

Camp CoEJ Diaries, Day 2

Monday 28th July



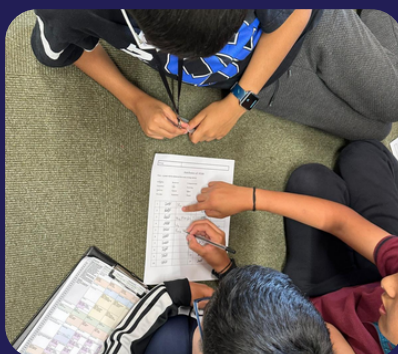
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Camp Diaries

Day 2 – Boys Camp

Today marks the second day of Camp CoEJ, as well as being our first official day at our campsite. The day began with Fajr namaz, where our campers were all exhausted from the excitement of meeting one another and playing games together all night. After Fajr, we all slept soundly and woke up around 8am for a wonderful breakfast of chai, croissants and fruit.

Shortly after 11am, we all packed up and loaded our suitcases onto the coach, setting off for the campsite, which is full of trees and greenery. Whilst the coach journey felt long to some, many of our happy little campers managed to catch some shut eye before we arrived at the campsite. The campers, as well as their mentors, all put their suitcases safely in the common rooms before the campers made their way to their first of three daily lessons. Whilst the children all got acquainted with their teachers, the mentors tirelessly took the campers' bags to their rooms and left fresh bedsheets for the campers to put on during our daily allocated planet time. The campers also took part in their first jamaat namaz at the campsite, with zuhr and asr jamaat being performed before lunchtime!



For lunch, the campers had a delicious meal of Spanish Chicken, which was served by our campers from Jupiter. Lots of campers enjoyed the flavour of the food, as a nice hearty meal was just what our little campers needed to keep their stomachs happy and their brains active for the rest of the day's lessons. This was followed by planet time, where our campers braved the treacherous task of having to make their own beds and settle in to their new rooms. Many of our campers used the time to also bond with each other, playing games such as 'Cover Your Assets' and 'Uno'.

After planet time, we had our daily PDT (personal development time) session, which some of the children have comedically dubbed 'PTSD' due to the similarity of letters in the acronym. This was filled with more brain teasing exercises to keep our campers and their minds engaged. This included a quiz on different football team logos and the translations of different names of Allah SWT from the Asma al-Husna. This was followed by Hasnain Bha reading our campers the wonderful messages sent from home by their loved ones. This was filled with many embarrassed faces and loud "Awwws" from all the campers. It was then time for the last two of our three daily lessons, where the children learned about understanding Salaah, parents in the Quran and the importance of collaboration and the 4 Cs with our teachers, dedicated to nurturing our campers to become more knowledgeable people by the end of Camp CoEJ.

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This was followed by dinner, fish fingers and potato wedges, served by our wonderful campers in Mars, with Jupiter campers tidying up. This was then subsequently followed by our Arbaeen workshop, where the campers of Saturn performed a recitation of Surah al-Ala with English translation, poetry about the love of Imam Hussain (AS) and a very well thought out debate about how whether the remembrance of Imam Hussain (AS) leads to substantial benefits. This debate captured the rest of our campers, with audience questions showing an excellent level of engagement from the crowd, followed shortly by matam. Our campers then had tabarruk, a wonderful addition of cake and ice cream, to conclude our daily Arbaeen workshop.

Finally, we ended our evening with Maghrib and Isha Jamaat namaz. Everybody is positively excited at the thought of what activities we have planned for the rest of the week.

Signing off from the mentor team,

Jafar Bha Khawaja (Mars Mentor)

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The morning began with campers rising from their sleeping bags at 8am. Breakfast consisted of fresh fruit, croissants, and juice, a refreshing start to the day. As the luggage was loaded onto the coaches, the campers spent their final moments at the Birmingham mosque site enjoying heartfelt conversations and playing games like UNO and Mafia, strengthening the bonds they had built. Our coach journey started with Dua al-Safar and Ayatul Kursi, beautifully led by Sakina Bai. After an hour-long drive, the campers settled into their rooms and neatly set up their beds.

For lunch, Planet Venus lovingly served a warm and hearty meal of Spanish Chicken and some refreshing salad. As always, the atmosphere was full of laughter and chatter, with campers helping each other and showing appreciation to those serving, a beautiful reflection of the values we continue to nurture on camp.

During Planet Time, the campers engaged in creative and reflective activities. They created posters representing their personalities and discussed their personal goals and heroes from the story of Karbala, leading to some deep and thoughtful conversations.

Salaah was led by Raihana Bai, and it was heartwarming to witness the active participation from the campers. Many of them volunteered to lead different parts of the prayer and duas, demonstrating confidence.

Throughout the afternoon, the campers rotated between three inspiring classes:

- Raihana Bai led the Arbreen class, where campers explored the history of Karbala and expressed their reflections through meaningful writing.
- Aaliya Bai Yusufali introduced a "Straight Path" diagram in her class, sparking discussions around what helps us draw nearer to Jannah.
- Fatema Bai Pirmohamed ran a hands-on creative workshop where campers began designing Islamic inspired tote bags. They learned embroidery and basic sewing techniques, which many found both relaxing and rewarding.



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After a short break, Naseera Bai and Sakina Bai facilitated a lively “Agree to Disagree” session. Topics included: “Women are better than men,” “Friends are more important than family,” “Patience is limited or unlimited,” and “Privilege is not a good thing.” The campers engaged enthusiastically, sharing a variety of perspectives in respectful and passionate discussion.

Dinner, served by Planet Mercury, was fish and chips, made even more special by the serving campers who announced in Camp CoEJ fashion, “This food was made with love, served with love, and we invite you to eat it with love.” Following dinner, the campers received heartfelt messages from their families, which were met with laughter, embarrassment, and lots of love. They then enjoyed a sweet treat of brownies and ice cream.

Later in the evening, Naseera Bai gave a talk about her personal journey, from her education and travels to her work setting up a Hijama (cupping) clinic. She introduced the concept of energy fields and seasonal personalities, prompting campers to reflect on their own traits. To conclude, each camper received a small, meaningful gift reminding them to “Bee who they are.”

To end the day in remembrance and reflection, the girls dressed in black and wore abayas out of respect for Imam Husayn (as). The evening majlis began with a Quran recitation by Aaliya Bai, followed by a moving, original marsiya by Raihana Bai. She then delivered a short talk on the significance of Arbreen and the etiquettes of majalis. The session concluded with matam led by our mentors Sakina Bai and Sabiha Bai.

Alhamdulillah, it was a truly fulfilling day. We mentors are incredibly proud of every camper, whether they stepped up to recite during Salaah, poured their hearts into classroom activities, or simply made someone smile.

We have already learnt so much from these incredible individuals and we can't wait to see what the next few days bring inshallah!

**Haniyah Bai (Venus mentor) and
Masumah Bai (Mercury mentor)**

