

# My Ijtema Experience

*In Loving Memory of My Beloved Uncle Lutfur Rahman Mahmood  
Sierra Leone Missionary 1989-1996*

I went to the Khuddam Ijtema this year (2018), only my second time going. I am a nasir now, so I attended my second Khuddam Ijtema as a guest. My first Khuddam Ijtema was last year (2017), which was my last year as a khadim. I can't remember why I didn't go previously, maybe scheduling, maybe timing, maybe location; I don't know. However, I regret not going sooner. These two Ijtemas have been amazing!

These Ijtemas have provided a much needed vacation, brought me closer to God, brought me closer to other members of the Jama'at, provided me wonderful life experiences, and created life-long memories. The above are not listed in any order of importance. The 2017 Khuddam Ijtema had Juma on the beach. Can words describe this experience? It's one of a kind. What's it like to pray outside? What's it like to pray with sand beneath oneself? What's it like to pray with the Pacific Ocean behind oneself?

How can one tell if they had an amazing experience? When one wants to repeat that experience. I want to have Juma on the beach again. And again. And again. I want to go to some unique place like Rocky Mountain National Park again. I want to hear the speeches, the experiences, the poems, the discussions from prominent people in the Jama'at to my local brothers...again. I want to do namaaz with members of the Jama'at again, members that are from other places, that I can't see regularly, but when I see them, we're all friends, we're all brothers.

There were places that I took members to visit and explore. A Hindu Temple. A place to see the stars, the Milky Way Galaxy, and Mars. A new hike. It was nice to contribute to my brothers' Ijtema experience. The part that gives me much pleasure is giving something to them, helping make their Ijtema experience better. Life is better when one can serve others. I believe that one of the best principles in life is to serve not just the Jama'at community, but the global community. I want to serve...again.

I wanted to write this essay because I was reminded how my uncle would write all the time and was well-known for his writings throughout the Jama'at. It feels nice and important to write in his memory, do something that he enjoyed and can do no longer. I don't have the skill or knowledge or regularity to write like him. However, it's nice to pay homage to someone important to me. You are missed Mamoonsaan.

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