



An Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) Publication

MUSLIMS AUSTRALIA

ISSUE 3: DHUL-HIJAH / DECEMBER 2007 | WWW.AFIC.COM.AU

FREE

Published by the Australian Federation of
Islamic Councils

CONTACT

MELBOURNE

66-68 Jeffcott Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

T: +61 (03) 9329 1228

F: +61 (03) 9329 1677

E: aficmelb@bigpond.com

SYDNEY

932 Bourke Street, Zetland Sydney NSW 2017

T: +61 (02) 9319 6733

F: +61 (02) 9319 0159

W: www.afic.com.au

E: admin@afic.com.au

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Ikebal Adam Patel

Deputy Editor: Mohammed Harun Abdullah

Contributing Writer: Dr Ameer Ali

Project Manager: Naazmeen Sayeed

Sales and Distribution: Uzma Husaini,
Naazmeen Sayeed, Menekse Yasar

Accountant: Chen Liu

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT

Hudsons Copy

T: 03 9302 3355

ADVERTISING

T: (03) 9329 1228

E: aficmelb@bigpond.com

CIRCULATION

Every 3 months

YOUR COMMENTS

If you wish to have an article published in
Muslims Australia, forward your article by
email in word format to:

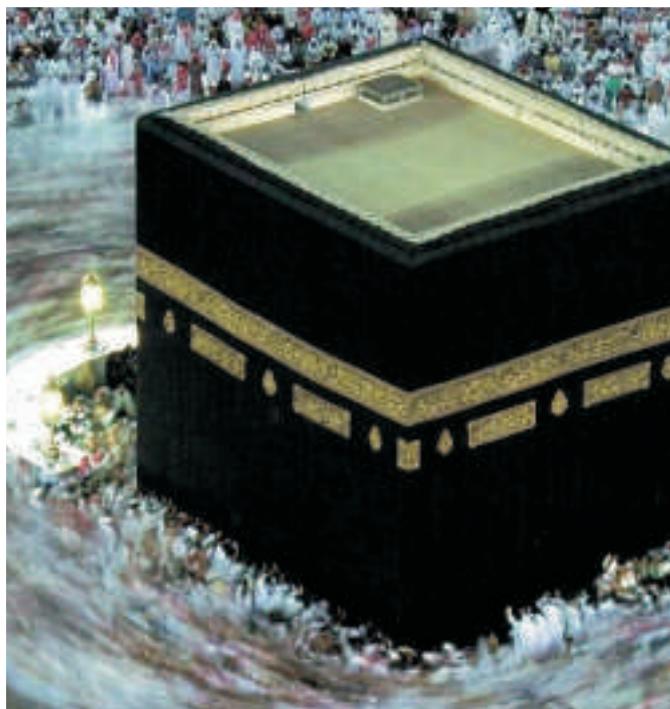
aficmelb@bigpond.com

Please ensure to include your contact
telephone number.

Note: Due to space constraints, your
contributions should be concise to be
considered for publishing.

DISCLAIMER

AFIC makes no warranty, representation or
undertaking whether express or implied, nor
does it assume any legal liability whatsoever,
whether direct or indirect in connection with
the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of
any of the information in this publication.
Opinions expressed in Muslims Australia are
those of the contributors and not necessarily
of the Australian Federation of Islamic
Councils Inc.



H A J J

Close to 2 million Muslims from over 80 countries embark on a journey to the holy city of Mecca each year to make the spiritual pilgrimage known as the Hajj. The pilgrimage is one of five Pillars of Islam that forms the framework of Islamic life. All Muslims who are physically and financially able are expected to perform the Hajj at least once. The Hajj begins on the eighth day of Dhul-Hijjah (month for Hajj), the 12th month of the Islamic year, and concludes on thirteenth day of Dhul-Hijjah.

IN THIS ISSUE

006 SIGNIFICANCE & BENEFITS OF HAJJ

Hajj, like most other duties cast upon a Muslim, will be found to possess both personal and universal significance

050 MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL

Sydney's premier Islamic educational establishment

051 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Our education, training and research facilities are second to none

054 ISLAMIC COLLEGE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The leading Islamic College in the state

To the Editor,

I write to wish you, your staff and all your readers a very happy New Year for 2008.

This is my first opportunity to write to you in my new role as the Liberal Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship.

I am very pleased to have been appointed to this important role and I look forward to working with you and all your community.

Australia's rich and diverse multicultural community is one of our greatest assets. Your community's contribution to Australia is greatly valued by the Liberal Party.

If at anytime I can be of assistance to you and your community, please contact me or a member of my staff by phone on (08) 9328 3688, by email at senator.ellison@aph.gov.au or by mail at PO Box 143, Northbridge WA 6865.

Best regards,

SENATOR CHRIS ELLISON

Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

A NEW BEGINNING

By Ikebal Patel

There comes a time in each of our lives when, we have to stop awhile and ponder...

“So that they may witness things that are of benefit to them”. (Al-Hajj 22:28)



The real blessings of Hajj can only be experienced by those who undertake the journey and perform the Hajj, which is one of the pillars of Islam, as ordered by Allah SWT. This journey demands of the individual, a love of Allah, as well as fear of Him and a conviction that Allah wants him to undertake this journey. The commitment and sacrifice is beyond comparison - one's willingness to incur monetary expenses, separation from loved ones, in some instances arduous physical journey, and other material sacrifices, all for one's devotion and adherence to one's duty to Allah SWT.

With this intention, the pilgrim's outlook begins a transformation as you make your way to the Holy land.

One's desire to do good strengthens and one's behaviour is placed in check as every effort is made to assist the other, be of service and helpful in whatever is honourable. One avoids squabbles, dishonesty, bickering, indecency and all those attributes that may displease Allah. One's overriding aim and objective is to seek Allah's forgiveness and His pleasure, so that at the end of one's journey of a life time, it is indeed a life altering experience, a new beginning, a second chance at living a new life with enhanced motivation and aspirations for what the future holds in store...And all these qualities that were put in practise over the Hajj period can now be demonstrated in your “new beginning”.

As we approach Eid-ul Adha, and recognise the sacrifice and selflessness of Prophet Ibrahim, and his devotion to Allah's Deen, it is an opportune time for us to embark on a journey of our own, a journey of self evaluation.

We may find ourselves in various life's stages; end of School or as some may say, end of a time of exceptional stress and tantrum. Where to from here? Numerous academic or other options. Others may have completed their years of tertiary study and are contemplating entering the “real world”, yet others

may be at a cross road in their careers or vocations, and some tossing around the idea of retirement, the list is endless.

With a new beginning, we find ourselves at the conclusion of Federal elections, a government with new expectations and aspirations for this beautiful country. I say to one and all who are on this new journey of promise and expectation: May Allah guide and bless you with faith, courage, determination, perseverance and fortitude to fulfil all your noble ambitions for an Australia that maintains its vibrancy and acceptance.

In whatever field or vocation we find ourselves, if we learn to demonstrate “kindness and humility” in all facets of our lives, not only will we be enriched but so too will those around us.

I'd like to conclude by wishing all the Hujjah, may Allah accept your Hajj and return you safely to homes and loved ones. To all our young students, congratulations and may your choice of further study stand you in good stead. To all our non Muslim friends we wish you season's greetings and best wishes for the new year 2008.

“Eid Mubarak”

“Kul Aam Intum Be Khair”

AFIC & UAE Ramadan Food Parcels Project

During the blessed Holy Month of Ramadan, the Embassy of the UAE implemented the distribution of food hampers which covered 12 Charities in NSW and Victoria. Each box contained different types of basic food items which were designed to meet the needs of its recipients.

This generous donation was given by Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Charity Foundation through the UAE Red Crescent as part of its International humanitarian operation to bring relief to the needy Muslims around the World.

More than 550 families benefited from this noble donation.

This task was coordinated with association and support from the Australian Federation of Islamic Council AFIC. The President of AFIC Mr. Ikebal Patal praised the UAE generosity and expressed his gratitude for this fine gesture which is a true expression of the values within the teachings of Islam.

AFIC made arrangements for the foods parcels to be distributed to those in need, in Sydney and Melbourne with recipients expressing gratitude and appreciation for such a generous gesture.

"Generous giving and reaching out to the less privileged people highlight the importance of the sharing to Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Charity Foundation as well as the UAE people especially during the blessed month of Ramadan" Mr. Al Habsi, Charged Affaires concluded.





FAITHS CALL ON 'CAPTIVE' GOVERNMENT TO SET EMISSIONS TARGET

The Sydney Morning Herald

Paul Bibby - October 4, 2007

Religious leaders have united to demand that the Federal Government set greenhouse gas emission targets.

The 13 leaders, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish and indigenous representatives, signed an interfaith climate change declaration calling on the Government to set a target 60 to 90 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050.

The call to action - facilitated by the Climate Institute - also demanded that the Government require that all new electricity generation come from clean energy, and that it ensure a decline in greenhouse gas emissions within five years.

The Anglican Bishop of Canberra, George Browning, said he did not think any Australian could morally vote for a government that did not have a viable climate change policy.

"The politicians need to be able to look any child in the eye and say, 'I'm doing everything I can to make sure your future is sustainable'," he said.

"Clearly, the current Government of Australia is captured by the fossil fuel interests - it seems to be the only

explanation of what is otherwise inexplicable. Why would our Government be so slow to respond?"

The president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Ikebal Patel, said the Government had missed the opportunity to take a moral stance by not ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, but he believed co-operation between faiths could force policy change.

"We have exploited the environment in the past and been negligent in looking after it, so we are not now in a position of moral strength within the international community," he said.

The chief executive of the Climate Institute, John Connor, said the faith groups were practicing what they preached. "We are seeing an international movement within different faiths to reduce carbon emissions within their own activities and places of worship," he said.

"You only have to look at Pope Benedict, who has committed to becoming carbon-neutral and plans to cover the roofs of the Vatican with solar panels. The examples that our religious leaders make is just as important in achieving change".

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF

HAJJ

-KMZ



THE age-old centre of worship, the House of God, Ka'aba, was built by Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Ismail. When the house was ready, a voice came from God:

"And proclaim the pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean (on account of journeys) through deep and distant mountain highways" (22-27).

This Quranic verse shows that Haj as an institution existed before the advent of Islam, from antiquity. When pilgrimage was proclaimed people came to it from every quarter, near and far, on foot and mounted on camels. From that time onwards, Haj has continued to be performed.

The only change introduced into the features of Haj after

Prophet Ibrahim seems to have been the removal of idols from the Ka'aba and other important places of Haj. Even in the Age of Ignorance, people used to come to Makkah in the days of Haj and make circumambulation (tawaf) of Ka'aba.

The Islamic Haj started after the conquest of Makkah in 8 and 9 AH. Hajj is the last of the five pillars of Islam (the other four are: Iman, Salat, Soum and Zakat). Laying it down as an essential religious obligation of a Muslim, the Holy Quran says:

"... Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah - those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures" (3-97).

In this verse while Hajj has been declared obligatory it has been made clear that it is applicable only to those who possess the means and material resources to undertake it. But care has been taken, in the last part of the verse, to warn that if Muslims whom Allah has blessed with the necessary means to perform the pilgrimage still fail to carry out the duty through sheer ingratitude then Allah does not stand in need of their pilgrimage. Allah, definitely, is not going to lose anything by their not performing Hajj; the loss will be entirely theirs. They will forfeit His good grace.

Hajj, like most other duties cast upon a Muslim, will be found to possess both personal and universal significance: personal, because it is the individual who hopes to become, by performing this pious act, a better person in this world and increase his prospects of reward in the Hereafter; universal, because the pilgrimage represents the largest of the concentric circle around which the Muslim institution of prayer is built.

At the centre is daily personal prayer in solitude, followed by Friday prayer in congregation in an individual's particular locality, and then there is the annual Eid prayers comprising all the people in a town, culminating once in a life-time is the pilgrimage or Hajj, in which an individual prays with Muslims from all over the world. The pilgrimage thus constitutes a most dramatic visual illustration of how belief in One Allah leads to a union of people from different parts of the world and of different ethnic communities into the ties of brotherhood. There are carefully prescribed rituals to be observed during the pilgrimage (as indeed there is for the other pillars of the faith, such as prayer and fasting), and these rituals have essential functions which ensure order and discipline amongst the vast concourse at the pilgrimage, as well as of emphasizing, through uniformity in practice, the unity which the pilgrimage symbolizes.

Important, and indeed essential, as are the ritual aspects and the outer form of the pilgrimage, they become little more than empty, meaningless shells, if they do not contain a living heartfelt understanding of the purpose of the pilgrimage. For instance, the pilgrimage should inculcate a living conviction of true brotherhood, and, by the dress prescribed for the pilgrim, eradicate from the heart and mind of the pilgrim any false notions of superiority or unjust privilege between men, which is based on differences of social class, economic wealth, race or genealogy.

Hence, it is far from sufficient for an intending pilgrim to repeat like a parrot, the rituals and all outward forms of piety, devoid of any understanding or of any attempts to understand the spirit underlying this institution and the type of transformation in human character which pilgrimage seeks to bring about.



Statistics are ever increasing, on the number of people who perform the pilgrimage every year, and this is an encouraging sign, but at the same time the very fact that large areas of the Muslim world are notorious citadels of unjust privilege and that fratricidal strife and bloodshed of appalling dimensions takes place between different Muslim groups demonstrates that, in many cases, the observance of this fundamental duty is more an empty ritual, rather than a task performed in the spirit of 'taqwa' in order to become better human beings in actual practice.

It is unfortunate that many an ordinary Muslim, in all honesty, suffers from the delusion that goodness consists in performing the ritual (whether it is of prayer or the pilgrimage) alone and that it is about this alone that he will be asked on the Day of Judgment. Yet a direct reading of the Holy Quran and the relevant Ahadith clearly establishes that the observance of these pillars of the faith must lead the practitioner to a constant improvement in his actual character, and that it is the extent to which his actual character increasingly resembles the character of the ideal Muslim that will determine whether or not he deserves Allah's forgiveness and rewards in the Hereafter.

Islamic brotherhood will become more and more a living reality, and, in this task the annual pilgrimage has its essential role, which it can only effectively perform provided the outer ritual and forms are not thought to be substitutes for the inner spirit of this essential Muslim duty, and when, on the contrary, ritual and inner spirit truly complement and strengthen each other.



History of the KISWA

THE KAABA IS COVERED BY A BLACK CLOTH KNOWN AS 'KISWA', WHICH IS PRODUCED & CHANGED EVERY YEAR.

SPECIAL FACTORY DESIGNED FOR THE MAKING OF KISWA IN MAKKAH.

IT COSTS APPROXIMATELY SR 17 MILLION. THE CLOTH IS MADE OF 670KGS OF SILVER DYED BLACK, ABOUT 120KGS OF PURE GOLD & 50KGS OF SILVER USED IN WRITING THE QUR'ANIC VERSES OVER THE CLOTH. THE TOTAL AREA OF THE CLOTH IS 658M².

PHOTOS >>>





National Centre of Excellence for **ISLAMIC STUDIES**

The National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies has been established at The University of Melbourne, following the awarding of a grant from the Department of Education, Science and Technology, with allows for Melbourne to work with Griffith University in Queensland and the University of Western Sydney in New South Wales to deliver world-class, multi-disciplinary teaching in Islamic Studies at a regional, national and international level.

The Centre is headed by Professor Abdullah Saeed, the Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and Head of the Asia Institute at Melbourne and Director of the University's Centre for Islamic Law and Society, jointly hosted by the Arts and Law faculties.

Professor Saeed says the Centre's strength lies in its ability to bring together established expertise in teaching, research and knowledge transfer in broad aspects of Islamic studies to further knowledge and understanding of Islam in its historical and modern complexities. It will also function as an important think tank in relation to Islamic issues, particularly in the Australian context, and contribute to public debate.

The University of Melbourne has taught Arabic and Islamic Studies for more than four decades, while the Griffith Islamic Research Unit, established with substantial funding from the Queensland Islamic Community, has quickly developed a

strong relationship and reputation with State and Federal government agencies and the Islamic community.

The University of Western Sydney has a substantial program of studies in Arabic at undergraduate and postgraduate level and research expertise in Arabic language, interpreting and translation, sociological and cultural studies.

“...the Centre's strength lies in its ability to bring together established expertise in teaching, research and knowledge transfer in broad aspects of Islamic studies to further knowledge and understanding of Islam in its historical and modern complexities.”

The Centre will offer a major in Islamic Studies within the Bachelor of Arts program to new and existing students at Melbourne, Western Sydney and Griffith universities, and, where possible, to students enrolled in other Australian universities and to individuals through community access programs.

Graduates will be well-versed in both the Australian and Islamic contexts a necessary requirement for bridging the gap between the two worlds.

A range of subjects will be offered from 2008 onwards, and all will be available on-line, with tutorials offered at each institution. The following subjects will be available during 2008 and 2009:

- Understanding Islam and Muslim Societies
- Islam in the Modern World
- Great Texts of Islam: Qur'an and Hadith
- Islam in Southeast Asia
- Islam and the Making of Europe
- Women in Arabic and Islamic Literature
- Islamic Law in a Changing World
- Islam, Media and Conflict
- Sociology of Religion
- Ethical Traditions in Islam
- Great Empires of Islamic Civilisation
- Islam in the West

The Centre will also promote postgraduate study in Islamic Studies.

Professor Saeed says development of these programs on a national basis will assist the participating universities to develop national responses to needs in research, teaching and community engagement in Islamic Studies.

The new Centre will be advised on Muslim community needs by an appointed national advisory board. The Centre is keen to establish a register of interested community members and would be happy to receive your feedback and comments.

Email: nceis-info@unimelb.edu.au
Web: www.nceis.unimelb.edu.au

