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## Private View of Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam

The British Museum, very kindly, has granted us a Private View of the new exhibition *Hajj; Journey to the heart of Islam*. The exhibition opens to the general public on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and our Private View is on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam will be the first major exhibition dedicated to the Hajj; the pilgrimage to Mecca (Makkah) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is central to the Muslim faith. The exhibition will examine the significance of the Hajj as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, exploring its importance for Muslims and looking at how this spiritual journey has evolved throughout history. It will bring together a wealth of objects from a number of different collections including important historic pieces as well as new contemporary art works which reveal the enduring impact of Hajj across the globe and across the centuries. The exhibition which has been organised in partnership with the King Abdulaziz Public Library Riyadh will examine three key strands: the pilgrim's journey with an emphasis on the major routes used across time (from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East); the Hajj today, its associated rituals and what the experience means to the pilgrim; and Mecca, the destination of Hajj, its origins and importance.

It is laid down in the Qur'an that it is a sacred duty for Muslims everywhere, if they are able, to make the journey to Mecca at least once in their lives. This pilgrimage takes place during the last month of the Islamic year, known as *Dhu'l Hijja*. At the heart of the sanctuary at Mecca lies the Ka'ba, the cube-shaped building that Muslims believe was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. It was in Mecca that the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore the city has long been viewed as a spiritual centre and the heart of Islam. The rituals involved with Hajj have remained unchanged since its beginning, and it continues to be a powerful religious undertaking which draws Muslims together from all over the world, irrespective of nationality or sect.

A wide variety of objects will be lent to the exhibition. Loans include significant material from Saudi Arabia including a *seetana* which covers the door of the Ka'ba as well as other historic and contemporary artefacts from key museums in the Kingdom. Other objects have come from major public and private collections in the UK and around the world, among them the British Library and the Khalili Family Trust. Together these objects will evoke and document the long and perilous journey associated with the pilgrimage, gifts offered to the sanctuary as acts of devotion

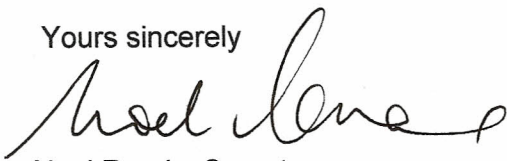
Honorary President: H.E. the Egyptian Ambassador  
Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean  
Vice Chairman: Professor Magdy Ishak-Hanna  
Treasurer: Mr. Mohamed Nasr Farid  
Secretary: Mr. Noel Rands  
Patron and Founder Member: Dr. Ahmed El Mokadem

and the souvenirs that are brought back from Hajj. They include archaeological material, manuscripts, textiles, historic photographs and contemporary art. The Hajj has a deep emotional and spiritual significance for Muslims, and continues to inspire a wide range of personal, literary and artistic responses, many of which will be explored throughout the exhibition.

There is no charge for this private view. However, some members and guests have asked me already about making a voluntary donation, and please note that this is voluntary. For that reason I am attaching a Gift Aid Form to this flyer which can be sent back to me with your advice on attending the Private View.

The main entrance to the Museum in Great Russell Street opens to us at 6.15pm on Thursday 8th March and commences with a talk on the exhibition by one of the curators; the evening ends at 8pm. For Security Reasons the museum needs to know the names of those attending so can you please return to me the slip below.

Yours sincerely



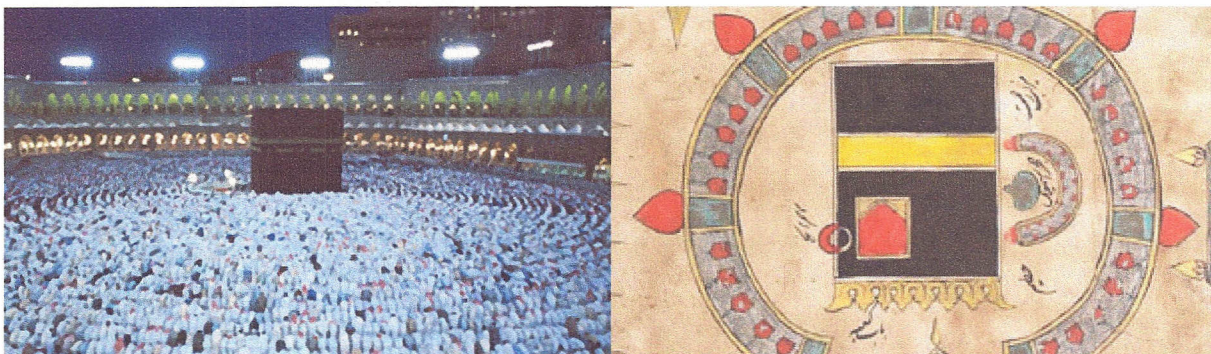
Noel Rands, Secretary

Please detach and send to 5, Brownlow Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 5JT/ e.mail [noelrands@hotmail.com](mailto:noelrands@hotmail.com)  
I /we would like to attend the Private View of the Hajj Exhibition at the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG:-

Name (s):  
Address:  
Tel/Fax/Email:

Signature:

Date:



### Gift Aid Declaration

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