas'a. Three years later, Al-Rahouni wrote about the renovations of the Mas'a during King Abdulaziz era. The King ordered that the Mas'a should be paved and covered by shade structures. In the year 1938, Al-Rahouni heard that the King ordered to have the Mas'a floor tiled.

When Al-Jaidi arrived to Arafat, he admired the arrangements and how the site where pilgrims stand in Arafat was divided while tents were set up and pathways were designated so that pilgrims would not get lost finding their way back to tents. These arrangements allowed Hajj guides to set up tents for their own pilgrims easily.

Al-Hajawi - who was a minister and a reformer, suggested smart expansion for the Holy Mosque. He said the huge number of pilgrims coming every year required expansion of the Grand Mosque because some houses encroached upon the Mas'a area, which became very crowded and narrow. The shops on both sides of the Mas'a worsened the situation.



Al-Hajawi suggested that houses adjacent to the Grand Mosque should be torn down to make space and the people living in them should be relocated. He called for renovating and tiling the floor of the Mas'a, removing gravel and replacing it with comfortable material instead so that pilgrims could walk and sit easily. He said all shops around the Mas'a should be relocated outside the boundaries of the Mas'a in order to make space and annex the Mas'a to the Grand Mosque.

The space could be used also for Friday prayer and learning sessions. The cost of these reforms should be shared by Islamic countries; each country should donate one-fifth of the revenue of its Wakf property generated in one year. If the donations were little, Muslims should be invited to donate money into a fund. However, the expansion of the Grand Mosque took place during King Saud's era.

### **Security**

All four travelers hailed security in Makkah and the special care given by the Kingdom to pilgrims. In the past, pilgrims were frightened to perform Hajj due to lack of security and viewed Hajj journey as a danger-

ous adventure.

In 1930, Al-Jaidi said there was a police barrack on the Mas'a street. Al-Hawari heard first-hand King Abdulaziz talking about the importance of security for pilgrims. In his speech which compared between security in his era and that of his predecessors, King Abdulaziz said: "This country was ruled by strong governments; however, none of them could provide security for pilgrims during their Hajj journey. Today, security has significantly improved across the Kingdom. You have seen it yourselves. For that, we thank Almighty Allah."

Al-Hawari said he visited the police department and witnessed himself the great efforts exerted by police officers to make pilgrims feel comfortable and secure.

Al-Hajawi said the Kingdom's security situation had largely improved (security had been enhanced and tightened, thanks to King Abdulaziz's strict and drastic measures. The King refused interference and favoritism, turning the Hejaz into a completely secure region.)

Al-Hajawi talked about how pilgrims used to suffer in the past because of the absence of security. There was almost no security while road bandits hid and lurked

near the roads pilgrims took during their Hajj journey and robbed them, especially roads connecting Jeddah, Makkah, Madinah etc. “During the era of the Turks and Al-Hussain bin Ali, the Hejaz was like a den of thieves, looters and bandits. King Abdulaziz eradicated robbery and banditry and enforced Shari’a judgements such as hand amputation and slapped around ten thieves with hand amputation. He also ended all forms of banditry. The country had become safer and people were able to do business and make money without fear.)

Al-Hajawi believes that when citizens obey rules and respect laws, this means one thing: they are civilized law-abiding citizens. This is also a proof how powerful the country and its institutions are and how effective its legislation and laws are.

### **Roads**

When pilgrims arrive to the Kingdom and head for the Grand Mosque, they very often cause traffic jams on roads. They suffer more when the condition of the roads is derelict. No doubt that the large and wide roads make travelers feel more comfortable and reduce traffic jams and even allow buses to transport pilgrims to the Grand Mosque faster and safer. The inter-city highways and city roads are important because they facilitate transportation of pilgrims.

When Al-Jaidi came to Jeddah city in 1930, he admired how the government was paving and constructing roads and how the Makkah roads were designed using modern style to ensure they were large enough.

In the Mina site, Al-Jaidi said there were four streets cutting through Mina; two were old while two were built in 1930 to reduce overcrowding in the old two streets.

He said (All Mina streets and the road

linking it with Makkah had lights. The streets connecting Mina and Arafah had lights as well.)

Al-Rahouni said the road between Makkah and Madinah needed urgent restoration to ease the suffering of pilgrims who traveled through them. When King Abdulaziz learned about the condition of the road, he gave orders to fix it immediately. First, technical and engineering studies were conducted on the road then the Bank of Egypt hired a group of engineers to redesign and repave the road at a cost of around 300,000 Egyptian liras. King Abdulaziz signed an agreement with the bank and the implementation of the road project began. When Al-Rahouni returned to Morocco, he knew from a reliable source that the Saudi government began paving the Jeddah-Makkah road and the project would be completed the within a year.

Al-Hajawi mentioned the road projects completed during the era of King Abdulaziz such as Jeddah-Makkah road, which runs for around 70 kilometers and shortens the time needed to travel between the two cities.

### **Hygiene and health**

Slaughtering animals as part of the Hajj rituals and engaging in other activities during Hajj were a cause of concern for many pilgrims because of garbage and waste resulted from these activities. These negative activities could hurt pilgrims and spread diseases and epidemics. In the era of King Abdulaziz, pilgrims did not have such concerns about these problems because all Makkah roads were clean. Al-Jaidi testified to this fact in his book and said: “Makkah Municipality used modern equipment to keep the city streets and roads clean and shining.”



Al-Hajawi expressed his admiration for the high level of street cleanliness. Although the number of pilgrims exceeded 250,000, the Grand Mosque, he writes, was completely clean.

The health services provided to pilgrims were as excellent and helped fight epidemics and reduce the number of death cases. Health departments were established in all areas where pilgrims lived, especially in Mina. Al-Jaidi said there was a health department following up pilgrims' health conditions and providing medication and treatment to ill pilgrims.

When Prince Faisal hosted Al-Rahouni, Prince Faisal expressed happiness that the pilgrims performed Hajj safely. Prince Faisal said: "We thank Almighty Allah that the ten pilgrims who passed away during Hajj died of natural causes. Over 200,000 pilgrims performed Hajj this year." Al-Rahouni noted that the measures taken by Prince Faisal helped prevent any catastrophic death.

### **Conclusion**

Since its foundation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has mobilized all its human resources and government agencies to serve pilgrims and ease Hajj measures. It has over the past decades implemented development and expansion projects. Every year, pilgrims, who visited the Kingdom, noticed remarkable improvement in the services provided to them. The Saudi government's gigantic efforts have facilitated the performance of Hajj rituals in a spiritual atmosphere. King Abdulaziz played an eclectic role in these efforts, thanks to his unique leadership, acumen and resourcefulness.

King Abdulaziz created a safe and secure environment where pilgrims could perform Hajj with comfort and ease. He shouldered the responsibility of protecting the safety and security of all pilgrims and built a strong and modern country that today enjoys a respectable and high position on the global map.

# Hajj - the Grand

Pilgrimage to Makkah:

*Transcending the Mundane Realities*



By Ahmed Kamal El-Din Izzeddin

*Here I am, Oh God, answering Your command!*

*Here I am answering Your command!*

*You are without associate! I am at Your command!*

*To You are all praise, grace and dominion!*

*You are without associate!*

*This is a brief version on another pillar of Islam, namely, Grand Pilgrimage, or Hajj. The pillar of fasting (in Ramadan), discussed in another issue of this Journal, may be useful for the non-Arabist and non-Muslim reader to go through before reading this article, although it is quite independently penned, and is intended to generally present Hajj as a form of worship rather than being descriptive of the detailed phases and rites of Hajj, which is abundantly available for readers elsewhere.*

Grand Pilgrimage (Hajj) is performed by Muslims whenever affordable once in a lifetime to Makkah, the city in Hejaz, Saudi Arabia, where God's House, or Ka'aba, has been erected for the first time by Prophet Ibrahim (or Abraham) and his first son, Ismael (or Ishmael), who are also commanded by God to purify His House for those who would compass around it and perform prayers in its vicinity. Those who can afford it may perform Hajj more than once if they, for more divine reward, although Hajj is mandatory on the adult Muslim only once, provided he is materially and physically able to perform it.

Hajj is to be performed at a specific season of the year: "For Hajj are the months well-known"; "They ask thee concerning the New Moons. Say: They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for Pilgrimage." One basic rite for the pilgrim on which his entire pilgrimage depends is to stand on or around the Mount of Mercy in Arafat, which should take place between the afternoon and sunset on the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah, the 12th lunar month in the Hijri calendar. The next 9th of Dhul-Hijjah is expected to correspond to August 21, 2018, which means that the very last possible day for arrival into Makkah for this year's Hajj is August 20, 2018, noting that the Saudi authorities may specify an earlier date for entry into the country for practical purposes, which must be observed by pilgrims. Stoning of Satan is followed by the festive day when the sacrifices are slaughtered by all Muslims regardless of them performing Hajj for the relevant year, followed by the farewell compassing around of Ka'aba (Tawaf Al-Wadaa).

Other rituals include walking the distance between the two hills of Safa and

Marwa, and continuously uttering duaa or supplication and words of dhikr or remembrance of God the Almighty. Pilgrims travel from the Holy Mosque in Makkah to Arafat, via Mina overnight, spend the night in Muzdalifa then move again to Mina, where the Satan or devil is symbolically stoned in three daily sessions over a couple of nights culminating in the Grand Eid, or festive day (Eid Al-Adha). Several prohibitions peculiar to Hajj are then lifted, including shaving, nail clipping, wearing perfume and normal clothing, washing up and practicing unfettered matrimonial life.

Beyond the aforesaid physical and verbal rituals are several abstract values and meanings of commendable significance. Here are some examples:

#### **Purification of inner intention and faith:**

It is a common, over arching principle of worship in Islam that it is the inner intention that matters and that all the acts of worship are done bona fide for the sake of God. One good indication is found in the Qur'anic verse on the Grand Eid sacrifice, which coincidentally happens to be in the Chapter (Surat) of the Qur'an on Hajj: "It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah. It is your piety that reaches Him". Again, both grand and minor pilgrimages, i.e. Hajj and Umrah, are required to be offered to God: "And complete the Hajj or Umrah in the service of Allah".

In an authentic Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as reported by Omar bin Al-Khattab, he says, "Acts indeed depend upon the intentions and every person will receive the rewards according to what he has intended. So, whoever emigrates for the sake of Allah and his Messenger, his emigration will be



(counted as being) for Allah and his Messenger and whoever emigrates for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration will be (counted as being) for what he emigrated for". Accordingly, Hajj will only be rewarded as far as good intention exists during the practice of the physical dimension of the rituals.

**Abstraction of mundane way of life:**

From its inception Hajj opens the way for

the pilgrim to move closer to his original nature. The preparatory acts in pilgrimage ceremonials, following a solemn intention to perform Hajj, include wearing the pilgrimage garb. For men, this is composed of two pieces of simple white unsewn fabric, one to cover the lower body, while the other is to cover the upper parts. No accessories, no caps or hats are allowed. Women should only dress decently and cover their heads. The pilgrim is thus made to live the



status of a nascent being, free of all worldly encumbrances and sophistication, and allowing the remembrance of God to be practiced with much attentiveness and clarity of mind.

**Practicing good communal interaction:**

One remarkable thing about Hajj is that between two to three million people come to meet in a relatively limited space, less than 40 square kilometers, forming the

greatest human gathering ever. All the pilgrims do the same actions, in the same order, within the same process, and same space and timeframe. The Islamic instructions to pilgrims anticipate the hazards and possible misgivings in such a huge human assembly.

Accordingly, pilgrims are required to prepare for Hajj by bathing, shaving and clipping their nails, thereby minimizing the need for littering in Hajj. They are strictly prohibited from hunting in Makkah, a rule that would preserve wild life in Hejaz from extinction in a few years of Hajj. No pilgrim is allowed to collect and appropriate any lost item, thereby shedding necessary protection for owners of lost property at a time of massive human throngs.

On the personal behavioral level, at a situation where men and women who are strangers to one another live and move at a relatively closer proximity, the Qur'an explicitly prohibits obscenity, which is usually the first step before promiscuity and further acts of indecency. Another behavioral hazard in the Hajj crowded human waves is the possibility of skirmishes and clashes. This is also prohibited at the pain of losing the acceptance of one's pilgrimage. The Qur'an reads: "For Hajj are the months well-known. If any one undertakes that duty therein, let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj. And whatever good ye do, (be sure) Allah knows it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct".

It is clear therefore that Hajj, basically a set of seasonal acts of worship, is also a complete system of designed compatibility, with inbuilt instructions meant to be crowd-friendly, and avoid anticipated hazards.



# Managing *Hajj*

**M. Nasir Jawed**

*“We cannot see such a high-level of crowd management anywhere in the world, except in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj pilgrimage.”*

*– Dr. Sala Yanoya, UN representative*

Hajj has never been as easier as it is today. Thanks to modern amenities and technology – not to forget air travel facilities and a highly improved infrastructure that Saudi Arabia has come up with – pilgrims today are faced with fewer challenges. It is no longer time-consuming, unbearable, or fraught with any undesirable criminal incidents as was the case in the past.

Yet, Hajj is a grueling procedure. It is unlike any other international event that draws world’s some major gatherings. The most

cherished journey in Islam involves a spiritual drill that spreads over five days and involves a set of some core rituals that are both intensive and at times complex, posing challenges to the Hajj organizers.

It therefore becomes the topmost priority for the Kingdom to serve the pilgrims in both the formats of the pilgrimage, Hajj and Umrah, the latter attracting pilgrims all through the year.

Arabs are known for their hospitality and generosity since pre-Islamic days. Al-

lah says: *“Have you made providing of water for the pilgrim and maintenance of Al-Masjid Al-Haram equal to (the deeds of) one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives in the cause of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”* (Surat Al-Tawbah, Verse 20)

Hajj, a spiritual journey to the ancient city of Makkah and the adjacent sites, takes place every year through 8th-12th Dhu Al-Hijj, the last month of the Islamic calendar, which is based on a lunar cycle. Some 3 million pilgrims converge to Makkah from more than 180 countries.

### **The Saudi Role**

Saudi Arabia considers it an honor to serve the pilgrims whom they call as guests of God. It invests vast manpower and financial resources. Over the past four decades, it has spent billions of dollars to expand the Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah and established modern airports, seaports, and other amenities and services for the pilgrims like road network, water, security, accommodation, sanitation, electricity and even food for the pilgrims.

Tens of thousands of security personnel, healthcare workers, traffic controllers, pedestrian and crowd control staff, safety control inspectors, volunteers etc. are deployed all over the holy sites to provide security, safety and healthcare, and to coordinate and control vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

All this has earned the country accolades from the Muslims from all over the world and international organizations including the United Nations. Grappling with the problem of controlling big festivals and gatherings, many countries are reported to have been learning the art of crowd management from

the Kingdom. They study the Saudi experience in Hajj management, as how it readies security forces for the annual gathering and how it deals with people speaking different languages and having different cultural and racial backgrounds.

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in a report quotes Dr. Sala Yanoya, a UN representative, as saying: “We cannot see such a high-level of crowd management anywhere in the world, except in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj pilgrimage.”

### **Vision 2030**

Under the patronage of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman launched Vision 2030, the primary goal of which is to transform Saudi Arabia into “an exemplary and leading nation in every field.” No wonder, the Vision finds an essential space for Hajj administration.

The Vision includes a comprehensive plan to develop the Hajj sector, thus allowing the maximum number of pilgrims. It plans to target 30 million pilgrims in both the formats of pilgrimage by 2030.

### **Expansion plan**

The Grand Mosque in Makkah is being expanded at an estimated cost of \$26.6bn to accommodate some 2.2 million worshippers from around 600,000 currently. It is the largest expansion of the Holy Mosque in history that is being carried out to increase the capacity annually.

With an estimated completion date of mid-2018, the project will be divided into three phases. It will include the addition of a new seven story building with 74 prayer halls, an ornate prayer hall spread over 250,000 square meters and a 5000-square meter of



central ceremonial area.

### **Managing the crowd**

Crowd management is not an easy task. Governments and security forces across the world have found it difficult to manage huge crowds at religious gatherings, festivals and sports events.

According to the United Nations, world population is expected to cross 9 billion by 2025, making crowd management even more difficult and a big challenge in coming years.

The biggest challenge facing the Hajj management is controlling the mammoth buildup of crowds, mainly transporting them in a time frame of three days in multiple movements, as also within the defined perimeter of the holy sites.

According to a crowd management expert, “The most challenging thing is that these pilgrims speak more than 100 languages and they follow different cultures, customs and traditions and lifestyle and have different racial backgrounds.”

Dr. Yanoya said: “You cannot find 3 million people staying in a limited space for a week, performing various religious rituals. They live in a spiritual atmosphere enjoying full security, tranquility and comfort.”

The UN official commended the accumulated experience gained by Saudi Arabia in crowd management over the past several years, adding that this has made the Kingdom No. 1 in the field. She commended Saudi Arabia for its successful efforts in crowd management. She said South Africa benefited from Saudi crowd management experi-

ence while hosting World Cup.

The hi-tech Jamarat Bridge in Mina, where Hajis perform their stoning-the-Satan ritual, has won accolades at various international forums including the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences, the leading association for analytics professionals. The bridge was instrumental in crowd management and reducing accidents at the Jamarat, which has witnessed some fatal accidents in the past.

### **Overcrowding**

For an effective management of the Hajj crowd, or any gathering in the world for that matter, it is imperative to limit the number of pilgrims to an acceptable level.

Learning from the problems encountered earlier, the Hajj management in 2013 ran a very successful campaign of media awareness vowing to severe punitive measure for unauthorized pilgrims. This succeeded in limiting the number of pilgrims to about 2 million, but still there were no significant reduction in the number of illegal pilgrims from Makkah region. To minimize the chances of locals contributing to the catastrophes, it is highly desirable to organize crowd management training programs and encourage the people, especially the ones from Makkah region, to participate.

Making it a smooth affair and hassle-free, more than 400,000 people have been turned away for lacking Hajj permits last year. A total of 208,236 cars driven by those without the correct permits were denied permission from entering into Hajj sites, while another 3,296 vehicles were seized at the entrances to Makkah, reports suggest.

### **Multiple movements**

Hajis travel to places like Mina, Arafat and

Muzdalifah to meet certain but essential ritual requirements. The tent city of Mina, some 7 km east of Makkah – on account of having predefined perimeters of about 20 km – can accommodate about one-and-a-half-million pilgrims, far short of the number of Hajis who reach there to camp for at least three days. They leave Mina in the middle of their stay (9th Dhu Al-Hijj) to go to Mountain Arafat, 20 km east of Mina for a day-long stay. By evening, they reach Muzdalifah where they spend the night only to return to Mina next day morning, where they perform the stone-throwing ritual at Jamarat. Finally, they go to Makkah once again to pay obeisance by way of making doing tawaf of the House of God. All this involves a highly complex process and poses a huge challenge to the local authorities as the spaces in above-mentioned places have predetermined perimeters making it difficult to accommodate the swelling mass of pilgrims which in some years swells to 4 million, as was the case in 2012. The illegal and unregistered pilgrims mainly emanating from the within the country further compounds the situation. Handling these pilgrims becomes a big challenge for the local authorities.

In fact, the Saudi 2030 Vision program incorporates many elements that will aid the growth of this flow of visitors to the country, including (but not limited to) new airports as entry points for pilgrims.

### **Overstay**

Another issued facing the Saudi authorities is overstay of the pilgrims. Overseas guests start arriving in Saudi Arabia five weeks before the actual Hajj period. Late arrivals stay back for up to five weeks after the event. More than 7 million pilgrims come to the holy places in the Kingdom throughout the

year to perform Umrah or the lesser pilgrimage. Many of the pilgrims stay for over a month in Saudi Arabia to visit the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, the second most sacred mosque, 400 kms from Makkah.

### **Transportation**

Year 2018 is a turning point for transportation services in the Makkah region and in line with Vision 2030, as it saw the new King Abdulaziz International Airport (KAIA) and Haramain train becoming operational this year.

Considered Gateway to the two holy cities, the SR 27 billion (\$7.2bn) KAIA has been modernized and expanded to handle 50 million passengers a year.

The \$16.5-billion Haramain high-speed railway linking Makkah to Madinah is also scheduled to offer passenger services from September this year. The 450-km-long line completed the first test run in July last year. It will surely go a long way to ease traffic to a considerable extent.

During Hajj in previous years, At least 18 Saudi transportation companies secured 18,000 fully equipped buses to transport 1.4 million pilgrims from outside the Kingdom. Fleets of buses are updated annually to ensure the safety of pilgrims as they move between cities, and this year, 1,696 buses are new or were provided only last year.

To operate and transport pilgrims, 24,000 young Saudi bus drivers and technicians have been hired to operate these buses. Riyadh is against any attempts to politicize Hajj. Kingdom has successfully managed to organise all Hajj seasons perfectly.

### **Health plan**

Such an event of a mammoth gathering,

spanning over several days, prompts another challenge: health risks. Health authorities with help from other departments and ministries, and not to forget hundreds of thousands of volunteers, do a marvelous job to keeping the event largely a healthy affair, remaining alert on contagious diseases and are ready with health-related requirements during the event.

It is no simple task to scan and screen pilgrims entering into the Kingdom with any communicable or contagious diseases. The Kingdom knows it well that it is extremely dangerous to allow pilgrims carrying HIV, MERS, hepatitis, swine flu, bird flu, and tuberculosis to live with other pilgrims.

Secondly, it is no easy job to carry out cleaning and disposal of rubbish regularly check any bacterial disease germinating.

Vision 2030 stipulates expanding health and medical services by preparing hospitals and health centers to provide top-of-the-line services around the clock, in addition to sewage, cleanliness, and lighting services at the holy sites and the Jamarat Bridge.

The plan includes myriad medical facilities including 133 ambulance centers run by 78 physicians and specialists and 2,500 administrative employees and technicians.

The Health Ministry last year opened 25 hospitals and 155 medical centers at the holy sites, supported by 100 small ambulances working as mobile intensive-care units, capable of reaching crowded areas to attend to the injured.

There are 25 teams assigned for advanced response that will support field-ambulance teams, in addition to other ambulance teams. There are four well-equipped air ambulances while 500 male and female volunteers will serve at the Grand Mosque and Arafat sites.

## Going Hi-Tech

Several countries have praised the government for implementing the e-gate and other advanced IT facilities that brought about a dramatic improvement and transparency to the entire process of pilgrimage service.

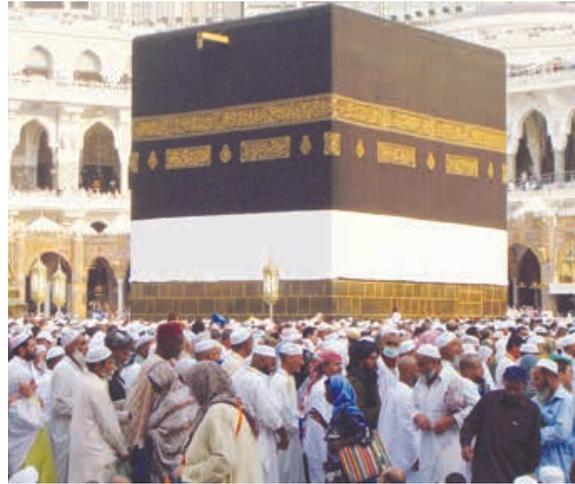
The ministry updated its electronic Hajj portal to speed up electronic issuance of visas and reduce procedural waiting and entrance times to a mere few minutes. It has introduced the electronic bracelet for pilgrims, in order to speed up identification processes and electronically read all related information, especially for those who do not speak Arabic.

All Hajj affairs offices around the world have been instructed to provide information on pilgrims before their arrival at ports, and information about visas, passports, a photo, service providers, and other personal information are stored on the bracelets.

Advanced technology, including tracking and monitoring tools and sensors and biometric technology, has been introduced, which will definitely go a long way in ensuring a smooth and efficient administration of Hajj. Many of the sensors and wireless devices available today, including Radio Frequency Identification are also being used for controlling and monitoring the movement of crowds. Currently, pilgrims carry a non-electronic wristband, which only identifies a pilgrim belonging to group of thousands of pilgrims under a Munazzim.

## Conclusion

Saudi Arabia has assumed a prominent place in the world and has become synonymous with hospitality and a warm welcome to all Muslims. As such, it has carved a special place in the hearts of pilgrims and the faithful everywhere.



The Saudi government not only makes heavy investments in Hajj infrastructure to facilitate a smooth and incident-free pilgrimage for the Muslims every year, but has also earmarked special provisions in its ambitious Vision 2030 plan. It leaves no stone unturned in making the event a pride event for all the Muslims.

This is despite the fact that the physical capacity of the holy sites in Makkah can “only” accommodate not more than 2.5 million pilgrims. Therefore securing and safeguarding both pilgrims and holy sites require major infrastructure and related safety and security provisions from the Saudi government, which creates a highly thriving business environment for your organization.

The government has undoubtedly exerted costly and strenuous efforts to maintain the safety of the pilgrims, insure services for them, provide them with comfort, and achieve their interests.

This is all so they can perform their rituals easily and return to their homelands and families secure, assured, happy and optimistic with the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: “The accepted Hajj has no reward other than Paradise.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)



# Pilgrimage and the Principle of Unity of Human being

## Reading of the Pilgrimage of the Leader Malcolm X

By Dr. Ahmed Bououd  
Translated by: Muhammad Salim

*The American leader, Malcolm X (1925-1965) or the pilgrim Malik Al Shabbaz suffered a lot from the yoke of racism in America. He devoted his whole life in defense of human rights and particularly black man rights who is the negro of an African origin. He lived a tragical life in America only because he is a black man. There is no room here to highlight Malcolm X's life with its all tragic situations, though it is very short one as such will take much time. Therefore, it is enough to say that his suffering makes him hate white man as the latter does. Such suffering continued despite of being Muslim, hate ensued and he keeps hating white man. However, pilgrimage changed up his life allover together with many concepts as if he has just become a Muslim anew. " You may get astonished of what I will say, but what I saw and experienced in this pilgrimage changed up my opinions and made me get rid of some of my previous deductions" He said. So, what has Malcolm seen to have changed up his mind in such a way? How, did pilgrimage make him believe in the principle of unity of human being?*

### •White and Black man

Malcolm X tells the story of negro black man suffering from white man. However, white man is not just a matter of color and nothing more, on the contrary, when we say “white man” in America, it means special situations and treatment of black man and of whatever that is not white. Malcolm has suffered a lot from such treatment, either by being called a negro instead of being called by his name or through frequent embarrassments and continuous contempt due to his color to the extent that one of his teachers advised him not to think of joining solicitation because of his color although he is excelling in studying.

However, on his journey to the Muslim world, Malcolm met white men who are friendlier than any other person. This is proved when he was highly impressed by a person who came to pick him up from the Airport, as he was taken by surprise to the extent that the conduct of the person did not make him feel that he is white man... He didn't feel any difference between him and the Arabian white friend. He had been generously and hospitably received. He was so impressed by the service extended to him by others, so he was made to declare:” As a black man in America, I have never considered in my life that any service provided to me is for the sake of Allah”.

Such a wonderful situation would not have been had it not been for Islam. It is the situation which is expressed by the Qur'anic verse: “O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that Ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise (Each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge

and is well acquainted (with all things). (Sura Al-Hujrat: Verse 13). The late scholar Imam Ibn Ashour commented on this verse saying:” It is meant by this verse that you have deviated from nature and changed up the natural status making the differentiation between nations and tribes due to quarrelling, fighting and aggression. Thus is the state of contemporary humanity.

### •People of different colors gather around the Holy House of Allah (Ka'ba)

Circumambulation around Ka'ba is one of pilgrimage pillars. At such a place, differences and colors are not considered. Muslims gather putting on a uniform that denotes equality among men and women, elderly and young, white and black, poor and rich, servants and lords, all of them gratifying Allah by being engaged in His remembrance in different tongues. With his attention being drawn by this gathering, Malcolm X described the scene by saying:” I walked behind the guider (Mutawif) carrying my shoes, then I saw the Ka'ba, a big house of black stone in the midst of the Grand Mosque (The Haram) as thousands of pilgrims men and women of different ages, shapes and colors gazing at it...”

All of them were impressed by the sight of Ka'ba and were taken up and wholly engaged by the grandiose of circumambulation (Tawaf), they felt the Mightiness of the Creator and the equality among His creatures. Such an equality was expressed by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) during the days of Greater Bairam (Eid Al-Adha) (the days of Tashreeq) following the completion of Hajj to explain to the people the purposes of Hajj and its rituals. He considered equality as a sublime purpose of Hajj. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon



him) said:” O people, verily your Lord is one and your father is one, no favoring of an Arab over a non-Arab, neither of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a black man over a red man, nor of a red man over a black man except by righteousness of Allah, did I inform you?, they said:” the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has informed us, then the Holy Prophet said:” Let that who is present to inform that who is absent, then he said: “Which month is this? They said: “It is a sacred month” He said: “Which a day is this?”, they said: “It is a sacred day.” He said: “Which country is this?”, they said: “It is a sacred country.” He said:” Verily that your bloods, your properties and perhaps he said your respects are sacred to you like the sacredness of your this

day in your this month in your this country, did I inform you?, they said:” The Prophet has informed us” then the Holy Prophet said: “Let that who is present to inform that who is absent.”

The sublime ends of the mission of Islam are to free humankind from slavery, to lift him up from injustice and to equalize him with his man fellow. This is what should be missioned to the worlds. Such an equality involves guaranteeing the following rights:

- Right of life: this is the first right to be guaranteed to humankind so that he/she could perform what has been assigned to him/ her.

- Right of dignity: It is a right for every humankind being righteous or wicked. However, preserving dignity of humankind against beating, killing, mutilation

of bodies, ridiculing and despise of people are priorities.

- Right of freedom: It is personal and self-ethical right for humankind the effects of which being materialized in humankind actions of his feeling of worshipping. The first freedom is one of faith.

- The need of Islam to realize the principle of unity of human being

While he was on the top of Arafat Mountain, Malcolm X is of the opinion that there is no solution for humanity problems and particularly racial discrimination except by Islam. Fraternity cannot be achieved except under the umbrella of Islam. Although logos are raised (the French Revolution, for instance, which adopts the logo of freedom, equality and fraternity) and adopted by schools of thoughts, however, individuality has indulged contemporary humankind into egotism and selfishness. Humankind is no longer concerned except by their selves and this puts an end to humanity. Auguste Comte, the French philosopher and sociologist (died in 1857), drew the attention to this problem when he got disappointed in the French Revolution and humankind

was lost in the swamp of individuality and selfishness. He declared that humankind belongs to humanity and benefits from its fruits to assert that altruism should prevail and dominate the relation of humankind with his fellow humankind.

Of course, if humanity did exist, it would involve equality among people, no way to favor oneself over the other, and the other has got the same value of the ego. Emmanuel Monnet, the French philosopher, (died in 1950) asserts that humanity has only one meaning which is closely related to the concept of equality. This equality is the main starting point to determine the value of humankind and his dignity as he is not an object and he should not be treated like objects.

To explain how Hajj has affected him and changed up his concept of equality, Malcolm X says: "In Arafat, I sat in a big tent among twenty pilgrims who were highly concerned about me as being a Muslim from America. They asked me about what has drawn my attention in Hajj, I started to answer their questions while those who understand English translate to the others. They were surprised by my



answer which they found it was relevant. I told them that fraternity has drawn my attention, it is the unity of human being which belongs to every color and race that proved to me the potency of Allah the One.

Pilgrimage changed up the mind of Malcolm X. Being despised by white man, Malcolm who was brought up to hate white man and to quarrel with him, has become a person who does not hate any one whoever he is. He no longer feels sensitive against color in the Islamic world in which favorability is judged by righteousness and ethics of humanity. As the impact of these two attributes on him increases day after day to change his thinking. By virtue of this pilgrimage he knew well the real Islam and understood the racial problem in Amer-

ica.

"I have never witnessed in my life such fraternity among people of different colors and races. I have been impressed by them during last week due to the friendliness they showed me." Malcolm said. The Holy Qur'an emphasized such conduct as Allah the Almighty says: "And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you, for ye were enemies, and he joined your hearts in love, so that by his Grace, ye became brethren, and ye were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you, that ye may be guided."

The late scholar Ibn Ashour interpreted the



above mentioned verse by saying:” Allah is addressing the believers who were then the immigrants and those who gave aid and support and a few people of some neighbouring tribes as they were all enemies to each other. Those who embraced Islam have become brethren and caretakers of each other. Barriers of pedigree and places have disappeared among them. Although their wise men and leaders tried to reconcile them with all means of reconciliation, but they failed. However, Allah has joined their heart in love by way of Islam and thus they became brethren in Islam.”

Therefore, Malcolm X

believes that America (and the rest of the world) must embrace Islam because it is the only religion that can solve the problem of apartheid in America. During his travel across the Muslim world, Malcolm met, talked and ate with men who were supposed to be white men from America, however, Islam has changed their white attitude and conduct. He saw for the first time in his life people of different colors not minding for their colors living a real , truthful fraternity life.

In conclusion, the story of Malcolm X may seem astonishing but it is real. He was made to change up his mind and get rid of his previous

deductions through the pilgrimage he performed. He said:” In spite of my previous contends, I always tried to face the reality and accept my contends on the light of experiences and practices, because I have bright and flexible mind which are the necessary characteristics of searching for truth.

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# Reimagining the Lifetime Experience



## Mohammad Dawood Sofi

In Islam, Hajj is believed to be one of the supreme acts of worship, doctrinally and spiritually. Performed at a particular place and in a particular period, Hajj, therefore, cannot be substituted by pilgrimages to any place other than Makkah or in a different season other than prescribed. Considered as one of the five pillars of Islam, the duty is obligatory for all adult Muslims who are sane physically and mentally and who are sound economically. In this highest form of worship, the Ḥujjāj are ordered to avoid all the practices leading to distraction and concentrate on such devotional acts necessary to reach the utmost level of purification and thereby attain the blessing and mercy of Allah.

In fact, Hajj is not an ordinary activ-

ity for Muslims because it demands tremendous physical, mental, and economic strength and more importantly spiritual preparation and planning. Hajj is physically a very demanding exercise as Ḥujjāj are required to walk for hours together to cover long distances and, with millions of others, do camping at Arafat and Muzdalifah. One of the central activities of Ḥujjāj at Arafat is their praying and standing in humility before Allah and asking for His forgiveness which in turn symbolizes a kind of rehearsal for the final standing before Allah on Day of Judgment. In this gathering where millions of people have converged, performing even the simplest rites can be extremely difficult, consuming, thus, a lot of time and energy. Despite this, for Ḥujjāj nothing can



be more inspiring and motivating than the experience of Hajj itself and that is why many Muslims go for this onerous journey hoping to die at the most blessed land.

Hajj combines all the unique acts and institutions and culminates all the obligatory obligations of Islam and thereby perfects the Īmān. It is, practically, the commemoration and reenactment of all of the acts of devotion to Allah by Haḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and his family, including the former's readiness to sacrifice his son Prophet Ismail (peace be upon him). The Ka'bah (Bayt Allah), the focal point the Hajj, constructed by Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his son Prophet Ismail (peace be upon him) is the spiritual center of all the Muslims. The Ka'bah actually is 'an authentic fragment of the oldest Past', writes Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish essayist, satirist, and historian. He further says that it is the Qiblah (direction of prayer) of all Muslims: from Delhi all on-

wards to Morocco, the eyes of innumerable prayers are turned towards it, five times, this day and all days: one of the notablest centres in the Habitation of Men.'<sup>1</sup> The repairing of Ḥujjāj to Ka'bah, thus, naturally generates a tremendous yet pristine spiritual taste in them. The renowned Muslim intellectual, writer and broadcaster, Charles Le Gai Eaton, also known as Ḥasan 'Abdulahakim, maintains that when a pilgrim 'stands before the Ka'bah in Makkah (after circling it seven times), the centrality already prefigured by his orientation when he prayed far off is made actual. Clothed only in two pieces of plain, unsewn cloth, he has left behind him the characteristics which identified him in the world, his race, his nationality, his status; he is no longer so-and-so from such-and-such a place, but simply a pilgrim. ... Although Paradise may still seem far distant, he has already come home.'<sup>2</sup>

In the current times, what gets manifest-



ed from the life is the cyclic movement devoid of spiritual goals, starting with day and ending with night. In the mean time, passing these days and nights a person should get engaged in every act that would help him in overcoming his material desires. A life in which the sole aim and philosophy of a person is only to live for material benefits, in fact, lacks a proper direction. Therefore such a life is a representation of a dead spirit in a living body. Moreover, another vital aspect of this material life is the division of human into nations, races, and classes, each one distinct in status and values from the other. On the other hand, this terrible condition gets reversed once a person performs Hajj and thereof experiences its spiritual benefits. A complete shift from material to spiritual, the ubiquitous dress termed as Ihram serves as a constant reminder for the one involved in this devotional act that all Muslims, rather all human beings are equal, despite worldly distinctions based on

class, color, caste, race, and gender. Ihram symbolizes equality and on the other hand normal clothes, coupled with other forms of ranks, symbolize a particular status and distinction, hence causing division and separation between people.

Hajj means a complete transformation and a shift from ordinary to extraordinary, mundane to special, and usual to exciting. Hajj an action that frees a person from all the worldly chains is a spiritual journey from finite to infinite. It is, thus, an act of escaping from material world to spiritual world, culminating in connecting and strengthening the relationship of a person with his Creator, Allah. Moving from the common house to the House of Allah, the fulfillment of Hajj is one of the highest forms of spiritual struggle that hence demands the highest level of patience. It is only then the Hajj will become the lifetime experience.

There are a number of questions linked with the philosophy of Hajj such as what

Hajj actually means and what type of experience a person gets once fulfilling this important duty. To answer these and other questions, it can be put forward in a philosophical language that Hajj in reality represents simultaneously Allah and His creation and unity within His creation exhibited in the form of what is known as Ummah. It is indeed the climax of spiritual experience where Allah is the Center of everything and creations. They have to perform a series of activities that includes, among other practices, Ṭawaf, Sa'ie, Spending the day at Arafah, Spending the night at Muzdalifah, Sacrificing the Hadi and Accommodation in Mina.<sup>7</sup>

Hajj takes place in the blessed month of Dhū Al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Allah highlights the message as:

And proclaim to humankind the Hajj (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform Hajj).<sup>3</sup>

In the land of Makkah or the land of peace, tranquility and peace is prevailing everywhere. The Ḥujjāj who are bestowed by Allah with a most vital opportunity are witnessing the atmosphere of worship. Its essence, therefore, lies in refreshing the Faith and strengthening the connection with Allah or in other words illuminating the soul through detachment from earth and attachment to Allah. The Qur'ān, therefore, explains:

Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for humankind was that at Bakkah (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-‘Ālamīn (the humankind and jinn).<sup>4</sup>

This message clearly explains that the

souls continue to be frivolous and averted unless accepting and fulfilling the divine call of ‘proclaim to humankind the Hajj (pilgrimage)’ and at the same time saying goodbye to all the avaricious desires that distracts from Allah. Answering and fulfilling the commandment of Allah, Hajj also means the preparation for death. Therefore, a person should make sure to clear his personal and other debts. Before leaving for Hajj, there should be a complete personality transformation reflected in the form of behavior change—no grudge and resentment toward relatives, neighbors, or friends. The transformation also means leaving all the selfish desires and clearing all the debts—both personal and material. Prior to this experience, a lifetime one, a person’s soul is dominated by his wild love for family, power, and wealth. Now by returning to Allah, a person is endeavoring to move toward goodness and perfection and loyalty and devotion to Allah, thereby meaning a shift from ‘materialistic desire’ to ‘spiritual desire’. In short, beyond doubt, Hajj is a wonderful scene of unity within diversity in which the Ḥujjāj while facing Ka‘bah openly and loudly reject polytheism and accept monotheism.

1. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 49-50

2. Gai Eaton, *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 242.

3. Al-Qur’ān, Surah Al-Hajj, Āyat no. 27

4. Al-Qur’ān, Surah Al-Imrān, Āyat no. 97

# The last sermon (Khutbat Al-Wada'a) of Prophet Muhammad

The last sermon of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is known as Khutbat Al-Wada'a. It is mentioned in almost all books of Hadith. Following Ahadith in Sahih Al-Bukhari refer to the sermon and quote part of it. (See Al-Bukhari, Hadith 1623, 1626, 6361) Sahih of Imam Muslim also refers to this sermon in Hadith number 98. Imam Al-Tirmidhi has mentioned this sermon in Hadith nos. 1628, 2046, 2085. Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal has given us the longest and perhaps the most complete version of this sermon in his Masnud, Hadith no. 19774.

This Khutbah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was long and it contained much guidance and instructions on many issues. The Prophet-peace be upon him- gave this sermon in front of a large gathering of people during Hajj.

Whosoever heard whatever part of the sermon reported it and later some scholars put it together. It is a great khutbah and we should all pay attention to its message and guidance. Following are the basic points mentioned in this khutbah:

O People

Lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefor listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People

Just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest); therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity.

Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all interest due to Abbas bin 'Abdumuttalib (the Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able

to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People

It is true that you have certain rights in regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives, only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat you women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People

Listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, pray your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All humankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white- except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim, which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefor, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember one day you will appear before Allah and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone. People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Hadith), and if you follow these you will never go astray. All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listened to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people."



# Hajj: The Sublime Experience

**M. Nasir Jawed**

*“And (due) to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves, then indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds.” (Surat Al-Imran, Verse 97)*

Come Dhu Al-Hijj, the last month of the Islamic calendar every year and Saudi Arabia becomes the center of a global attraction, for it gears to handle the world’s largest religious gathering – arguably the biggest chal-

lenge in terms of managing a moving mass of crowd. (Hajj dates change every year, as the Islamic calendar is based on the moon’s cycle.)

The five-day event engages the pilgrims, or hajjis, traveling back and forth connecting Makkah, Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah, depending on which form of Hajj one is performing.

The hajjis come from all corners of the world – by air, land and sea; rising from an ocean of humanity to set up a unique phe-

nomenon that is simply overwhelming in all its symbols and appearances; physical and spiritual; devotion and declarations, of their faith in one God, through chants and prayers. “*And proclaim among men the pilgrimage: they shall come to you on foot and upon every lean beast; they shall come from every deep ravine; they shall come to witness things of benefit to them and mention the Name of Allah.*” ( Surat Al-Hajj, Verse 27)

### **What’s Hajj?**

If faith has the power to move the mountains, Hajj is the literal reflection of that very faith – moving a millions-strong mass of people from all across the world to converge in the holy city of Makkah and the surrounding areas.

All adherents of the faith are expected to perform the Hajj once in their lives, provided they are physically and financially capable.

For the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims, roughly 24 percent of the population, Hajj is one of their cherished goals, a life-time journey, a spiritual one where the created meets his Creator.

Keeping this faith with God, nearly 2 million Muslims from outside, and some 1 million from within, gather in Makkah to perform Hajj – the fifth and the final pillar of Islam after shahadah (profession of faith), salat (prayer), zakat (giving alms), and sawm (fasting and abstinence during the month of Ramadan).

By doing so, they follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who completed his first and only Hajj in CE632.

The Hajj consists of a set of intricate and physically demanding rites that involve

mainly the movements of Muslims – both men and women; old and youth; black and white – from place to place. It is the emotive goal and the climatic experience of his temporal existence. It is a form of spiritual fulfillment which he shares and simultaneously celebrates with the entire world of Islam.

The figure of participation is “four times the number of people who traveled to Rio for the 2016 Olympics, more than double the entire population of Fiji, and 20 times the number of people who performed Hajj in 1924.”

### **Background**

The marvel of Hajj has its history that underscores an unflinching faith in Allah, unparalleled sacrifices and the practical demonstrations of one’s unquestioned obedience to the Almighty.

The story of Hajj began with the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), not unfamiliar with Jews or Christians; who finds mention in all the major revealed books of Allah, including the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an.

He rebuilt the Ka’ba, the House of God; and together with his wife Hajar and son Isma’il (peace be upon him), he became central to some of the rites that are performed during Hajj, noticeably the running between the two hillocks Safa and Marwah the male pilgrims undertake, circling around the Ka’ba, etc.

If the Hajj began with Ibrahim a few thousand years ago, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) affirmed it and purified it in the 7th century, purging it of all the evil and idolatrous rituals that had crept into holy ritual over the years.

Why and how it so happened that Jews and Christians didn’t follow the tradition



of Ibrahim – the common patriarch of the three monotheistic faiths – is another story, but all the revealed books including Torah and Bible stressed the religious importance of “an annual pilgrimage (Hajj in Arabic, Hag in Hebrew) to a sacred location.” In Biblical times the Hebrew word Hag was pronounced Hajj.

The Muslims however followed the tradition in letter and spirit. For them, it symbolized a lifetime journey in the quest for God. But it was more than that. Consider the following:

### **1. Faith and Piety**

Hajj is a week-long blissful exercise to deepen one’s faith and increase piety. Pilgrims revisit the places and sites mentioned in the Qur’an and are virtually transported to the times of their beloved Prophet. Hajj therefore makes them refresh the spirit of

sacrifices that were made by Prophet Abraham, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Besides, the pilgrims renew their pledge of obedience to Allah Almighty by means of acts during Hajj – the physical, intellectual and the spiritual.

### **2. Unity**

Hajj instills a sense of unity and solidarity in the human beings. In the times of current global chaos affected by hatred, racism, regionalism and sectarianism, Muslims annually gather in the House of God and the adjacent sites as one body of humanity; with no feelings of colors, sects and regions – the like of which is never seen anywhere in the world. They all become equal before God like the teeth of a comb.

“And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear me.” (Surat Al-Muminun, Verse 52)



It becomes a grand congress of human beings where they unite to know each other, to strengthen the bond of fraternity and to reaffirm their united message of brotherhood and world peace.

Al-Tabrani narrated in Al-Kabeer that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Allah boasts about the people of Arafat to the Angels and says: ‘Look at My slaves, they have come to Me, shaggy and dusty, they have come from every deep valley. So, bear witness that I have answered their supplication, accepted their intercession and granted mercy to the negligent among them for the sake of the benevolent ones’.”

### 3. A Virtual Hereafter

When a sea of humanity in white unstitched clothes – forsaking worldly desires, coming from far-flung places – streams into the plains of Arafat, it evokes the feeling

of the life after death – either in the grave when a man lies in plain white unstitched clothes with no worldly facilities to support him; or, on the Day of Judgment when they would appear before their Almighty, barefooted and naked, helpless, seeking mercy for their sins and wrong-doings. Hajj therefore re-enacts the unseen images only to remind them of what is awaiting them once they depart from this world. A heavenly performance indeed, never seen on earth elsewhere on this scale!

### Understanding the Philosophy

Allah Almighty demands loyalty from His whole creation – plants, animals, the cosmos, and of course the humankind. Loyalty comes by way of a strict discipline, devotion and dedication. This can be achieved if one is immersed in piety, prayers and praising Allah,

Human is Allah's only creation that has been endowed with the faculty of intellect, reasoning and reflection. This is both a boon and a bane for the human beings, for they either stick to the path of One God, or simply go astray; become a wali, or turn a rebel; attain the high pedestal of spiritual attainment, or just remain an ordinary Muslim.

Allah prescribes a minimum requirement of devotion by sticking to or following a set of rituals.

As mentioned above, these rites are known as the five pillars of Islam, and in which the pilgrimage holds the prime position as it assimilates attributes of all the four tenets:

1. When a Haji chants talbiya, it takes the highest form of Shahada i.e. not only professing of one's faith in Allah, but declares the Oneness of God worthy of worship. Consider the wordings in Talbiya:

"Labbayk, Allahumma labbayk, labbayk la sharika laka labbayk, Inna Alhamda, wa anni'mata, laka wa almulk, la sharika lak."

("I am at Your service, O Allah, I am at Your service. You have no partner. I am at Your service. Praise and blessing belong to You, and the Kingdom. You have no partner.")

2. Prayers during Hajj are not just limited to five times a day, but become an inseparable part of one's being all through the day and night;

3. In Ramadan, one forsakes eating and drinking from dawn to dusk. In Hajj, a pilgrim renounces the temporal life in its entirety — wearing two pieces of plain, white unstitched clothes, forsaking their civic dresses. (Women have the liberty to wear of their choices.) This is besides a number of prohibitions while one is in Ihram.

4. Islam's fourth tenet, Zakat, encourages the faithful to donate a miniscule part of their wealth (just 2.5 percent of their accumulated wealth). By embarking on the journey, the pilgrims spend a considerable amount of their wealth or their live savings for the sake of Allah. Beside, a pilgrim sacrifices an animal (goat, sheep, cow etc.) reflecting on the supreme sacrifice by Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) thousands years ago.

Thus, it is the emotive goal and the climactic experience of his temporal existence. It is a form of spiritual fulfillment.

### **Hajj Rites**

They are few in number but are rich in meaning. Some of the important rituals are:

#### **Wearing Ihram**

Donning Ihram is an essential rite, a physical manifestation of the pilgrim's entering into a state of consecration. This act is accompanied by the uttering of the Talbiyah, which is frequently repeated during the Hajj. Both men and women don ihram clothing: Men wear two-piece of white sheet of unstitched clothes and women can wear whatever they want.

#### **Circumambulation of Ka'ba**

Pilgrims circle seven times around the cube-shaped, 43-foot-high black granite Ka'ba in the vast courtyard of the Sacred Mosque both at the beginning and end of their pilgrimages. Neither the Ka'ba nor the Black Stone, which Muslims try to kiss, are however objects of worship.

#### **Zamzam**

Before heading toward the two hillocks, they drink holy water from the Zamzam

well.

### **Sa'ie**

After Tawaf (circumambulation), the pilgrims perform Sa'ie that is pacing up and down between the two hillocks of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa seven times. The act is a reenactment of Hajar's frantic search for water for her infant Isma'il when they were lost in the desert. It commemorates the anguished love of motherhood and the decisive role of womankind in history.

### **Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifa**

Pilgrims reach Mina to stay on the 8th Day of Dhu Al-Hijj. The next day is the Arafat Day, when Hajj is considered as accomplished. Pilgrims spend the day in the plain of Mount Arafat, contemplating, supplicating and listening to the grand mufti's Hajj sermon. In the plain of Muzdalifah, pilgrims spend a night in prayer and gather pebbles to later throw at three 85-foot walls, a symbolic stoning of the Satan.

### **Lapidation**

Throwing stones at the three pillars in Mina, known as Jamarat, that are symbolic of Satan, the pilgrim rejects evil and disobedience to God.

### **Animal Sacrifice**

On the 10th day of Dhu Al-Hijj, or the third day of Hajj, pilgrims sacrifice an animal, and shave their heads (men) or cut their hair. This day, Muslims all over the world join the Hajis by celebrating the Festival of Sacrifice – Eid Al-Adha – in their respective home countries.

The ritual is again a recollection of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice even his beloved son to fulfill God's command. It also

symbolizes the Muslim's preparedness to part with what is dearest to him in order to attain God's pleasure. The act of sacrifice is an encapsulation of the spirit of Islam: submission to the will of God—which is the literal meaning of the word Islam.

### **Conclusion**

So, faith had its victorious moments, devils being discarded; the faithful had his date with Divinity; and his cherished dream of a lifetime journey fulfilled. A re-born Muslim – a good human being – cleansed of all his sins, returns home happy and content. But the trial is yet not over. He has to ensure by his acts of behavior that he is a changed person.

If he is filled with an unrivalled sense of solidarity; if he feels part of the whole system of a disciplined cosmos; then he is surely endowed with ability to change much of the face of the world – for a better one, for mutual coexistence, and for a moderate approach when it comes to deal with his non-Muslim world.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "*For Hajj are the months well known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein, Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj. And whatever good ye do, (be sure) Allah knoweth 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.*" (Surat Al-Baqarah, Verse 197

"Take a provision" indicates that the effects of this experience should extend to the conduct of the Muslim in his normal life afterwards, and that he should live and conduct himself by the values that manifest piety, "the best provision."

# A remarkable spread of Islam in Papua New Guinea

By **Dr. Osman Abu Zaid**

Translated by: Dr. Muhammad Salim

In the recent years, observers noticed a considerable growth in the number of Islam embracers in Papua New Guinea as the increase of Muslims reached (1000%) within fifteen years. There were only (476) Muslims at the beginning of the third millennium where they reached five thousand people by 2015.

That was elaborated in a modern study by Scott Flower, an Australian researcher, and published in (Nova Religio) Journal in its fourth issue, volume 18 and issued by California University. The researcher cleared up the reason behind this noticeable spreading of Islam. Based on field researching, he asserted that the spread of Islam and the increase of Muslims was not due to the flow of Muslim manpower from abroad as it is the case in other countries such as South Korea and Australia. However, it is a result of two factors which are globalization and preachers arrival following easy traveling from place to place and accessibility of ideas and knowledge through the internet.

The study points to globalization that makes knowledge accessible and that the events of 9/11 have enlightened people about Islam and revealed to many that there is a religion called Islam which they have never heard of it before. When tested such a religion people discovered its simplicity: ((a Muslim does not need a mediator to keep him close to his Lord and the Lord the Almighty is not only in mosque, rather He is with you

wherever you are; therefore, the one who cannot move to a mosque may perform his prayers under a tree or at home or anywhere. Moreover, there is Muslim great passion that brings hearts of people together)).

The researcher mentions that (75%) of the study population embraced Islam due to the efforts exerted by preachers coming from Sydney, Melbourne, India, and Pakistan.

One important indicator in the study is that all Muslims there are of Sunnah and gathering sect. Another indicator is that all the study population said that Islam is the closest religion to their customs and traditions which emphasizes the fact their ancestors were originally Muslims and that they gave up their religion following the arrival of colonizers and Christianity.

The cultural environment in which these people were brought up is harmonious with Islam. They found in this religion values which are similar to their traditions and customs. Such values are represented in performing rites, family affairs and social relations even the rites of funeral and burial. Some embracers of Islam said that the impact of religious Islamic values is positively reflected in their lives. This is practically demonstrated in credibility and equality whereas the colonizers show superiority and racial discrimination among colonizers and the native people.

A 24-year-old young woman who recently converted to Islam said that she found in

Islam comprehensive guidance for the whole of her life starting from worshipping only one God up to the cleansing of the body. Such guidance is not limited to the personal level, however, it extends to include life organizing in accordance with the society needs.

The Prime Minister of Guinea, Michael Samar commended Islam in 2007 when he addressed the parliament saying that the society disintegrates due to sexual degradation, robbery, and killing. He is of the opinion that the best solution for putting an end to such erroneous conducts is to apply the rules of Islamic laws (Shari'a) such as pebbling stones as punishment in case of committing adultery or cutting the hand of the thief or life sentence against whoever proved to be a killer.

The researcher, Mr. Flower, highlighted the journalistic comments on the Prime Minister's speech as all journals opted for commending the rules of Islamic law. Of course, that was before emerging a hostile status by the official authorities recently due to the increase of Islam embracers along with the global wave of Islamophobia in the last years.

It was reported in the press and the comments of those questioned by the study that the explicit call for applying the rules of Islamic law was a reaction to the weak applied laws on the society. Some commentators went for comparing such laws with the laws of Saudi Arabia where the rules of Islamic Shari'a are applied where security and tranquility prevail. One commentator said that: ((We are in a dire need for Saudi experts to present to us their experiences in promoting security and stability)).

Abu Bakr (24 years old), one of the new converts to Islam says: ((the difference between the law in our country and the



Islamic law is that our law is written by the Australians and it favors the interests of the Australian rulers, however, the Islamic law (Shari'a) is from Allah the Almighty who created us and He knows our interest. When we apply the Islamic law (Shari'a), we realize our interest and not the interest of colonizer. Parents always complain of their disobedient sons whereas the relation between Muslim parents and their sons is an exception, where people here notice a relation of respect between Muslim parents and their sons. Society here considers woman as another face of corruption. The woman is looked down as an inferior creature being within the possession of man just like land and animal. Rather, there is a study which shows that woman is classified in the third rank after land and pig in terms of significance.

The future growth of conversion to Islam in this country is clearly related to the tendency of its citizens towards modern values and looking forward to the future. Such are relevant social and cultural approaches and not just a feeling of retreat to the past in its passive denotation. However, it is an inclination of going back to the roots and committing to originality. This is what gives this conversion to Islam its dimensions that deserve to be studied and contemplated.



**CYBER  
CRIME:**

# Cybercrimes

## How to control ?

Dr. AbdelGadirWarsama Ghalib

*Information Technology IT, spreads every day and every single body in the world are benefiting from this revolution spreading through many unlimited ways and means. IT revolution, helps in technology transfer, cultural aspects, social attitudes and economical matters. The direct positive effects of this revolution is clear in every field, you name it., and more to come in this era of IT revolution.*

However, nowadays, we can also notice some bad effects stemming from the IT revolution. New crimes, among other things, came up as a consequential result of the IT era. Unfortunately new type of crimes, new type of criminals came-up due to IT misuse coupled with criminal intention from greedy “white-collar” sophisticated criminals.

In an attempt to define cybercrimes we could say, offences committed against individuals or groups with a criminal motive to intentionally harm the victim or cause physical or mental damage, or financial loss. By adversely using new modern telecommunication networks such as internet, chat rooms, emails mobile phones.. etc.

Losses of cybercrimes are unlimited, uncountable and statistics reveal that it could be over multi billion dollars and the march is going fast around the clock in all corners of the globe. No doubt, this is very grave and harmful to the economic and social development of all indiscriminately. Cybercrimes may threaten persons or nations security and the financial assets by hacking, identity theft, copyright infringement, child pornography, privacy trespassing, fraud, phishing..

In criminology lessons we have learned that, “the change in the offence requires a change in the defense”. Cybercrimes are new different offences as the “corps delicti” has changed, as such, there is a real genuine need to change the defense. The criminal “Actus Reus” of e-criminals are maliciously achieved through different IT software programs known as, inter alia, viruses, malwares, Trojans, spywares, hackers, DDoS attacks, spams, SQL injections ... They are uncountable and what is unknown in the “Dark Internet” is more and more. Every

day or night we are victims of new grave dangerous IT e-crimes. The fierce epidemic is already there attaching every corner..

There is urgent need to work hard and face to face cybercrimes as the damages are increasing and very frustrating to all. In this respect, there are drastic steps to be taken by all. In addition to the personal level, there are further steps to be undertaken by Governments and the whole community is required to create water-tight defensive strategy, otherwise the future is at great unwarranted risk.

There is a need for a dedicated will with clear vision and transparent mission to face cybercrimes in order to save our community. All must stand firmly, as one mind and one hand to curb this new e-threat before we loose what we can't bring back from the cyber..

Based on the accumulated experience during past years and as recommended by many studies, there are steps to be taken urgently so as to control the new black cybercrimes. Some steps are small and minor whereas others are big and sensitive. To achieve an effective full control on cybercrimes all steps, being small or big, are to be undertaken, well presented and properly implemented. As a rule, we need to know that no place is attack proof. E-criminals could reach any place any where any time, therefore strong preventive measures are needed such as firewalls, encryption, re-encryption, frequent security check-ups and the like.

In addition, the most vital step needed to control this new crime, is the enactment of efficient and sufficient laws. New, modern and well-drafted legislations are imminently required. A clear-cut definition of e-crimes is a must, otherwise culprits will go away



with their fruitful crimes in front of the eyes of justice... A golden basic rule of law provides that “no penalty without a crime and no crime without a law”, based on this an e-criminal who had intentionally committed an e-crime will not be convicted unless the committed crime(s) is well defined in a very clear state-of-the-art accurate definition.. In criminal evidence any degree of suspicion is totally for the benefit of the victim. The victim is innocent unless proved otherwise beyond any reasonable doubt.. Herein a wise judge stated that “having ninety nine (...) criminals free at large is far better than having one innocent person behind the bars”.. what a wise wisdom and a wise man.

Ironically, I quote here a famous French Court rule decreeing that the person who took the extra money given to him by ATM is criminally not responsible as his act was not covered by the e-banking laws. So, the lucky person got the best of all worlds and legitimately took the extra money given to him by the hospitable ATM as his act to

withdraw some money from his account is not defined as a crime. Irrespective of our views regarding this Court decree, the crucial point here is the lack of a clear-cut definition for e-crimes.. We need to benefit from this French Judicial precedent and update cybercrimes laws accordingly to cover such loopholes.

A positive step is also required to boost international cooperation in facing e-crimes as such crimes are homeless and they are actively living in the cyber that covers the globe irrespective of any borders.. At the international level, there are treaties and international conventions to control/ combat cybercrimes. There is a need to join forces and endorse/ratify such treaties and conventions, so as to add power to the unified global stand against e-crimesthat penetrate everywhere without being noticed and without leaving any material tracks of blood or a corpse of a dead-body. Ultimately, in proving e-crimes, it is required to have capable forensic investigation by forensic IT

experts.

Every person and every institution is obliged to put in place all regulations and procedures that are needed to control e-crimes. No doubt, this is a personal responsibility as well as a national one. Each part must perform its duty and all parties are to cooperate together as they complement each other in this dangerous unique task.

It has been undoubtedly proved that more than 80% of e-crimes came through or are committed by e-mails. From this we know that the e-mail is the first door to be penetrated or invaded by e-criminals. My email or your email could be the door through which the system could be invaded and eroded. Everyone must make sure that his email is strong to face enemies at any time. A strong “password” is a must for each email otherwise it could be defeated and conquered. This is a personal responsibility and every one must be accountable for any leakage or weakness.. By controlling emails we can, almost, control and prevent a very high percent of cybercrimes.. Legally, employees are not allowed to disclose their password to any person nor colleagues. In a bitter case, one bank lost millions because



staff gave passwords to dishonest colleagues who embezzled millions before being discovered.. Beware, a small leakage could flood and destroy the whole process..

In conclusion, we say, it is not possible to stop or eradicate crimes as this is in the nature of humans since inception. However, we can work hard to mitigate their risk by following above points or otherwise. IT revolution is needed for an advanced e-future and we need to accommodate/live with its pros and cons.. However, a strong stand against cybercrimes is a big must. Let’s work tirelessly for this and we can control the crime and defeat the masterminds.





## The nobility of Leader Salahuddin Founded First Mosque in France

**By Al-Zubair Mehdad**

Muslims military and political leaders have always been described as God-fearing and strict followers of the Prophet's tradition who manifest the high morals and ethics of Islam and treat others with justice and wisdom.

This is a story of a Muslim leader who set an example of nobility and magnanimity and was, as many have described him, a powerful and principled man. One year, a Muslim caravan was raided and attacked by Raynald's soldiers. Angry, Saladin

immediately ended the truce with Raynald and laid siege to the Karak Castle twice in 1183 and 1184.

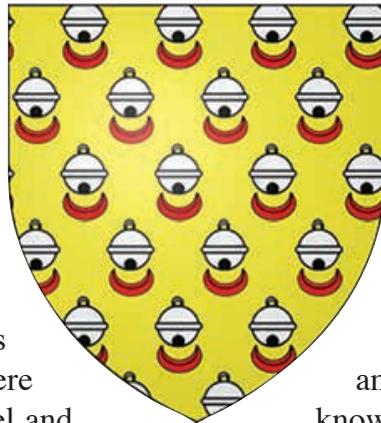
In 1188, Saladin armies defeated the Crusader forces in the Battle of Hattin and Saladin captured all cities and laid siege to Jerusalem, forcing the Crusader forces to surrender in a week following the siege. Many were taken prisoners in the battle; however, Saladin treated them well and many of his foes testified to his magnanimous positions.

As a leader, Saladin preferred peace to war and always negotiated with his enemies before fighting any battle. He would free prisoners as a gesture of good intention but would ask them to promise not fight Muslims again. These noble acts were not reciprocated by the cruel and oppressive leaders of the Crusades who had their eyes set on thing: expansion and hegemony. They had attacked Muslims several times, waging wars.

Saladin had always welcomed any peace or negotiation initiatives and only resorted to the option of war when such initiatives fell through. Under his leadership, Muslim armies fought ferocious battles and emerged victorious, forcing their enemies to accept negotiations and sign peace agreements. The Muslims and the Crusaders reached truce and agreed on the areas of influence; everyone was free to practice their religious rituals and visit the holy sites freely and safely. As a result, the political, cultural and intellectual ties between the Muslims and the Crusaders in the Levantine improved and became closer.

Indeed, Saladin was an influential historical leader who treated everyone with kindness, even Christians themselves, some of who reverted to Islam and joined the Muslim armies.

One story passed down the ages in France reveals his tolerant position regarding Pierre D'Anglure (1172--1205, a French nobleman from Saint-Cheron, who carried the title Ogier I of Anglure and lived a luxurious and adventure-



filled life. D'Anglure was the actual founder of the Saladin branch of the family, naming it so in recognition of his enemy's loyalty. He even built the first mosque in France, a country which had had none previously.

Born and raised into an ancient family of Champagne, known for its noble figures and brave

knights, Ogier I joined the military for training. When Pope Gregory VIII of the Catholic Church called for initiating a new Crusade, Ogier I joined the Crusader army. Pope Gregory VIII mobilized the army and all financial resources for the third Crusade. Thieves, mercenaries and men who wanted to repent for their crimes were hired to fight alongside traders, noble men and knights.

It was not the first battle for Pierre D'Anglure; he had gained previous experience from taking part in several other wars. While fighting alongside the army in Jerusalem, he was injured and taken prisoner by Saladin soldiers.

Saladin treated the prisoner with kindness, respect and human dignity and ordered his soldiers to treat him. When Pierre recovered, he met Saladin and offered him ransom to set him free. Because he could not pay the ransom, he suggested that Saladin free him and let him go back to France and bring back the money. He promised Saladin that he would return. Pierre's trust in Saladin and his soldiers increased after he saw how kindly the leader and his followers treated him and how magnanimously they acted. They simply manifested war ethics in Islam.



In spite of wars and mutual hatred, the Christian military leaders and knights admired Saladin's political acumen and human ethics. Saladin had big trust in the Christian noble men and courageous knights and knew that they were forced to take part in battles they had nothing to do with. They were mobilized by some fanatic religious leaders.

Saladin did set Pierre free. Pierre went back to France, sold some of his properties, and travelled back to Jerusalem. On his way, he had to take a road cutting through south Europe (currently Turkey) then continued on to Palestine and Egypt. During this arduous desert journey, he was attacked several times and even lost one of his eyes but did not let the bandits steal the ransom. As promised, he brought the ransom to Saladin who decided not to take it as his way to recognize Pierre's courage and honesty.

Saladin gave the ransom back to Pierre and asked him not to fight Muslims or take

part in wars against them. He also asked him to explain to people back home the truth of Islam and dispel the misconceptions promoted by anti-Islam groups.

The fifth volume of "Guide pittoresque du voyageur en France", a famous travel guide about France published in 1838, says Pierre returned home and decided to give his family the name of the magnanimous leader Saladin. This name was handed on ever since to his family "Saladin D'Anglure". He even replaced all Christian symbols with lanterns and the Islamic crescent.

Pierre built a square-shaped mosque with a gold-studded crescent on top of the minaret in Buzancy City, Ardennes, near French borders with Luxembourg, Belgium. The street where the mosque used to stand was named "Rue Mohamed" while the mosque was demolished in 1830. Two boys' and girls' schools were built in the location of the mosque, which had for tens of years represented Muslims' tolerance and peace and respect for human rights and dignity.

The era of medieval wars and conflicts saw the emergence of valiant leaders who promoted understanding between Muslims and other nations and focused on the common values shared by all human beings. They promoted peace and coexistence. Today, members of society and civil institutions should revive these values in order to promote peace, security and stability and fight extremism and conflicts that continue to claim the lives of innocent victims.

# How to build bridges between religions and encourage dialogue?

**Muhammad Zakir Hossain**

*With its glamorous history, mix of European and Arab influences and its liberal, cosmopolitan culture, Beirut was once known as “the Paris of the Mideast.” But those days were long past. There was no mistaking the street where I stood: we were in the center of a war zone.* Mark Siljander

Mark Siljander represented Michigan for 15 years, which includes three terms as a Member of the United States Congress, where he served on the International Relations Middle East Subcommittee and was Ranking Member of the Africa Subcommittee. He was the primary sponsor of the African Famine Relief Act and was later appointed by President Reagan as a US Ambassador (Alt. Delegate) to the United Nations in New York, where he served as a member of the Middle East and Africa Strategy Group.

On 25 June 2018, the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue organized a World Conference on the theme of “Religions, Creeds and Value Systems: Joining Forces to Enhance Equal Citizenship Rights” at the United Nations Office at Geneva in collaboration with the International Catholic Migration Commission, the World Council of Churches, the Arab Thought Forum, the World Council of Religious Leaders, Bridges to Common Ground and the European Centre for Peace and Development.

The World Conference - held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom



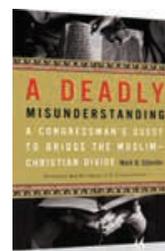
of Jordan - was addressed by more than 35 world-renowned religious, political and lay leaders from the major regions of the world.

However, the mainstream discourse focused on the latter instead of emphasizing convergences, because these differences led to disputable dialogue.

In this regard, he mentioned that in order to build bridges between religions and encourage dialogue. Ambassador Siljander said:

“We could do this through the model of peacemaking and crisis management, something that has been evolving for the past eighteen years. However, the main problem that lies is within the human heart: enmity, hatred, revenge».

The speaker concluded his statement by noting that we should focus on using our brain power and intellect to reach out to others, as “there is power in loving your enemy».





## Zubaida Trail, a historic landmark and ancient international road to Makkah

### Arab News

Saudi Arabia is rich with a large number of historic trails the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula traveled along before and after Islam.

However, Zubaida Trail remains one of its most famous trails because of its monuments that are still found today. This has earned its registration in the UNESCO World Heritage List, among 10 sites the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) asked to register, based on the Royal approval on Oct. 10, 2014.

Zubaida Trail, or Al-Kufi pilgrimage route, runs from Kufa in Iraq to Makkah, passing through the north of the Kingdom and its center.

It stretches more than 1,400 km in the Kingdom and passes through the following five areas: Northern Borders Region, Ha'il, Al-Qassim, Madinah and Makkah.

The trail was listed among the projects of the Two Holy Mosques program to care for

the Kingdom's cultural heritage, executed by the SCTH among its initiatives in the National Transformation Program.

Zubaida Trail was named after Zubaydah bin Jafar, wife of the Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid for her charitable work, in addition to the number of stations she ordered to be established along the trail.

Zubaida Trail was a trade route in the pre-Islamic era, but its importance increased with the dawn of Islam and it flourished during the time of the early caliphate. According to the report by the SCTH, the trail reached its peak during the Abbasid Caliphate between the years 750 and 1258, when the road and pavements were installed.

Stations were also installed, wells, pools and dams were established and houses were built. Twenty-seven major stations have been identified, most importantly Al-Sheihyat, Al-Jumaima, Faid, Al-Rabadha, That-Erq and Khuraba.

The trail has an outstanding universal

value; it embodies the cultural importance of exchanges and multidimensional dialogues between countries. It gathered many Muslim pilgrims from different races and regions, and religious, cultural and scientific exchanges started between people from around the world.

The trail also highlights interactions in terms of locations and times from the pre-Islamic era until the end of the Abbasid Caliphate era in the 13th century.

Many historians, geographers and travelers have written about Zubaida Trail. Some of the most notable ones are: Ibn Khordadbeh, ibn Rustah, Al-Yaqoobi, Al-Maqdisi, Al-Hamdani, Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta. The trail also attracted a number of Western travelers who walked along it and wrote about it during the 19th and 20th century.

According to historical sources, this trail aimed to “serve pilgrims from Baghdad” which was the capital of Abbasid Caliphate to Makkah, enrich cultures and commercial exchange at the time with a length spanning 1,400 km. Markers were placed along the road to guide pilgrims. Pools were also installed to smartly gather water in carefully chosen locations along the distances to provide pilgrims with water.

The trail runs through a number of mountains, highlands and depressions and was mentioned in the books of geographers, ancient travelers from Muslims and other religions. It was mentioned by Finnish Georg Wallin and Anne Blunt in Blunt’s book “A Pilgrimage to Nejd” and while some monuments of this trail have disappeared, some ruins are still found today.

Archaeologist and Professor Saad Al-Rashid said the Zubaida Trail was planned in a practical way and was elaborately engineered. Its directions were specified sta-

tions and houses were installed along it and the road was paved with stones in sandy and muddy areas, cleared of boulders and obstacles in inaccessible areas and mountains. The road was also engineered with a delicate system to distribute waterworks from dams, wells, pools, springs and canals, and flags, lighthouses, “stones distance markers,” torches and fireplaces were placed in a careful manner to guide travelers day and night.

Geographers and Muslim pilgrims observed the number of stations and houses on the trail between Kufa and Makkah and counted 27 main stations and 27 houses or “secondary stations” which are considered rest stops built at a specific distance between two main stations, not taking into consideration the other houses and facilities that were installed along the route.

Geographers also tracked the stations and houses on roads that fork from the main road of the trail. One of the Basra road branches meets with the Kufa road, where it bifurcates to Makkah south and Madinah west. The pilgrimage route also meets the Zubaida Trail near Makkah.

Historian Ibn Kathir said: “The Hejaz road stretched from the safest road in Iraq,” but the road, along with other roads from the main and secondary ones, was subjected to tribal attacks in consecutive periods, owing to security problems. The pilgrims and travelers were unable to cross the main road or any of its branches without military care and protection from the caliphate’s capital.

The road was disrupted to a great extent after the Siege of Baghdad at the hands of Mongol forces in 1258 and the road was intermittently used after that. Most stations along the trail gradually disappeared and the stations and houses were diminished to ruins. Some wells and pools remained usable



but the majority were covered with sand over time.

Studies and archaeological surveys have revealed patterns of castles, fortifications, houses, accommodations and mosques in a number of archaeological sites which were main stations on the route.

These locations consisted of cities and villages serving the inhabitants of those areas, the convoys of pilgrims, merchants and travelers and provided them with food, water, clothes and livestock feed. Many of them were markets thriving with agricultural and animal products and various industries.

Some of the most famous archaeological sites which represented cities and big main stations were Zabala, Al-Thaalabiya, Fayd, Al-Sumaira, Al-Naqra, Al-Rabatha and Maa'den bin Slim.

Archaeological research in historic Fayd have revealed an advanced network of wells, springs, canals and pools, and their diverse

architectural aspects focused mainly on building fortified castles, houses, facilities, mosques and roads to a big city. Diverse patterns of archaeological findings have been also revealed pottery, ceramic and glass utensils, metal, and stone tools and coins.

These findings are consistent with the information of the historical and geographical sources and the writings of Muslim pilgrims about this city which was one of the most ancient Islamic cities in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, a main station in the middle of Zubaida Trail between Kufa and Makkah.

In historical Al-Rabadha site, comprehensive archaeological excavations have taken place for more than 20 years. Excavations in the location revealed a mosque, a residential area, houses and castles' units, markets, manufacturing sites, warehouses, pools and tanks of groundwater.

The archaeological findings in Al-Rabadha are an important source for researchers



since it is one of the early Islamic cities. Al-Rabadha was a city and a main station in the location that determined one-third of the road from Kufa. Some of these findings include pottery, ceramic, glass and metal utensils, jewelry and decorative items, coins and carvings. Life in Al-Rabadha lasted from the beginning of Islam until 917 when it was ruined and left by its inhabitants.

Archaeological studies have shown that the architectural structures on the pilgrimage route from Kufa to Makkah represent an architectural pattern that is exceptional to early Islamic architecture in the Arabian Peninsula that is represented in the architectural plans and different functions.

The buildings also stand out because of the thickness of the walls and protective towers. The houses and accommodations' building blocks in Al-Rabadha were equipped with tanks to preserve drinking water under the rooms, squares and passageways' floors,

and a number of stations included the markets and public bathrooms, among other facilities.

About charting the Zubaida Trail and its ramifications, engineers specified its directions in most parts. It crosses flat rangelands, rugged terrain and desolate deserts until it reaches the Hijaz Mountains' difficult terrain penetrated by narrow and deep valleys. The road was facilitated by passageways between mountain paths, and the trail was protected with high walls on both sides. Wide terraces were placed in rugged mountainous regions and experienced engineers excelled at charting the way while avoiding routes with torrential rain.

Dr. Hussain Abu Al-Hassan of SCTH clarified that the commission conducted a full survey of archaeological Zubaida Trail, restored some of the monuments and rehabilitated them as part of the project "Old Trade and Hajj Routes in the Kingdom."

# Hajj Hackathon enters Guinness World Records



**Jeddah (OIC-UNA)** – Saudi Arabia entered the Guinness World Records — breaking the record with the largest number of participants in the world by recording 2,950 participants — at the Hajj Hackathon, that was held by the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones, Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

On behalf of organizers and participants in the Hackathon, Advisor at the Royal Court and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones Saud bin Abdullah Al-Qahtani thanked Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, deputy premier and minister of defense, for the great support for Saudi youth in all fields, which was the main reason for this achievement.

He said, “The Kingdom’s entry into the World Records through the Hajj Hackathon confirms the aspirations of the Saudi youth for their country to be the gateway to technology in the region, pointing out that this is in line with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030, as an ambitious vision that takes the Kingdom to a quantum leap in all aspects of life.” The entry of Hajj Hackathon in the Guinness World Records was announced at 7:00 a.m. on Wednesday, whereas Al-Qahtani received the Guinness Records Certificate from the Guinness World Records’ Arbitrator Ahmed Jabr. Jabr officially announced that the Hackathon registered 2,950 participants as the highest

number of participations in the world, breaking the previous record of 2,577 participants registered by India in 2012.

The Kingdom’s entry into the Guinness World Records is a great success for the first session of the “Hajj Hackathon”, which attracted male and female developers from different countries, including the Kingdom, GCC countries and the world. Google supported the event and held several training workshops for the participants. The Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones had allocated rewards and funds for participants’ projects amounting to SR2 million, in order to transform participants’ ideas into projects. The reward will be divided into three parts, with first prize winner receiving SR1 million, the second SR500,000, and the third SR 350,000. Another prize of SR150,000 will be a reward for excellence.

The competition in the Hajj Hackathon included the sectors covering the Hajj season, its services and challenges, including food and beverages, public health, financial solutions, transportation, crowd management, traffic control, travel and accommodation arrangements, waste management, housing and communication solutions.

Meanwhile, four Young Saudi women bagged the first prize of SR1 million by winning the Hajj Hackathon 2018 that concluded here in Jeddah. The first runner-up was “Mahfazat Hajj” from Egypt and they received SR500,000 as prize money. And the second runner-up was “Hajj Walad” from Algeria and they received SR350,000 for their effort.

The four young Saudi women team presented an idea for solving the language barrier problem among pilgrims as they introduced an application that makes it easier for pilgrims to translate signboards to any language without having to connect to the Internet. The first edition of Hajj Hackathon concluded awarding top three teams with cash prizes of SR2 million. The three days event was held at the Jeddah Center for Forums and Events from Aug. 1-3.

