

British Museum Hajj Exhibition Hajj Journey to the Heart of Islam

“Hajj celebrates peace, unity and our equality before God – men and women, of all ages, from every nation. It is a profound, life changing experience – it doesn’t guarantee a passage to heaven, but it focuses all Muslims on what is really important in life, as prescribed by our faith,” said Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United Kingdom & Ireland at a Media Lunch on Tuesday, 24th of January 2012 prior to the British Museum Hajj Exhibition which will be inaugurated on Thursday, the 26th of January. High Royal Highness Prince Charles, heir to the British Throne, will be the honorary Guest.

The King Abdul Aziz Public Library of Saudi Arabia in cooperation with the British Museum is holding an Exhibition, Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam, which will be inaugurated on Thursday, the 26th of January, 2012 at the British Museum. Prince Charles is going to be the honorary guest for the inauguration of this exhibition and Prince Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and a Member of the Board of King Abdul Aziz Public Library will be present at the inauguration ceremony among others. . The British Museum Hajj Exhibition will be opened from 26 January to 15 April, 2012.

Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf at Media Lunch at Saudi Embassy at London

The Saudi Arabian Embassy at London held a media lunch in preparation for the British Museum Exhibition on Hajj, titled Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam, at the Saudi Embassy, London, on Tuesday, 24th of January, 2012. In the beginning, Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom & Ireland, gave a short statement regarding the importance of Hajj as a spiritual journey, so central to the Muslim faith. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam and Muslims all over the world are very much concerned about Hajj. That’s why, the Saudi Ambassador wanted to explain to Muslim and non-Muslim media about the importance of Hajj and its centrality to Islam and of course, Hajj has to be done in Makkah.

The Saudi Ambassador said, “We are sitting in the majlis, at

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the heart of the embassy where we hold prayers every Friday. You will see that pictures of the Holy Cities of Makkah Al-mukarrama and Medinah Almunawara surround us. This is particularly appropriate as we are here today to talk about the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah Al-mukarrama which is the focus of an exhibition being launched at the British Museum this week and to which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has contributed.”

Prince Mohammed also mentioned, “This exhibition celebrates Hajj and traces the experiences of pilgrims undertaking this inspirational journey over the centuries. It also includes important artifacts and archive material from the Kingdom.”

“Through the exhibition you will see that Hajj has changed: from a journey of great length and hardship undertaken by thousands, to the pilgrimage experienced by Muslims today, undertaken by millions,” said the Saudi Ambassador.

Last year three million people from every corner of the world undertook Hajj. Many millions more visited the Holy sites on the smaller pilgrimage of Umrah.

“To accommodate the growing number of pilgrims who wish to undertake Hajj a dramatic expansion of Makkah Al-Mukarramah has become essential. The expansion, which we will also hear about today, will more than double the size of the prayer area around the Ka’bah, the House of God built by Abraham, peace be upon him,” said Prince Mohammed and added, “Hajj is not just a physical journey: it is the most important spiritual journey a Muslim ever makes. It is an extraordinary experience. We leave our homes, our families and our every day concerns behind us, and submit ourselves totally to God’s will. This journey is at the core of what it is to be Muslim.”

The Saudi Ambassador also mentioned, “Hajj celebrates peace, unity and our equality before God – men and women, of all ages, from every nation. It is a profound, life changing experience – it doesn’t guarantee a passage to heaven, but it focuses all Muslims on what is really important in life, as prescribed by our faith.”

“It is our duty individually as Muslims to make this journey. And it is our prime concern as



left: Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf addressing the British media at British Hajj Exhibition



the people of Saudi Arabia, under the guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, to look after all pilgrims, their security and welfare and to care for Makkah Al-mukarrama and Medina Almunawara,” concluded Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf, Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Dr. Ahmed bin Saifuddin Turkistani

Then Dr. Ahmad ibn Saifuddin Turkistani, on behalf of the King Abdul Aziz Public Library, Saudi Arabia, spoke about the history of Hajj and the history of Ka’aba as the center for Hajj and center of gravity for Muslims to come from all over the world in order to perform their duty of Hajj. Obviously Dr. Turkistani also talked about Hajj

during the past, through different stages and periods till today. He also mentioned about different projects of developments and expansion of the Grand Masjid in Makkah al-Mukarramah and the holy sites. He particularly mentioned about the projects of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques regarding the expansion of Masjid al-Haram, expansion of al-Masaa, the new