

## The Months and Seasons

[Page 1]

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Blessings be upon the Prophet, the Exalted.

Praise to the One who created the four seasons!

These are difficult times. Listen to what I have to say.

Let us submit ourselves to the Honorable Ahmad.<sup>1</sup>

From the earth to far on high, [he has] no equal.

I intend to seek out knowledge of numerology,<sup>2</sup>

from God so that we may become well versed in it.

Listen my friend, as I will be speaking

the truth. You are my witness—I will speak nothing but the truth!

My friend, you ask about the days that make up the

year. Undoubtedly,

that's the purpose of the Arabian [Islamic] calendar.

And note that it's also appropriate for the Ajamiyyah.<sup>3</sup>

Take note as I examine [the months] so that you may grasp

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<sup>1</sup> *Ahmad* is one of the prophet Muhammad's numerous names.

<sup>2</sup> While the word *al-ḥisābī* in Arabic refers to arithmetic and the science of mathematics, in Hausa it has taken on a broader meaning that includes the use of the alphanumeric system in astronomy and astrology, for determining auspicious times for planting, romance and other human activities, and for reckoning dates and times.

<sup>3</sup> *Ajamiyyah* means non-Arabs, but here it specifically refers to the Hausa people.

every aspect of the Ajami [Hausa] months.

The first are the days of the Dry Season,

which inevitably lead into the Rainy Season.

As for July, it ushers in the Rainy Season.

As for August, it ushers in the Harvest Season.

November ushers in the Cold Season.

Oh reader, do you hear what I'm saying?

Anyone who has experienced October<sup>4</sup> should understand the differences we've noted.

Each [season] has its distinct time beyond which it cannot extend.

Each [season] has ninety days and [in some cases an additional] one – [I will] list them for us.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Jabhah,<sup>6</sup> has two [additional days] -- that is its nature.

Each of the seasons is governed by seven

planets. We distinguish them as follows. So, there is:

[Page 2]

The Dry Season (Far'u),<sup>7</sup> the Rainy Season (Haqqatun),

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<sup>4</sup> October is known for its dramatic changes in weather, as the brief but severe hot spells of the harvest season give way to the cold.

<sup>5</sup> The number of days in the Hausa year is between 360 and 366 days. This is why the poet notes that each season has 90 days. But not every season has precisely 90 days, so he says: "90 plus additional day(s)."

<sup>6</sup> *Al-Jabhah* (Gamma Leonis) is a binary star system in the constellation of Leo. *Al-Jabhah* or the planet of summer rules for a total of 14 days (from the 31<sup>st</sup> of July to the 13<sup>th</sup> of August), two more than the average number of days governed by a planet, which is 12.

<sup>7</sup> As stated earlier, there are four seasons, each having seven different classes of planets and their distinct seats.

the Harvest Season (Sarfa), and the Cold Season (Shawlatu).

[Try to] distinguish between the stars Daili and Ha-Kabiru<sup>8</sup>

which create the unique phenomenon of Nahaju, which you can observe.

If you are wondering about the characteristics

of the two [the stars Daili and Ha-Kabiru], know that they bring passion.

Listen, the characteristics [of these stars], together with their celestial movements,

mean that [their effects] are not permanent, let alone usual.

As for the star Jumbari,<sup>9</sup> whose impact appears at night,

there are forty days in its cycle.

As for the star Yulyuza, which confers power,

its cycle is also forty days, no doubt.

These are seven stars that evildoers make use of.<sup>10</sup>

Those who don't believe in Almighty God like these stars.

In March, they make sacrifices to the star Kahhu.

May Allah protect us from their similar evildoings when the star Inkis appears.

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<sup>8</sup> *Daili* and *Ha-Kabiru* are two stars that, when they appear together, create the distinct phenomenon of *Nahaju*.

<sup>9</sup> There are two stars, *Jumbari* and *Yalyuza*, that are different from the other planets. *Jumbari* only has an impact on human beings during the night, while *Yalyuza* is active only during the day and confers the powers of total control and exploitation.

<sup>10</sup> The poet notes that wicked people harness the power of such planets to commit evil acts or to damage someone's life or property. He specifies the seven planets used for these evil ends: *Daili* and *Ha-Kabiru*; *Kahhu* and *Inkis*; *Yunyubi* and *Unsuru*; and *Ma'u Nisa*.

You see, these are the seven (stars) that were used to destroy the *Aad* people.<sup>11</sup>

[God] used them without hesitation to accomplish His will.

There is also the star Yunyuhi that impacts the night of Unsuru.

Nothing can change this predestined relationship.

[When] you get to April, there is the star called Ma'u Nisa.

Oh Allah, save us from it, keep it far away from us!

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<sup>11</sup> The people of *Aad* lived in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. They lived after the great flood (see Quran 7:66-70; 26:124 – 130). The *Aad* were a polytheistic group who established a society that was strong, rich and influential, building palaces and other structures as symbols of their power.