

Rituals of Hajj 2005

London – A. S. Shakiry

This year I had the opportunity to go on pilgrimage (hajj) to the holy places of Islam. After the fasting the month of Ramadan, and completing the reading of the whole Quran, I felt a certain emptiness and a desire to pray and read the Quran once again. I decided to make the reading of Quran when I woke up during the night and at dawn.



The courtyard of The Prophet's Mosque

في باحة المسجد النبوي الشريف

I am also keen on taking part in Friday prayers. During one of these prayers I met a relative and told him: "I want to go on Hajj this year". He answered that it is easily arranged and that there is a group organising the pilgrimage from London

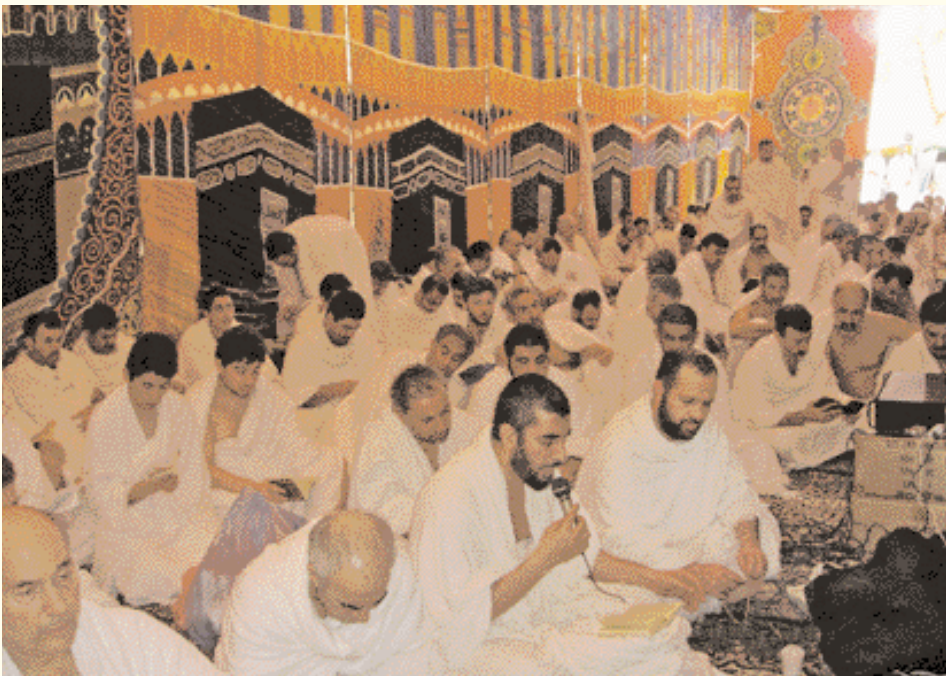
called "Ihsan" (Beneficence), to which intellectuals, scholars and religious advisers belong. Intensive religious instruction is part of their activities. The idea appealed to me and I decided to go to Mecca. The trip was booked by the company recommended by

my relative and the journey began on January 9th from Heathrow airport to the holy city of Madina. I arrived in the evening but did not have enough time to visit the Prophet's Mosque, even though my hotel was only 300m away. ➤



The night at Mezdalifah after coming down from Arafat

المبيت في المزدلفة بعد النزول من عرفات



Mount Arafat

على جبل عرفات

The following day, at dawn, we went to the Prophet's Mosque to pray and read the holy Quran. Then, we returned to the hotel for breakfast and to listen to religious lectures. Afterwards, we returned to the mosque for prayers and to recite the Quran

until Asr prayers. We came back to the hotel for lunch and to rest. At sunset, we returned to the Prophet's Mosque for Maghreb prayers and Ichaa. Then it was time for dinner at the hotel and more religious lectures on the rituals of Umrah and the Hajj.

A visit to the seven mosques

On January 11th, we visited the site of the Uhud Battle, as well as the tomb of Hamza, the martyr and uncle of the Prophet. We also went to Qiba Mosque, the first mosque built in Madina after the Prophet's migration, and Al-Qiblatayn Mosque, where the Prophet prayed in the direction of Al-Aksa Mosque. God subsequently ordered him to move the Qibla (direction of prayer) towards the Kaaba. The seven mosques were closed this year so we looked at them from outside before returning to our hotel.

Visit Al-Baqii Cemetery

On January 12th, we visited Al-Baqii Cemetery, the burial place of the four Imams of Ahlu- Al-Beit: Al-Hassan Bin Ali Bin Abi Taleb, Zine El-Abidine Ali Bin Al-Houssein, Mohamed Al-Baker and Jaafar Al-Sadek, all descendants of Al-Houssein Bin Ali Bin Abi Taleb. Many companions of the Prophet and saints were also buried there. Unfortunately, these tombs are in ruins because Wahhabism, unlike other schools of Islam, forbids the construction of tombs. They make us appreciate the values of faith, righteous conduct and the virtuous life of the saints. Anyone who visits this burial ground has the opportunity to emulate the spiritual values of the saints. It is a way of getting closer to Allah, enhanced by readings of the Quran, prayers, love of the Prophet and Ahlu- Al-Beit. During our stay in Madina, we attempted to visit Al-Baqii Cemetery that was open for a limited time only because of the influx of pilgrims, particularly those loyal to Ahlu- Al-Beit. On some of our visits we were able to go inside, but on other occasions we stood close by the cemetery. On January 13th, we headed towards the Prophet's Mosque, and after several attempts managed to pray close to it in a space that is considered a part of paradise. A holy Hadith tells us: "Between my Minbar and my tomb, there is a garden of paradise". Unfortunately some pilgrims monopolized this space and prevented others from worshipping there.

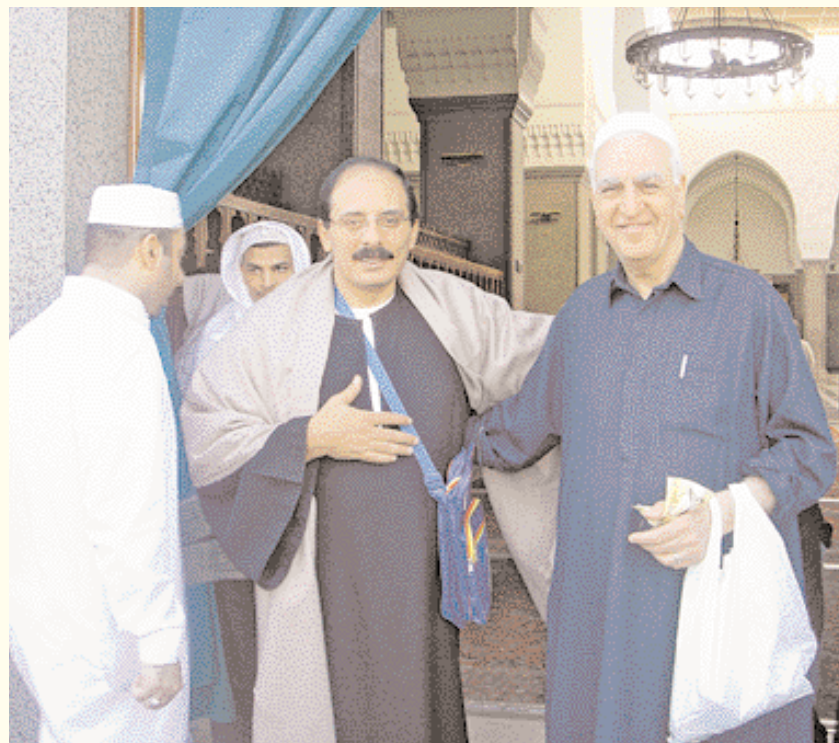
The journey towards Mecca

On January 14th, after Friday prayers in the Prophet's Mosque and lunch, we headed ➤



Hamza's grave

أمام قبر الحمزة سيد الشهداء



Mr. Shakiry with Mr. Ameer Naser, the presenter of "What is next?" program at Salman's Mosque

الناشر مع مقدم برنامج ماذا بعد الاستاذ عامر ناصر في مدخل مسجد القبليتين



The Iraqis Hajj Mohammad Salman Al-Sadi and his wife at Kaaba

الحاج محمد سلمان السعدي وحرمة أمم الحرم المكي، من حجاج العراق



Salman's Mosque

مسجد الصحابي الجليل سلمان الفارسي

towards Mecca to do the Manasik of Umrah and Hajj. Our first stop was on the outskirts of Madina where we went through the official procedures required to get our passports back. Every pilgrim received a box containing food, as a gift from the Prince of Madina. Then, we arrived at the wells of Ali/ Shajara Mosque, to declare the intention of

Al-Ihram and begin the rituals of Umrah and the Hajj.

The obligations of Umrah Attamatou are: Al-Ihram (to wear the cloth of Al-Ihram, to have the intention and Attalbiya with the recitation of: "I wait for Your Orders, Lord, You That don't have a partner, I wait for Your Orders". We stopped at the passport check point on the way to

Mecca, then proceeded to the Attawaf Centre for registration. The procedure was long and we reached our hotel in the early hours of January 15th. Some pilgrims were able to leave their belongings at the hotel and proceed immediately to perform the rest of rituals around the Kaaba, by circling it, praying two Rukaa behind the place of Ibrahim and ➤



Al-Qiblatayn Mosque, the Prophet prayed there toward Jerusalem before turning toward Mecca

مسجد القبلتين حيث صلى الرسول متوجه للمسجد الاقصى ثم حول الاتجاه الى الكعبة المشرفة



Hotels overlooking the Prophet's Mosque

سلسلة من الفنادق الدولية مطلة على المسجد النبوي الشريف

walking between Safa and Marwa seven times before shaving their heads. After that Ihram is complete and normal dress can be worn. This took the whole night. Some of the pilgrims performed these rituals late the following day as they were very tired.

January 16th and 17th were dedicated to prayers before the Kaaba or next to it. Due to

the large number of pilgrims, I said these prayers standing up and my Sujud only consisted of touching the soil with the tips of my fingers, although I was outside Al-Haram, close to the souk.

Hajj rituals

On the 8th day of Dhil Hijja (January 18th) we

began the 13 hajj rituals:

- Al-Ihram from the inside of the former borders of Old Mecca, followed by marching to Mount Arafat, where we spent the night in a camp reading the Quran, praying and sleeping little.
 - On the 9th of Dhil Hijja, the gathering on Arafat at the beginning of the afternoon, until sunset of the ninth day, praying for forgiveness and mercy from God. Before sunset we moved to Muzdalifa, where we spent the night in an arid land and collected stones for Rami Al-Jamarat.
 - On the 10th of Dhil Hijja, the gathering at the Mashar Al-Haram in Mezdalifa, from dawn to sunrise on the day of Sacrifice (Al-Adha) January 1st. At sunrise we went to Menna.
 - We spent the day of Eid, from sunrise to sunset at Menna where we threw the Jamarat (seven stones) of Al-Aqaba Al-Kubra.
 - The sacrifice on the day of the feast at Menna.
 - Shaving the hair and cutting nails at Menna. Here everything that was forbidden during Ihram was allowed except women and perfume. This is called the First Permission.
 - Tawaf Al-Hajj: circling the Kaaba seven times.
 - The prayer of Tawaf Al-Hajj.
 - Walking between Safa and Marwa. Afterwards, everything forbidden to the pilgrim becomes allowed, except women. This is called the Second Permission
 - On the 11th of Dhil Hijja, The women Tawaf.
 - The prayer of women Tawaf. Afterwards, conjugal rights resume. This is called the Third Permission
 - Spending the nights of the 11th and 12th days of Dhi Al-Hijja at Menna , reading the Quran and praying.
 - On the 11th of Dhil Hijja, throwing the three Jamarat, the small, the the medium and the large - seven stones for each.
 - Sleeping at Menna for the night before the 11th of Dhi Al-Hijja, reading the Quran and prayers.
 - On the 12th of Dhil Hijja, Throwing the three Jamarat on the 12th of Dhi Al-Hijja as before.
 - On the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhil Hijja , different activities, including prayers at Kaaba, visiting historical sites, religious meetings and shopping.
 - On the 16th of Dhil Hijja, getting ready to leave to London. We reached London on the morning of 27th of January 2005.
- Thus, thanks to God, end the hajj rituals and we got back safe. ■