

Home, Sweet Home !!

By

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Nearly all travel agents have received complaints over the past few days about their patrons, including those who visited the Holy Lands, about how they abuse the hotel facilities. In the communiqué, it's stated that patrons use the underside of the clothing iron to fry eggs, the kettle to make noodles, the hair dryer to dry their clothing (socks fit snugly on the nozzle), and the hand-lotion as shoe polish. Shower caps are also used to cover food stolen from the breakfast buffet! When complaints like these start pouring in, we all know that we are not wanted in Dubai or Durban anymore, so it's time to head home - home sweet home!

If you were amongst those fortunate one who just returned from a holiday, and not from those who just boasted to everyone that he is going on a world tour, but just hid indoors for six weeks due to embarrassment, then chances are that you are now broke, busted and burnt out. These words rhyme, but it's the reality of how we spend our holidays nowadays, and its high-time we change the way how we spend our leisure time and spare cash.

Broke

After counting the little savings one has, people either finance their holidays in one of two ways: either by defaulting on their children's school fees for the last two months, and dodging people they owe money to, or by maxing out their credit card. Either way, you will return broke, and in January, there will be no biscuits with your tea! In actual fact, you were broke before you left, and after returning, you will still be broke as you pay off your holiday many months after you splashed in the pool.

What is the allure of a holiday that it must become the most important feature of your annual calendar, even if you cannot afford one; even if the holiday, which supposed to relax you, causes you more stress? In December, one may have more pressing priorities like mending family relations or meeting business commitments, renovating one's home or anything else. The world may have starving children in Africa or the Middle-East, who survive on nothing but grass for days on end, whose women sit the entire day for fear of revealing their soiled clothing due to lack of sanitary pads; yet, this holiday cannot be sacrificed for anything in the world. What grip does a holiday have on one that it desensitizes one to the suffering of humanity, that one can spend R1000-00 on a single meal, knowing that in Syria, this is equal to 200 loaves of bread?

Leaving aside the capacity of one of our meals to feed an entire refugee camp, we have the cherry on the cake: the 828-metee high Burj al-Khalifah in downtown-Dubai which spent over 6 million US\$ on a 6-minute fireworks, LED light and laser beam display on the pagan festival of New Year's Eve. Spanning a total area of 32,467 sq metres, the illumination had 70,000 LED bulbs, linked seamlessly by 55 000 metres of cabling. Over 4.7 tonnes of fireworks were used for the fireworks display with 500 000 shots lighting up the sky. The event may go down in the Guinness Book of Records as the "World's Most-Watched Spectacle," but for Muslims, it will be one of the most shameful displays of wastage! It may even be a signal of how spectacularly they will be disgraced by the Almighty.

So, to answer the question: “Why is the annual holiday a must?” The answer is simple: it’s nothing but a status symbol. The more money you spend and the more exotic the location, the higher your position in society, and the more “oohs” and “aahs” you will receive. If you went to a nearby resort, then this is just a normal “weekend getaway,” not a “major holiday” – an economy holiday! And if you stayed at home, chilling, enjoying the quiet roads, peaceful neighbourhood, and pollution-free air, then you are from the “underprivileged.” You need to maybe rob a bank in order to afford the next holiday!

If the working class people strive to live like the Jones, then the wealthy flaunt their wealth in style. Whilst an average week in Durban for a family of five, during peak season, costs about R25 000-, the wealthy pay up to R500 000-00 for two weeks, globe-trotting first class, and staying at five-star hotels. Now if the purpose of a holiday is being achieved after spending such obscene amounts of money, then at least we can say that something was achieved. However, generally, the mental and physical rejuvenation one so desperately seeks after a holiday, is not achieved at all, and thus sadly the money spent falls into the category of *israf* (extravagance).

Busted

Islam has a system of achieving peace of mind, physical relaxation and complete harmony of body and soul without spending an arm and a leg. Although it has nothing to do with the western concept of “holiday” which is nothing but a billion-dollar hotel and tourism industry aimed at filling the coffers of the wealthy, it will NOT deprive you of going anywhere and doing any of the clean fun activities people normally look forward to.

You are “busted” if until now, you haven’t realized that your holiday has been commercialized to such an extent that the industry benefits more than you. Even your ‘Umrah trip is nothing but a

commercial trap if your only concern was snapping dozens of photos in front of the Ka'bah, many with one's hair uncovered, and posting them instantly on Facebook. Indeed, the modern holiday is meant to leave you financially and spiritually broke. In fact, the concept of an annual holiday, the system of time shares, pleasure cruises and water resorts are all modern concepts, not known 100 years before. Holidays, previously, were designated for purely religious purposes or to celebrate a national event like "Freedom Day" or "Women's Day." It was never more than a day or two, but gradually it was extended to include the secular "recreational" holiday which lasts up to three months in certain countries. Such long periods of inactivity, especially for children, is very dangerous. This results in the parents, unable to keep their children under supervision for so long, giving them freedom to do whatever they want to do.

You are more "busted" if you think that a western-style holiday frees you of tension and prepares you for the year ahead. All this is a nothing but a gimmick. For many, a holiday means going to another place where there are more strangers than acquaintances, dropping your guard, and satisfying your every physical and sexual appetite, even if your Creator is angered: "YOLO – You Only Live Once," they say. Such people wait for December to commit sins they didn't committed throughout the year. The amount of women they "undress" with their eyes only in one day is more than what they come across in an entire year. Some men and women are actually very "generous" to others in this regard. Instead of other's undressing them in their imagination, they actually do it for them and appear naked before them!

In the midst of all this mindless fun and entertainment, the Almighty often sends His silent reminders to us. We had our fair share of them this holiday, but did anyone take notice? Those shark-attacks, vehicle accidents, drowning, hijackings and other mishaps were not co-incidental. The Almighty, who is the Giver of true happiness, and Who has afforded us an opportunity to travel upon His land, doesn't want us to forget Him at such a time of joy. True happiness comes by attaining His blessings, not by driving it away.

Burnt-Out

After a holiday, you generally need a full week to recover from it. You were so stressed making sure your car is safe all the time, your cash is still in your pocket, that the food you waited for over an hour at the restaurant is not burnt, and a drunk driver not slamming into your car, that now you need to take a holiday from your holiday! You also suddenly realize that you have a deep sense of guilt and a sense of unfulfillment from all the wrongs that you committed on the trip. Not once you thought of the Almighty, except for maybe a short while on a Friday. As the All-Merciful Almighty gives you a second chance, you ask yourself: "Which was my original holiday, the first or the second?"

If a holiday leaves you bankrupt, with a feeling of anxiety and dissatisfaction, and more stressed, then it's high time you change the manner on how you achieve perfect relaxation. So, the next time you think of packing your bags and heading off to the coast, take a minute and first ask yourself: "Will I do it the right way, or the wrong way?"