



Reflections from Hajj and its Vision under the Khilafah

The Hajj in 2015, 1436 Hijri probably broke all historical records of the number of dead when over 1700 people died in 2 major safety disasters in Hajj, the first being the Crane Crash into the *Mataaf* (circumblation area) adjacent to the Kabah and secondly the stampede at the *Jamarat* (devils stoning ritual).

The *Jamarat* has seen over 7 major stampedes which has resulted in the deaths of hundreds in the past 20 years. Yet the Saudi administration has not seemed to learn a lesson and come to a proper solution.

Hajj 1436 AH stampedes have several theories doing rounds with the most prominent among them being the Irani conspiracy behind the stampedes and others. The Saudis have become experts in trying to prove the Irani-Shia hand behind all their failures and callousness. Instead of accepting their mistake and sincerely looking into how they can improve the Hajj, they comfortably pinpoint at others, to the extent that the governor of Makkah, one of the Al Saud princes went to the extent to say that the African Hajjis are responsible for this as they are generally aggressive!

The actual reason behind the stampede as several Hajjis and other sources explained was that the convoy of Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud caused panic among millions of pilgrims and started the stampede. The prince was escorted by over 350 security forces, including 200 army men and 150 policemen and this convoy sped up the road to go through the pilgrims that were moving towards the site of the 'Stoning the Devil' ritual, causing panic among millions of pilgrims who were on the move from the opposite direction and caused the stampede. Furthermore, to facilitate the travel of the prince several roads were blocked and there was no clear direction to the pilgrims as to which roads to take to reach the *Jamarat*.

After the convoy had passed the blocked roads which had been closed for a long time and where people under the sweltering sun had been suffocated were opened and in the commotion and jostling and pushing people started falling, one after the other.

One particular location where the roads had been blocked may be seen at the following link,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evVOwCnJfQY>

The value of pilgrims in the view of the Saudis doesn't seem to be more than cash cows who they try to milk during the Hajj season. In the Hajj season in 2013, the Saudi Government made 16.5 Billion Dollars which is almost the size of the economy of countries like Brunei, Georgia, Iceland and Mauritius.

In principle, it is one of the duties of those governing the Hajj to make it easy for the pilgrims and assist them during the Hajj. The Hajj is not for the locals to make money out of the pilgrims cheating and overcharging them and it is the duty of the state to ensure this.

How will the Righteous Khilafah State organize Hajj

The Righteous Khilafah State will organize hajj with the objective of serving the pilgrims and assisting them in completing this obligation in the best manner possible. Making money out of the pilgrims, be it for the hotels or the transport or food would not be from its aims, it would rather curtail such practices if they happen.

Currently the planning of the Haram Mosque doesn't allow accommodation of more than 3.5 – 4 million at one time. Considering the current population of the Muslim Ummah and its growth in terms of those accepting Islam the number of Hajjis allowed to do Hajj need to be increased. **This is the first challenge for the Righteous Khilafah State** (Caliphate). Any increase in the Hajjis will require restructuring of the outside area and inside area of the masjid.

In 1982 when King Fahd came to power, he announced the expansion of the *Haram* and built an extension now known as the King Fahd extension. King Abdullah, the current king of Saudi has also announced another extension which is expected to be completed by 2020.

King Fahd's extension plan required large areas of lands to be acquired from the surroundings of the mosque. Thousands of houses were destroyed which included many relics from the past. A large part of the acquired lands and houses were given away to real estate developers which led to several non-Muslims (who otherwise are not allowed entry into Makkah) to open their hotels around the Haram. Radisson, Sheraton, Intercontinental...all of them have high valued properties surrounding the Haram. Not only this, they don't mind giving away the Holy Land to ill-reputed people, not long ago infamous Paris Hilton was allowed to open her franchise showroom in the vicinity of the masjid.

So the expansion project for the King did not only give him political mileage but also benefited many of his family members who had stakes in the fledging real estate property in Makkah.

Initially the Righteous Khilafah State will attempt at increasing the open space surrounding the Haram so that more pilgrims can be accommodated. As temperatures can become very high during summers, the open space would also be covered using mechanical umbrella shaped shades (similar to the ones used in Madina). Oxygen dispensers would also be installed along with them which will emit oxygen and moisture combined to beat the heat during summers. This would be initial plan of the state and then extensive makeovers will happen with time covering these spaces and air-conditioning them.

The current structure covers an area of 356,800 square metres (88.2 acres) including the outdoor and indoor praying spaces and can accommodate up to four million worshipers during the Hajj period.

It is noteworthy to mention that the gigantic Shamiyya project to the north west of the Sanctuary is being developed on an area of 1.5 million square meters approximately, extending from the extremities of the sanctuary to beyond the second circular road to the north and from the Holy Mosque Street to the east and *Jabal al Qaaba* road to the west.

The plan includes Al-Shamiya, Garoul, and Alqarara wa Alnqa. The area to be developed reached three million square meters distributed among different activities, of which hotels, hotel residences, commercial centers, and markets, and general services, in addition to permanent residences for the people.

If only this area which is adjacent to the Haram was converted to a marbled plane praying space for the Pilgrims, it would accommodate 4.5 million *Musallin* (worshippers)! And if it was converted into a two-story covered space then that number would be doubled. The existing area for developing Al Shamiya includes developing residential and hotel spaces meant for 250,000 people and praying space for only 400,000 people.

The Jabal Omar project to the south western side of the mosque for which more than 600 properties have been seized involves constructing two 5-star hotels with 935 rooms, and six 3-star hotels comprising 1,255 rooms, across an area spanning 244,800 sq. m. Residential buildings reaching 20 stories to accommodate 100,000 people, 520 restaurants and 4,360 commercial and retail units are also being built. The current plans include a plan to make a 6-story building for *musalli's* to accommodate 100,000 *musalli's*.

The Righteous Khilafah State's mission would be to ensure that more and more people can fulfill the fifth pillar of Islam and in this endeavor it would not seek to make wealth from the pilgrims rather it would aim at assisting them and aiding them and providing them all the facilities which would make their pilgrimage easy.

Jabal Omar if it is only converted to a plane as mentioned earlier with mechanical umbrella shaped shadings and oxygen dispensers can accommodate 0.75 million pilgrims for prayers.

Jabal Khandama another project spanning over 600,000 square meters is being developed into a mixed-use area mostly hotels and residential apartments and shopping units. Redeveloping this area as a prayer space will give space to about 2 million *Musalli's*.

All these projects are adjacent to the *Haram* and can be annexed with the *Haram* with ease.

In most of these projects, properties are acquired often with little or no compensation and in some cases, the owners are given less than a week to leave the property.

The Jabal Kaaba is another of these projects which covers about 46,000 sq. meters. Similar is the case with the *Ajyad* fortress on the Mount Bulbul which was destroyed to build the *Abraj al Bait* towers. These towers along with other towering structures are a violation of the *Kaba's* sanctity. It is ironical that on one hand, airplanes cannot fly from above the *Haram* but on the other hand, high-rise towers can constantly dwarf the *Haram*.

Historic sites of religious importance which have been destroyed by the Saudi's include five of the renowned "Seven Mosques" initially built by Muhammad's (saw) daughter and four of his "greatest Companions": Masjid Abu Bakr, Masjid Salman al-Farsi, Masjid Umar ibn al-Khattab, Masjid Sayyida Fatima bint Rasulullah and Masjid Ali ibn Abu Talib.

It has been reported that there now are fewer than 20 structures remaining in Mecca that date back to the time of Muhammad (saw). Other buildings that have been destroyed include the house of Khadijah, the wife of Muhammad (saw), demolished to make way for public lavatories; the house of Abu Bakr, Muhammad's companion, now the site of the local Hilton hotel; the house of Ali-Oraid, the grandson of Muhammad (saw), and the Mosque of Abu-Qubais, now the location of the King's palace in Mecca; Muhammad's birthplace, demolished to make way for a library; and the *Abraj Al Bait* Towers, built after demolishing the Ottoman-era Ajyad Fortress.

The ostensible reason for much of the destruction of historic buildings has been for the construction of hotels, apartments, parking lots and other infrastructure facilities for Hajj pilgrims. However, many have been destroyed without any such reason. For example, when the house of Ali-Oraid, the grandson of Muhammed (saw) was discovered and excavated, King Fahd himself ordered that it be bulldozed in case it should become a pilgrimage site.

The King's Palace on Mount Abu Qubais which covers over 100,000 sq meters will make way for accommodating more pilgrims for prayer.

So if the surrounding region of the Mosque was freed from buildings and even if it was preliminarily converted into marbled open space, it would make space for at least 10 million Pilgrims.

Certain structural changes to the mosque will also have to be performed. For e.g., the *mataf* (tawaf area) will have to be expanded. Removal of the ottoman era enclosure will lead to much more space in the *mataf* area and further expansion of the *mataf* can be done by removing more of the enclosure so that the *mataf* size increased.

To ease matters for children, women and elderly people, the State would make use of modern technologies such as travelators on the upper floors. Not only will this ease the matters for the pilgrims, but will also stop the wheelchair owners from charging people exorbitantly.

As for the evidence why travelators may be used, we know this from the hadith Narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA): In his Last Hajj the Prophet (saw) performed *Tawaf* of the *Ka'ba* riding a camel and pointed a bent-headed stick towards the corner (Black Stone). [Bukhari]

Similarly travelators may be employed between the Safa and Marwa as well.

The second challenge the State will face will be that of the residence for the dwellers of Makkah and the pilgrims. Makkah being a mountainous region has several mountains which cover its terrain. Removing these mountains and developing the areas into residential areas will solve lot of the residential problem. Large swathes of land are covered by these mountains towards the south east of the mosque, and to the north of hijrah district and the south of *Mahbas Al Jenn* parking.

With the growth of the Muslim population, there will come a time when even what the State would have planned will fall short. The state will then have to work on establishing satellite towns next to Makkah to house the Pilgrims and city dwellers but such a reality is not expected very soon but will certainly happen when the whole world converts to Islam.

عن تميم الداري قال سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول: «لبيعلن هذا الأمر ما بلغ الليل والنهار ولا يترك الله بيت مدر ولا وبر الا أدخله الله هذا الدين بعز عزيز أو بذل ذليل عز الله به الإسلام وذلا يذل الله به الكفر» وكان تميم الداري يقول قد عرفت ذلك في أهل بيتي لقد أصاب من أسلم منهم الخير والشرف والعز ولقد أصاب من كان منهم كافرا الذل والصغار والجزية

It was narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, from Tameem Al-Daari, who said that he heard the Prophet (saw) say: **“Verily, this matter (Islam) will reach where day and night have reached,**

and it will not leave a house of *Madar* (mud or clay) or a house of *Wabar* (fur of camels and goats, i.e. tents) except Allah will bring it into this *Deen*, (either) with the honour of an honoured one, or the disgrace of a disgraced one; honour with which Allah honours Islam, and disgrace with which Allah disgraces *Kufr*.”

The third challenge the state will face is that of transportation. A complete overhaul of the current transport system is required. A combination of public transport System & Mass Rapid Transport Systems (MRTS) will serve the needs of the pilgrims. The Mass Rapid transport systems will be employed in the sacred places such as the Makkah mosque, Mina, Muzdalifa, Arafah initially but will eventually cover all the areas of the Sacred sites.

The design and construction of the MRTS would be underground and would involve several lines at each port. This is so as to avoid congestion at the ports of embarking and disembark. Examples of effective utilization of MRTS in cities like Malaysia, Delhi, London and others will be studied and adopted.

At any station the number of people who can embark on a train and the number of trains that arrive periodically should be planned in such a way so that there are mishaps and accidents due to overfilling of stations.

The Righteous Khilafah State cannot afford to experiment putting the lives of the Muslims at stake so it will plan things in a manner that do not cause hassle for the pilgrims.

As for the public transport, there is a serious lack of public transport vehicles inside the city and the roads are narrow and badly managed. Private cars would not be allowed near high congestion areas like the Haram Mosque and Arafah and transport in these areas will be provided by the State vehicles.

As for the challenge, the state will face for Mina, Muzdalifa and Arafah. The reality of these towns is similar to that of Makkah, they are mountainous. Where there are mountains they should be brought down and high story buildings built in their place. The sunnah for the *haji* is to stay in Mina and not that it has to be in a tent and therefore high story buildings will allow very high and effective utilization of space.

The reason why the Saudi government has not attempted at constructing the buildings is because of the very low return on investment on their money. The Righteous Khilafah States ROI will be the reward for its efforts it would make in making Hajj easy for the Muslims.

The current problem in these three towns is that of transport and space, the MRTS will resolve the transport problem and high rise buildings will address the space constraints.

The current planning of *Jamarat* is excellent and can accommodate a much larger number of pilgrims than today's.

Another challenge the state will face is that of food and water. Large desalination plants will be installed in Jeddah to cater to increasing need of water and *Zamzam* water will be available at different places around the city and the other sacred places. A strict control over food quality will be maintained, no adulteration in the food will be allowed and overcharging the pilgrims will not be allowed.

All this will be maintained more by developing the *Taqwa* in the people and reminding them and less by the stick.

The State will endeavor a similar parallel program in Madina as in Makkah.

May Allah (swt) grant us the victory and allow us to re-establish the Khilafah on the path of Prophethood soon.

***Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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