

وَأَنذِرْ عَلَىٰ آلِهِمُ الرَّجْعَ ۚ

"And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House"
(Quran 3:97)

A JOURNEY OF FAITH,
PATIENCE AND LEARNING

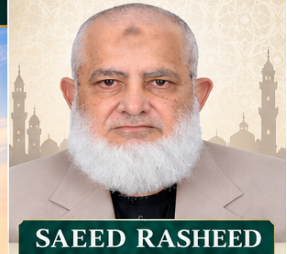
ROAD TO MAKKAH Hajj 2024

A PILGRIM'S MEMORIES,
EXPERIENCES & LESSONS

"Hajj is not just a journey to a place,
it is a journey within."

— Saeed Rasheed

Millions of
Steps...
One Destination...
A Lifetime of
Lessons...



SAEED RASHEED

Researcher | Journalist | Auditor |
Editor | Policy Analyst

*Evidence. Analysis. Accountability.
For a Better Pakistan.*

Saeed Rasheed is a researcher, journalist, auditor, editor and policy analyst with a keen interest in governance, public finance, accountability and socio-economic development. His work focuses on examining real issues, analysing available evidence and presenting practical insights and policy recommendations. He believes that research should help ordinary people understand complex issues and encourage institutions to be more transparent, responsible and accountable.



MAKKAH

The Heart of the Journey



MINA

The Test of Patience



ARAFAT

A Day of Supplication



MUZDALIFAH

A Night of Faith



JAMARAT

A Step Towards Completion



MADINA

A City of Peace

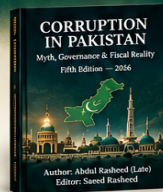
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CORRUPTION IN PAKISTAN

Myth, Governance & Fiscal Reality
Fifth Edition — 2026



Author: Abdul Rasheed (Late)
Editor: Saeed Rasheed

Also by Saeed Rasheed

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A continuing effort to
promote informed debate,
evidence-based analysis and
a more accountable Pakistan.

"May this booklet serve as a small contribution
to help future pilgrims."
— Saeed Rasheed

MEMORIES | EXPERIENCES | LESSONS | A BETTER TOMORROW

ROAD TO MAKKAH — HAJJ 2024

A Pilgrim's Memories, Experiences & Lessons

ROAD TO MAKKAH | HAJJ 2024

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Saeed Rasheed is a researcher, journalist, auditor, editor and policy analyst with a keen interest in governance, public finance, accountability and socio-economic development. His work focuses on examining real issues, analysing available evidence and presenting practical insights and policy recommendations. He is also the editor of “Corruption in Pakistan — Myth, Governance & Fiscal Reality”, Fifth Edition (2026), authored by his late father, Abdul Rasheed.

“Independent thought, informed analysis and a commitment to public interest.”

A PERSONAL NOTE

Hajj is not simply a journey from one country to another. It is a journey of the heart.

In 2024, that dream became a reality for my wife and me. We travelled through the Government Hajj Scheme. I began the journey expecting the greatest challenge to be the rituals themselves. I discovered that transport, crowds, communication, accommodation, heat, medical needs and finding one's way could also become a major test.

I have written these memories not to discourage anyone from performing Hajj, but to preserve what I experienced and to offer practical lessons to those who may travel after me.

Some observations in this booklet are personal experiences rather than universal claims. Religious matters should be confirmed with qualified scholars.

1. THE JOURNEY BEGINS



We prepared for Hajj through the Government Hajj Scheme. We deposited approximately Rs. 1.2 million five months before departure and joined a WhatsApp group for preparation.

Much of the early communication concerned practical matters, but I felt that pilgrims also needed more preparation for the physical and organisational difficulties ahead.

LESSON: Prepare medicines, prescriptions, identification, emergency contacts, footwear and a walking routine before departure.

2. ARRIVAL IN MAKKAH



We arrived in Saudi Arabia on 1 June 2024. Baggage, room allocation and identification became confusing because a large number of pilgrims were being processed together.

The experience taught me that the first requirement of Hajj is patience.

LESSON: Keep your hotel, Maktab and emergency information written down as well as on your phone.

3. OUR FIRST UMRAH



Later that day we travelled towards the Haram. Seeing the Kaaba was one of the most profound moments of my life.

After Tawaf, Sa'i and prayer, leaving the Haram became difficult. My wife and I became separated and I eventually became unwell.

LESSON: Establish a family meeting point before entering crowded areas.

4. THE HEAT AND THE DISTANCE



Walking became one of the defining features of our Hajj. On one occasion we walked approximately 17,000 steps while trying to find the correct route and exit.

Extreme heat changes the experience of even ordinary distances.

LESSON: Physical preparation is part of Hajj preparation. Practise walking, stay hydrated and recognise your limits.

5. MINA



Our journey to Mina involved a long wait for transport. When we arrived, the camp was crowded and finding our place was difficult.

The experience made one lesson very clear: capacity planning matters. Tents, toilets, Wudu facilities, food and transport must match the number of pilgrims.

LESSON: Carry a small personal bag with water, essential medicines, identification and basic hygiene items.

6. ARAFAT



Arafat was both spiritually powerful and physically demanding. Finding our Maktab required considerable walking and guidance.

LESSON: Learn your camp location before the day begins, keep identification with you and do not depend entirely on verbal directions.

7. MUZDALIFAH



The night in Muzdalifah was among the hardest parts of the journey for me. Large crowds, limited facilities and water difficulties tested everyone's patience.

LESSON: Prepare for discomfort. Carry only what you can personally manage, and keep water and essential personal supplies available.

8. WHEN THE BODY SAYS ENOUGH



At one stage I became extremely weak and almost fainted. Emergency personnel eventually assisted me. My wife was central to my care and support.

LESSON: Hajj is also a journey of mutual responsibility. Families should look after vulnerable members and seek medical help early.

9. JAMARAT



The journey towards Jamarat involved long walking routes, intense heat and large crowds. I became seriously unwell and required assistance.

LESSON: Do not underestimate heat exposure. Plan your movement, hydrate, protect yourself from the sun and know where assistance can be found.

10. MY PERSONAL HAJJ DIFFICULTIES



I later sought religious guidance about several personal difficulties involving Ihram, cleanliness and the rituals. The experience was emotionally distressing because I worried about whether I had fulfilled every requirement correctly.

LESSON: Learn the rules of Hajj before travelling and seek guidance from a qualified, trustworthy scholar when a problem arises.

11. FROM MAKKAH TO MADINA



After the main Hajj period, we travelled towards Madina. The journey provided further observations about transport, rest facilities, food prices and passenger safety.

LESSON: The pilgrimage journey continues until you reach home. Transport safety, hygiene, accommodation and personal security remain important.

12. MADINA



Arriving in Madina brought a sense of peace after the hardships of the Hajj days. Being near Masjid-e-Nabawi was a deeply memorable part of the journey.

I also observed the commercial side of the city, with busy markets and higher prices in some locations.

LESSON: Preserve time for worship, reflection and rest rather than allowing shopping to dominate the final part of the journey.

LESSONS FOR FUTURE PILGRIMS

- 1.** Learn the basic rituals and common mistakes before leaving home.
- 2.** Keep essential medicines and prescriptions with you.
- 3.** Practise walking and prepare for heat.
- 4.** Keep hotel, Maktab and emergency information on paper and on your phone.
- 5.** Agree on a family meeting point.
- 6.** Carry water and essential personal supplies.
- 7.** Do not rely blindly on WhatsApp or unofficial religious advice.
- 8.** Seek qualified medical and religious assistance when needed.
- 9.** Remain patient when transport or accommodation is delayed.
- 10.** Remember that Hajj is a test of patience, cooperation and responsibility.

LESSONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

- Provide multilingual assistance.
- Organise baggage, room keys and identity cards through clear systems.
- Provide maps and written route instructions.
- Match toilet and Wudu capacity to actual crowd numbers.
- Position emergency medical response near major crowd routes.
- Communicate transport schedules clearly and consistently.
- Give all pilgrims dignity, safety and equal access to assistance.

A FINAL REFLECTION

Looking back, I do not remember Hajj simply as a series of difficulties. I remember it as a test of patience, faith, physical strength, marriage, friendship, humanity and personal responsibility.

People helped us. Volunteers guided us. My wife supported me. And I learned that a pilgrim must take responsibility for his own preparation.

“Preparation reduces hardship, but patience gives meaning to hardship.”

If you are preparing for Hajj, go with faith, humility and preparation. Learn the rituals. Prepare your body. Carry your medicines. Stay close to your family. Be patient with other pilgrims.

For me, Hajj 2024 was not a perfect journey. It was a real journey. It tested me, frightened me, exhausted me and taught me. Above all, it gave me memories that I will carry for the rest of my life.

Makkah — Mina — Arafat — Muzdalifah — Jamarat — Madina

One journey. Many difficulties. Many lessons. One unforgettable memory.