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TV ads for Hajj registration  
campaigns

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# Hajj Reporters Weekly

Vol. 1 Week 5

December 2023

ISSN" 2659 - 1103

Online

## Hajj 2024: Saudi Arabia licensed 166 buildings, comprise 26, 710 rooms to accommodate 1116,697 pilgrims

The number of buildings for pilgrims in Mecca, known as the Holy Capital, is expected to eventually exceed 5,000 buildings.

Authorities in the Saudi city of Mecca have so far licensed 166 buildings to house Muslim pilgrims during next year's Hajj pilgrimage.

#hajj2024

The licensing was given by a Hajj housing committee in the city that will continue to receive applications for licensing more such buildings until next month as part of early preparations for annual pilgrimage.

The licensed buildings comprise a total of 26,710 rooms set to accommodate 1116,697 pilgrims.

The number of buildings for pilgrims in Mecca, known as the Holy Capital, is expected to eventually exceed 5,000 buildings.

The committee has urged owners of buildings, who wish to obtain licences to designate them for pilgrims' housing, to contact accredited engineering offices that check their compliance with related terms.

Nearly 2 million pilgrims from around the world performed Hajj, an obligatory Islamic duty, this year, marking the return of their numbers to pre-pandemic levels.

Saudi Arabia has recently disclosed rules for the upcoming Hajj season due next June and stressed early preparations.

According to these rules, no specific places would be allotted for countries at the Saudi holy sites in the new pilgrimage season, Saudi Minister of Hajj Tawfiq Al Rabiah has said.

He explained that places for different countries will be designated depending on finalising contracts.

"From now on, each country will start getting ready for the next year's Hajj to guarantee delivery of high-quality services to Guests of Allah (pilgrims)," Al Rabiah has said.

"The country that concludes early contracts will be given the priority in taking the appropriate places at the holy places," the official added.

The issuance of Hajj visas will commence on March 1 and end on the 20th of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar corresponding to April 29. The arrival of Hajj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia will begin on the first of Dhul Qaidah, the 11th Islamic month, corresponding to May 9.

The new mechanism is geared towards facilitating preparations for Hajj, an obligatory Islamic duty.

Around 1.8 million pilgrims attended this year's Hajj in and around Mecca, according to Saudi official figures.

Source: Gulf News



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## IN BANGLADESH: Only 6674 Pilgrims Registered under Hajj agencies, deadline extended till Dec 31

In last 26 days of beginning of the registration of the Hajj pilgrims intending to perform Hajj next year of 2024, only 6,674 pilgrims have completed their registration by completing all procedures till Sunday, the last day of registration for the first phase.

In this situation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) has given announcement of extending the time of registration till December 31 this year as the ministry will have to submit the complete lists of Bangladeshi pilgrims to the Saudi Arabian authorities concern within January 7 next year.

In a final notice of the ministry issued with the signature of its Assistant Secretary Tafiqul Islam, the ministry of Sunday extended the registration time for the final phase.

In 2024, a total of 1,27,198 Bangladeshis will be able to perform hajj. Among them, 10,198 can avail this facility under the government management while the rests

1,17,000 will go under private management.

According to the website dedicated for Hajj registration and management under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, only 1,416 persons have completed their registration under government management while 5,258 persons registered under private management during the period.

Till to date, some 5,405 persons have completed their pre-registration while 1,39,877 pilgrims have enrolled as pre-registered under private arrangement, it showed.

As a result, most of the private Hajj agents have expressed their frustration over to sluggish registration process. They apprehend that the pilgrims quota allocated for Bangladesh would not be filled up due to various new conditions applied by the Saudi Arabian authorities and higher Hajj fees during the ongoing crisis period amid the wars in Russia-Ukraine and Israel-

Palestine and higher inflation in the country.

This year, the Saudi government has given condition that each of the government approved Hajj agencies must have to send at least 500 pilgrims to Hajj which was only 100 in the previous years.

Though some big agencies will be able to manage the number of pilgrims as per the condition of the pilgrim's receiving country, it's too hard for all Hajj agencies to collect 500 pilgrims for sending to Hajj. As a result, most of the agencies have stopped collecting pilgrims being discouraged with the condition.

In last Hajj season in 2023, Bangladesh government has allowed 603 Hajj agencies to send pilgrims. For the year of 2024, the number of agencies has been raised at 869 from the government approved agencies.

In the notice issued on Sunday, the ministry said that in accordance to the Saudi governments condition, they will have to send to pilgrims list to the country within January 7 next year. Otherwise, tents for the Bangladeshi pilgrims cannot be confirmed at Mina and Arafah. In this situation, they have to hire houses comparatively far away from the Jamarah.

So, the time for the pilgrim's registration would not be extended further, it warned.

It also said that the pilgrims will be able to complete registration by paying a total of Tk2,05,000 for plane fare and Saudi expenses for each of the pilgrims. It has also refixed the pre-registration fees at Tk30,000 from existing Tk30,752 to expedite the registration process.

Source: observed

## Pakistan uses ringtones, TV ads for hajj registration campaigns

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has launched a novel campaign to attract more applicants for the official Hajj scheme this year, reported 24NewsHD TV channel Thursday.

The ministry has hired private cellular companies to inform mobile phone users about the details of the Hajj scheme through ringtones. This is the first time that ringtones are being used for this purpose, according to sources.

The ministry has also started advertising the Hajj scheme on television for the first time, sources said.

The advertisements highlight the features and benefits of the government's regular and sponsorship schemes, which are aimed at facilitating low-income and overseas Pakistanis to perform Hajj.

The campaign has shown positive results, as 53,000 applications have been received under the regular scheme and 2,500 applications under the sponsorship scheme so far, sources said.

The ministry is expecting to receive 22,500 more applications for the sponsorship scheme, which allows applicants to submit their payments in dollars from abroad.

The ministry is also working to remove any barriers for overseas Pakistanis who wish to apply for the Hajj scheme, sources added.



## Kano Gov pays for Umrah to parents of deceased girl he sponsored to have surgery in India

Kano State governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf has paid for lesser Hajj (Umrah) to parents of Asma'u Sani, a young girl he sponsored for surgical operation in India but died before the departure to the Indian hospital.

### #umrah

Speaking when he alongside his deputy, Comrade Aminu Abdussalam, paid a condolence visit to the family of the deceased at Alkalawa Quarters in Gwarzo local government area of the state, the governor directed that the money set aside for late Asma'u's surgery should be used to sponsor her parents to perform the Umrah in Saudi Arabia.

Governor Abba also pledged to immortalise the late Asma'u, thereby directing the Imam of the area to secure a plot of land for the construction of either a hospital or an Islamiyya school, which would be named after the deceased.

Governor Abba said he was deeply saddened by the death of young Asma'u,

and described her death as very shocking and pathetic.

The father of the deceased, Malam Sani, who was moved by the honour done to the family by the governor, prayed to Almighty Allah that the election of the governor be affirmed at the Supreme Court.







## Hajj spells peace, equality and unity

By: Umer Riyaz

Hajj or the Pilgrimage is the last among those acts of worship, which Islam enjoins upon us like the prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The word Hajj means to make a resolve to visit a holy place, visiting the Ka'ba in Makkah is therefore called Hajj.

This journey involves repenting for all their past wrongdoings, moving closer to Allah, resolving to acquire a higher level of piety for the remaining of their life and teaches innumerable invaluable lessons in sincerity (Ikhlās), humility, submission to Allah, and forbearance.

Hajj is the only obligatory duty in Islam that involves communal worship in which all the rituals and rites have to be performed along with lakhs of other Muslims in the same time, space and days. Because of this, the journey of hajj imparts pilgrims an unforgettable annual lesson in peace and unity that is scarcely available anywhere else throughout the rest of the year.

The State of Ihram: No divisions, no differences. One purpose, one place, one nation and an Aura of Calm Self-Restraint.

When a pilgrim enters the state of ihram for hajj, they do not just put on a specific set of garments that are the same as the other pilgrims: rather, they enter a state of forced self-restraint, politeness, calmness, and forbearance in dealing with all their brethren in Islam for the next few days. This state of ihram abolishes their mutual differences related to social class, prestige, and economic status. Ihram unifies all pilgrims as slaves in front of Allah who are toiling on the same noble journey.

Differences in social class, wealth, race, and color vanish within these feelings and rites. A pure and solemn atmosphere of brotherhood, serenity, affection, and love prevails. In a world engulfed in dispute and division and where discrepancy is the prevailing system, they (pilgrims) enjoy an atmosphere of equality and use more or less the same facilities as the others.

Unity is vividly observed in the great pillar of Hajj, which is repeated every year and for which millions of Muslims gather from all over the world. They represent the Muslim ummah with all its different races, countries, colors, and languages. They make one stand in the same monument.

They proclaim the oneness of the Lord of the worlds, submit themselves to His law, and show their unity under His banner. They announce to the whole world that they are one nation although they come from different countries and homes. They perform the rites and stand in the open areas of Makkah, where bodies become close to each other, faces meet, hands shake, greetings exchange, tongues communicate, and hearts reconcile. They meet for the same purpose and intention.

A follower of the Hanafi Fiqh prays next

to one who follows the Shafi Fiqh and both remain mutually respectful about it. There are no arguments or confrontations. As they converge together upon the plain of Arafat, all pilgrims pray four units of salah behind one imam, read one Book, the Qur'an, and direct themselves to one Qibla, the Ka'bah, at the Holy Mosque. They perform the same rites of standing, sitting, bowing down, and prostration and seek forgiveness henceforth till sundown from Allah.

What unity is deeper than that one of the pilgrims when they stand at the mountain of Arafat with bare heads and simple white clothes? There is no difference between the rich and the poor, the ruler and the subject, men and women, Arabs and non-Arabs. All of them are the same, like the teeth of the hair comb. They direct themselves towards Allah, humble and submissive. They hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath" (Al-Isra 17:57).

It is a kind of unity that penetrates the hearts, and not only external appearances. This is unity in aim and direction, in sayings and deeds, an internal and external unity, through which they could feel the essence of the verse: "The believers are but a single brotherhood." (Al-Hujurat 49:10).

### **The Security Center of Peace and Equality and Ensuring Peace:**

Islam has given to the world an inviolable territory, a city of peace till Doomsday. Within the prescribed boundaries around the Ka'ba, called the Haram, the hunting and shooting of animals is strictly prohibited, the cutting of grass is not allowed, thorns may not be pruned, nor fallen articles picked up.

And, of course, no human being may be harmed. It is forbidden to bring weaponry or ammunition in sight within the magnanimous annual populace of millions of pilgrims, and yet, despite the current political and ethnic differences that exist in the ummah, and cause chronic strife, not a single pilgrim who comes for hajj gets hurt, injured or killed during the journey – except by unintentional accident!, where it is tantamount to 'heresy' to hoard cereals and other articles of common need and sell them at a higher price, and where those doing wrong to others or oppressing them are thus threatened by Allah: "We shall cause them to taste a painful punishment" (Al-Hajj 22: 25).

Islam has given a center to the world, which is defined as: A place where the resident and the visitor are equal (Al-Hajj 22: 25).

This means that the rights of all human beings are equal here. Whoever acknowledges the sovereignty of God and accepts the leadership of Muhammad P.U.B.H., enters the brotherhood of Islam, no matter if he is American or African, Chinese or Indian. If one has become a Muslim, his rights are identical to those of the Makkans themselves.

Allah the Almighty declares Mecca as a "sacred town" and it is the same place for which Prophet Abrahams beseeched Allah: "My Lord make this city [a city] of peace." (Ibrahim 14:36).

In Mecca are situated the Holy Ka'bah and the Sacred Mosque, which embodies God's promise: "And whoso enters it, enters peace." (Al-e-Imran 3:98). God further says: "And has given them security against fear." (Quraish 106:5).

Similarly, God says of the Sacred Mosque: "Have they not seen that We have made the sanctuary secure [for them].." (Al-Ankabut 29:68). This is an assurance that this holy city guarantees peace to its visitors.

It is prohibited to kill any animal while wearing Ihram, the fact that "all kinds of arguing, wrangling, fighting, and even hunting halal game is impermissible in the state of ihram" (Al-Baqarah 2:197), it causes the descent of an aura of complete peace upon the massive population of pilgrims who are performing hajj. This ensures that peace and security will prevail, aggressiveness will be controlled, and spiritually gripped the hearts and minds of the pilgrims. The four months were made sacred so that no fighting took place during this period, peace reigned on all the roads leading to the Ka'ba and no pilgrims gets molested.

When the pilgrims reached the Ka'ba, there is no fun fairs, no carnivals. Instead, there is Prayers, sacrifices and circumambulation (tawaf) of the Ka'ba. The only cry that one could hear is that which rise from the heart of the pilgrim:

Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, you have no partner, here I am. Verily all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty, you have no partner.

Such sincere Hajj was described by Prophet P.U.B.H.: "Whosoever performs Hajj solely for the sake of God and, in the course of it, abstains from sensuality and disobedience, he returns from there as immaculate as child just born" (Bukhari).

The nations of the world have long been meeting each other, but in what circumstances? On battlefields, cutting each other's throats; or at peace conferences, carving up countries and nations for themselves; or in the League of Nations, indulging in deception and plotting against each other or conspiring against each other. The meeting of common men of all nations, with sincerity and love, with mental and spiritual affinity, with unity in thoughts, deeds and aims and not only once but always at the same center every year is a blessing available to mankind nowhere else but in Islam. This is the greatest movement of a permanent nature for the establishment of peace in the world.

*(The author is a Research Scholar, Department of Arabic BGSB University, Rajouri)*



## Hajj Payment Deadline Campaign: Hajj Reporters laud Bauchi State Govt

The Independent Hajj Reporters (IHR), a civil organization that monitors and reports Hajj activities across the world, has commended the efforts of Bauchi State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board in educating and creating awareness on the deadline for payment of 2024 Hajj fare.

The commendation is contained in a statement signed on Tuesday by the IHR National Coordinator, Malam Ibrahim Muhammed, and made available to newsmen.

It said: "We have followed the unique efforts deployed by Bauchi State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board towards sensitising intending pilgrims on the need to hasten registration for the 2024 Hajj exercise. Bauchi State is the first state to publicly embark on Hajj payment campaign and rally support of Hajj stakeholders in the state towards

the success of the campaign.

"So far, the leadership of Bauchi Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board has taken Hajj payment campaign to the six emirate councils in Bauchi state for the success of the campaign. On the 3rd of October, the Executive Secretary of the board featured in a phone in programme in Bauchi to educate intending pilgrims on the new Hajj calendar and how it will affect late payment of Hajj fare. On 19th October, the leadership of the board met with officials of some Banks where they pleaded with the financial institutions to help sensitise intending pilgrims as part of their corporate social responsibility. The board has also met with Islamic scholars and engage media houses to help in the campaign.

"Independent Hajj Reporters commends such proactive and timely

measures adopted by Bauchi State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board. Late commencement of educating Nigerian intending pilgrims of the implication of the new Hajj calendar by most states Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Boards contributed to the slow response being witnessed across the country.

"It will be recalled that Independent Hajj Reporters had immediately after the last Hajj exercise called on relevant Hajj authorities in Nigeria to begin early registration of the 2024 Hajj intending pilgrims after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia released its 2024 Hajj calendar.

"The New Hajj calendar clearly slated the closure of issuance of visa to 50 days before Arafat and scheduled 25th of February as the date for signing of all Hajj contracts relating to 2024 Hajj services."

## Maldives offer Free Hajj for citizens aged 50-69 for three years

Ministry of Islamic Affairs has announced that the first three years of the free Hajj program announced by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu would be facilitated for poor or low-income citizens aged between 50 and 69.

The ministry stated that it would follow a standard procedure in selecting poor or low-income citizens from their respective national registry. The cabinet has already held discussions regarding the program.

The ministry revealed that as per discussions, the government would be facilitating the Hajj program for elderly citizens below the age of 70 provided they are in stable health conditions capable of traveling. The government would send senior citizens aged between 50 and 69 in the

first three years while the age bracket would be expanded in the following two years for citizens between 49 and 69.

### #hajj2024

Additionally, the government will cover the expenses for pilgrims' domestic travels and accommodation in Malé City before their embarkation to Saudi Arabia.

The cabinet decided to direct the Zakat Fund for the expenditure of sending 50 senior citizens for Hajj in 2023. In the coming years, the state will make allocations in the state budget, and sponsors from various parties will be involved in supporting the initiative.

The participants of the free Hajj program by the state would be selected from the national registry of poor or low-income

citizens.

Speaking about the government's decision to select citizens from the Zakat-applicable registry, Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed mentioned that the state believes those listed in the Zakat registry would be eligible for the free Hajj program as well.

At the moment, a total of 6,000 locals are listed in the poor or low-income citizens registry. Dr. Shaheem said that a draw would be conducted to select the individuals eligible for each year's free Hajj program.

The minister further emphasized that the government was seeking methods to make the program a long-term and sustainable initiative.

Source: *Malviesdaily*





## Contemplations About Hajj? The Necessities

- 1 - Prior to Hajj and/or 'Umrah the Muslim should:
- a) Purify his creed ('Aqeedah) from any aspects of Shirk, greater or lesser, as Shirk destroys one's deeds.
  - b) Devote his Hajj purely and sincerely for Allah.
  - c) Sincerely repent for all of his sins.
  - d) Acquire knowledge about Hajj and its rites.
  - e) Use Halal (lawful) means to support this great journey, taking what he will require (i.e. not begging while on Hajj to meet his needs).
  - f) Record all of his debts and include them in his Islamic Will.
  - g) Relieve himself from any kind of injustice which he may have inflicted upon others.
  - h) Secure the needs of his family members whom he leaves home.
  - i) Accompany the knowledgeable and righteous Muslims and stay away from the innovators.
  - j) Perform the Prayer on time and as prescribed during the journey and in the Hajj period.
  - k) Safeguard his tongue from backbiting, arguing, complaining, etc.
  - l) Keep his beard and not shave it for Hajj or for any other reason, as this is prohibited.
  - m) Remember that it is unlawful for men to wear gold (rings included).
- 2 - Hajj is a journey that was taken by Prophets and Messengers before you.

Those who take the path of the Prophets glorify the Tawheed (monotheism) of Allah and glorify His House. However, there are those who come to perform Hajj and their hearts are attached to other than Allah. They invoke the dead and the righteous, whether present or absent. This is the opposite of Tawheed because it is setting up rivals with Allah. So, free your intention from any kind of devotion to other than Allah The Almighty. Repent and come to perform Hajj with a sincere heart, submitting to Allah and remembering what Ibraaheem and his son Ismaa'eel, may Allah exalt their mention, said when they were raising the foundations of Allah's House - the Ka'bah: {Our Lord! And make us submissive unto You and of our offspring a nation submissive unto You, and show us our Manaasik (all the ceremonies of Hajj and 'Umrah, etc.), and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.} [Quran 2:128]

3 - You are embarking on an expedition to Allah's House and you may or may not return to your home. So, make this journey as Allah wants it. Think of the next journey that is sure to come, the one that leads to the meeting with Allah the Most High. Indeed, this raises questions like: What did I prepare for that Day? Am I following Allah's Commands? Do I practice the Sunnah of Muhammad? Do I really know Allah? {And invoke not any other ilah (god) along with Allah, none has the right to be worshipped but He. Everything will perish save His Face, His is the decision, and to Him (all) shall be returned.} [Quran 28:88]

4 - When you start saying the Talbiyah, remember the Command of Allah to Prophet Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention: {And proclaim to mankind the Hajj. 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).} [Quran 22:27] The Talbiyah you make is in response to Prophet Ibraaheem's proclamation to visit Allah's House of worship.

5 - Upon entering Makkah remember that you are in the Secure Sanctuary: {...Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary (Makkah), to which are brought fruits of all kinds, a provision from Ourselves, but most of them know not.} [Quran 28:57] Let one commit himself to repentance, having a good opinion of Allah, hoping that Allah will grant him security from His Punishment.

6 - You will enter one of the gates of al-Masjid al-Haram. Then there you are before the magnificent House of Allah the Most High - the Ka'bah. Now you



see what you hoped to see for a long time. Thank Allah for making this possible and hope that He will grant you the greatest reward of seeing His Majestic Face on the Day of Resurrection. This thankfulness is not just in saying "Al-Hamdu-lillah," but also by obeying Allah while on Hajj and for the rest of your life.

7 - You start your Tawaaf knowing that it is a great time to glorify Allah the Exalted. Remember Him by His Names, Attributes and Actions. Also while in this state (Tawaaf), try to reflect upon the time when the Prophet Muhammad was prevented from doing the very thing you are doing at that time. Ponder over what he did when clearing out the site of idols signifying worship to other than Allah. All idols were demolished. Therefore, busy yourself with supplications. Ask Allah, the Most Great, to cause you to adhere to the correct belief, stick to the Path of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) and make you die in that state. Ask Allah to safeguard you from all forms of Shirk (polytheism) and Bid'ah (innovation).

8 - While in Sa'y, contemplate on Hajar, the mother of Ismaa'eel, when she asked her husband Ibraaheem: "Did Allah order you to do this (leaving her and her baby Ismaa'eel in Makkah)? He said: "Yes." Her great response was: "Then He (Allah) will not neglect us!" Think about this great dependence upon Allah when you are in the Sa'y, walking the same path that Hajar took in search of water and sustenance around the mounts of Safa and Marwah. Think about her endurance, perseverance and true belief in Allah. The Sa'y exemplifies the strong belief that we must have in the One Who Sustains and Provides - Allah the Exalted.

9 - The standing on 'Arafat is the Hajj. The crowds should remind you of the Day of Resurrection. Humble yourself to Allah, manifest your 'Ubudiyyah (worship) to Him Alone through supplications, sincere intention and strong determination to free yourself from the sins of the past and to build up a commitment to rush toward doing what is good. Think of becoming a better person when you return. Rid yourself of false pride and showing off because it may ruin what you may gain on this day.

10 - You gathered the pebbles and you are about to embark on stoning the Jamarat. This is an act of obedience and remembrance of Allah, Most Magnificent. The Prophet said: "When you cast the small pebbles (i.e. at the Jamarat), it will be a light for you on the Day of Resurrection."

11 - When performing the sacrifice remember the saying of Allah, the Most High: {It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is your devotion that reaches him....} [Quran 22:37]

12 - When you have completed your Hajj, do not think that the remembrance of Allah has ended. Listen to what Allah Says (what means): {So when you have accomplished your Manasik (i.e. the rites of Hajj) remember Allah as you remember your forefathers or with a far more remembrance....} [Quran 2:200]

Special Note: If you go to Madinah then the objective of your visit should be according to the Sunnah and not Bid'ah (innovation). Your intention should be to visit the Prophet's mosque and not his grave. When you reach the mosque and you pray upon entering, then you may go to the grave and say, "As-Salaamu 'alayka ayyuhan-nabiyy." The same Salaam is also mentioned when you pass by Abu Bakr and 'Umar, without innovations like:

- a) Visiting the grave of the Prophet before praying in the mosque.
- b) Making supplication facing the grave.
- c) Seeking nearness to Allah by means of the Prophet. This is a prohibited form of Tawassul.
- d) Seeking intercession from the Prophet.
- e) Placing the hands upon the grills around the room containing the Prophet's grave to seek blessings, etc. Remember the Prophet's sayings: "Do not make my grave an 'Eed (place of celebration)..." "May Allah's Curse be on the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their Prophets as places of worship."

13 - Many scholars state that women visiting the Prophet's Mosque may pronounce their Salaam upon the Prophet away from the gravesite since it is confirmed by many Ahadeeth that the Salaam is related to the Prophet wherever the person may be. However, the position of the scholars regarding visiting the gravesites by women can be summarized as follows:

- a) Allowable, if done infrequently. If a woman is known as being unable to behave herself within the limits of Sharee'ah at a gravesite, then she should be prevented from visiting the graves.
- b) Disliked but not unlawful.
- c) Forbidden.

14 - The Hajj journey is not meant to gain any material reward. It is a selfless sacrifice solely for Allah, Most Majestic. It demands true love and fear of Him. It should be performed with full consciousness of one's heart, with full humility and submission to Allah. It should not be thought of as a tourist-type excursion or be performed as mere physical rites. It develops sincerity, piety, humility, self-control, sacrifice, and true knowledge of the meaning of submission and obedience to Allah, Most High. It helps the pilgrim to be a better person who is devoted to Allah in every aspect of life.



### Hajj: Obtaining benefits of this world and the hereafter

For the true Muslim, this life is no more than a passage to the Hereafter, and the Muslim only needs this life to achieve his ultimate purpose, which is success in the Hereafter. In this sense, the Muslim should not isolate himself from the rest of the world to live in a distant corner or in a shell; rather, he should interact and live his life to use it fully, rather than allow it to use him. He should subject it to achieve the Sharee'ah-recommended goals and only take from it what helps him to achieve this purpose.

Therefore, the Hajj, which is one of the greatest acts of worship and one of the five pillars of Islam does not forbid the pilgrim from seeking worldly benefits. Allah The Exalted Says (what means): {That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days...} [Quran 22:28]

Ibn Katheer commented on this verse saying, "Ibn 'Abbaas said, '...they may witness benefits for themselves...', the benefit of the Hereafter is the pleasure of Allah The Almighty. The worldly benefits include sacrificial animals and trade." This was also the view of Mujaahid and others that the benefits here refer to both the worldly benefits as well as the benefits of the Hereafter.

Those who isolate themselves from the rest of the people to dedicate themselves to worship without participating in the affairs of the Ummah, Jihaad, or fighting the enemies, have not benefitted from the lessons of Hajj. Likewise, those who are absorbed in worldly ambitions and hopes until they harm their religion, should remember that the Aayah (Quranic verse) mentioned the benefits accompanied by remembrance of Allah The Almighty.

On the Day the Prophet, performed Hajj, Allah The Exalted revealed (what means): {...This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion....} [Quran 5:3]

On that day, the 'Arafah Day of the 10th year A.H, Allah The Almighty perfected the religion of this Ummah, completed His favor upon it and approved Islam as the religion for it. This is a great bounty from Allah The Almighty upon His slaves, and whenever a Muslim stands at 'Arafah, he should remember this bounty and thank Allah The Almighty for this great blessing. He should also pledge not to be the chink in the armor through which the enemies of Islam can attack this great religion. He must recognize that Allah The Exalted provided him with a perfect methodology of life that will make him desire nothing beside it.

Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy upon him, commented on the above-mentioned Aayah saying,

"This, indeed, is the greatest favor from Allah The Almighty to this Ummah, for He has completed their religion for them, and they, thus, do not need any other religion or any other Prophet except Muhammad. This is why Allah The Almighty made Muhammad the Final Prophet and sent him to humankind and Jinn. Therefore, the permissible is what he allowed; the impermissible is what he prohibited, the Law is what he legislated, and everything that he conveyed is true and authentic and does not contain lies or contradictions."

Is it possible for whoever looks toward the East, the West, the North, or the South to import opinions, laws, thoughts, and creeds to say that he believes that the religion is perfect?

Similarly, those who commit religious innovations, exaggerate in religious duties, or rule according to secular laws instead of the law of Sharee'ah (Islamic legislation), have not understood this great lesson from the duty of Hajj.

Soucre: Islamweb

# Still on the call for Hajj Subsidy

Various groups such as the Independent Hajj Reporters and some Islamic clerics has called in the Federal Government of Nigeria to grant consissionery foreign exchange rates to citizens planning to travel for Hajj next year.

The calls became necessary owing to the high exchange rate of the dollar to the Naira which has seen the local currency being exchanged at over N1000 to \$1.

It will be recalled that Pilgrims exchanged the dollar at a little less than N500 for this year's Hajj. With the high exchange rate in mind, NAHCON had already pegged a minimum fare deposit of N4.5 million, for Hajj 2024, up from less than N3 million paid for Hajj 2023.

For Muslims, Hajj is an important part of the religion. Indeed, it is one of the five pillars of Islam. Of course, God himself said one should only go if they have the means, that said, it doesn't therefore, stop the government from coming to the aid of Muslims wishing to fulfill Allah's command.

It will therefore, not be asking

for two much to request for an intervention that will make it easier for intending pilgrims to travel and perform Hajj.

Information available shows that Nigeria has currently registered less than 20,000 intending pilgrims out of the allocated 95,000 Hajj slots.

NAHCON had fixed December 31 as the deadline for registration. It has been confirmed that the high exchange rate is responsible for the inability of intending pilgrims to come forward and register.

If the government can provide any form of subsidy, I am sure the country will fill up its slot. The Nigerian Umma will greatly appreciate governments show of concern.

Many intending pilgrims were particularly hopeful of an intervention following Wednesday's announcement of a fifty per cent rebate for people travelling for Holidays across the country starting from Thursday. It is the clearest sign yet that the government is always willing to come to the aide of the ordinary Nigerian when the need arises.





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