

Hajj Stories

Two Tales, One Hajj

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‘You have exceptional leadership ability and a very high level of intelligence. We are sure that during the five days of Hajj you will be able to able to not only easily be able to handle the draining and taxing emotional physical journey, but you will also be able to be as close to your Creator as would be humanly possible. Our group is blessed to have you travelling with us and it is evident that the uncertainty and trepidation that many experience will in part be allayed by your reassuring presence. The vast majority of Hujjaaj will undertake this journey only once in their lives and the group leaders try their utmost to ensure that this fifth pillar of Islam is accomplished in comfort and with high spiritual reward. However each group is only permitted one worker per fifty pilgrims by the Saudi authorities. This is where selfless people like you are so important,’ the Imam told the pilgrim.

A fellow Hujjaaj, who happened to be a doctor like me, and I overheard this conversation. ‘The Imam is really going a bit over the top with our Lordship,’ my colleague sarcastically remarked. ‘It’s not an easy situation to deal with,’ I replied. ‘Bear in mind that Hajj starts in

two days and we have to act in the best interest of all Hujjaaj,’ I added. ‘But he is a narcissist! He has zero interest in anyone other than himself and he protests and complains about everything, even blaming other pilgrims for his shortcomings. You know as much as I do that everything revolves around him, even this trip is about HIM coming to Arafat and not him being a mere drop in the ocean of humanity on those vast plains,’ my colleague protested vehemently. ‘We are feeding into his sense of delusions of grandeur,’ he added sadly.

‘I treated his wife for her medical conditions,’ I informed my colleague. ‘She has realised over the last few years what he really is and is trying to live with it. Our Imam has evidently noticed that their Hajj is about the husband only and the wife for him is not even an afterthought. On one occasion he paid for only one bus trip when the whole group went on a visit to Jeddah and forgot about her! What the group leader is trying to achieve is for each pilgrim to be responsible for at least one other and the husband is being prompted to at least be looking after his wife,’ I added. ‘I am sure she will be looking after him!’ my colleague added. We then discussed the

difficulties we have about the narcissists in our practices and that it is nearly impossible to rehabilitate them if they do not realise that they actually have a problem.

Our first day on Mina went without incident except that he complained about the heat inside the tent. We managed to move him close to one of the air condition-

“Hajj is Arafat. Whatever lays ahead must just be.”

ers whereafter he complained that he felt claustrophobic. We managed to appease him by opening one of the side flaps of the tent to some extent. His wife was in a separate tent and had very little communication with him. On Arafat the conditions were even more basic and, despite his supposed leadership position, he was the one constantly needing to be attended to. Again, his wife was in the ladies’ section and had very little interactions with him other than when he demanded something or the other that he was sure he instructed her to bring along. She was on Arafat and in her own words she was undisturbed when she was beseeching her Creator for His mercies.

She was a bit dizzy in the late afternoon after standing for prolonged periods during the time of Wuqoof. I was requested to medically assess her and duly did so. After a cursory examination, I advised her to have enough fluids, have some rest and not to stand too much. I advised that Allah does not require us to stand hand outstretched all the time. ‘I need to make the most of the few hours we have left on Arafat,’ she said. When we leave, I’ll be with my husband again and I’ll in effect will have to look after him. If I don’t hear about any of the complaints, it will be about what he wants me to do and what my and every other pilgrims’ shortcomings are. He will point out that only he would have performed his Hajj absolutely correctly and that everyone else made a mistakes,’ she added.

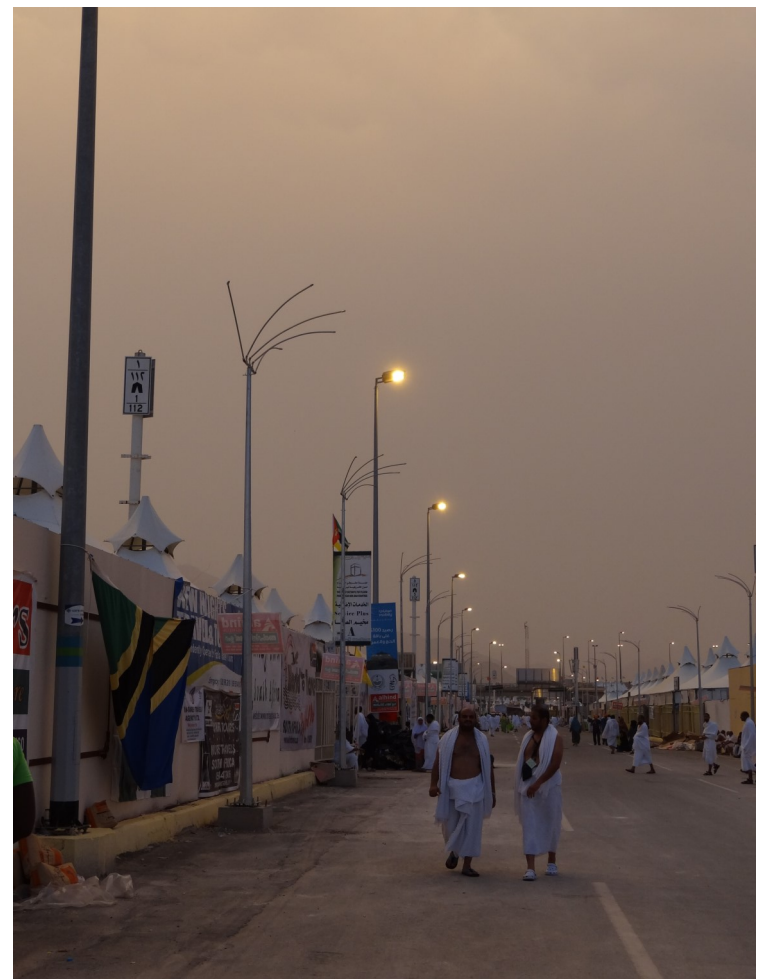
‘Do you know that he plans to walk from Arafat to Mina?’ she asked. ‘He cannot even walk one kilometer but has this grandiose

assumption that he will lead the group. I have multiple health problems, but he is going to insist that I walk too. So far I had my closeness with my Creator on Arafat and as you always say Doc, Hajj is Arafat. Whatever lays ahead must just be,’ she said with a tinge of resigned acceptance. ‘Allah blesses those who reach out to Him. All will be well,’ I replied.

We made sure that the two of them did not walk but were placed on a bus under the guise that his navigation skills will ensure that they will not get lost as he was armed with the latest

journey!’ she glowed. Our group had our pebbles collected already on Musdalifah after our Salaah and we just stuck to the well signposted road. There was enough water and toilets everywhere even though it was crowded. We even slept a little under the stars before we crossed the border to Mina and then walked to our tent. Yes, we were tired and a bit fearful, but Allah’s blessings were with us. Later we went to pelt the Jamarat and went to Azizya to our hotel to rest. Hajj is just perfect,’ she smiled. ‘How is your husband?’ I asked.

He was with the other group. The group leader tried his utmost to calm him down but he was adamant that they must immediately rush to Mina as soon as midnight



The calm and serenity of Mina does not reveal anguish experienced

gadgets. He apparently got into arguments with the driver whilst on route to Mina and it probably was a good thing that they did not speak each other’s language. Traffic was horrendous and when they were on Musdalifah collecting pebbles, the authorities forced the bus to depart without the passengers. They had two very good group leaders with them who had extensive experience and were not far from Mina and their camp. Somehow the husband and wife got split into separate groups.

I met the wife the next day on Mina. ‘We had the most amazing

was reached. The rest of the group realised that they were safe and that it was one of the unforeseen events but he went on a tirade against the Saudis, the Hajj organization and his travel agent. The couple were probably not more than two hundred meters apart but oceans separated their experiences. Our interventions did not have any effect on him, but circumstances led to his wife experiencing Hajj as she was praying for. AllahuAkbar!

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