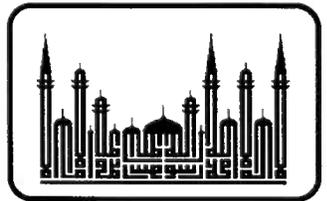


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Perspectives



A bimonthly newsletter published by Foundation for Islamic Knowledge * April/May 1997, Zul-Qi'dah/Zul-Hijjah 1417 * Vol. 3, No.2

Editorial

Although many advanced facilities have been developed for Islamic education, including videotapes and multimedia software systems, most of the Islamic full-time and week-end schools are not using modern technology in their curricula. They neither engage nor challenge their students. Little attention is given by the present Islamic schools to the fact that most of the secular public and private schools are incorporating advanced instructional and communication technologies into their educational programs. In a few years, all the schools in the U.S. will be connected to the Internet.

The use of advanced instructional technology in teaching Islam to Muslim youth and children is very important since it can significantly enhance the effectiveness of education, and makes the students feel not inferior to other religious groups. It also dispels the notion the Muslims are backward. Therefore, national Muslim organizations should work with major Islamic software developers, and communication companies, specialized in distance learning, to provide Islamic curricula suitable for the U.S., as well as low-cost video teleconferencing facilities for Islamic schools throughout the U.S.

Few attempts have been made in that direction. However, they have not

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ALIM - Islamic Software on CD-ROM for the PC

Version 4.5 of the multimedia *Alim* program on CD-ROM provides lots of information on Islam which is particularly useful for English - speaking Muslims and non-Muslims. It has full color Arabic script of Qur'an with 30 hours of recitation; translations by Yusuf Ali, Pickthall and Shakir; translation; introduction to the Surahs by Maududi; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Al-Muwatta*, *Al-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan Abu-Dawood*, *Hadith* books; *Fiqh-us-Sunnah* books; and Islamic reference books (including a chronological history of Islamic events that took place from the birth of the Prophet to the Twentieth century, a dictionary of Islamic terms, and biographies of the companions of the Prophet). It has search facilities by word, phrase, person, *hadith* narrator, and subject. It also has facilities for transferring text to a word processor, and printing the search results. The program is distributed by ISL Software Corporation, 2037 Featherwood Street, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6645, Tel. (800) 443-3636, FAX (301) 662-9199. □

The screenshot displays the 'Al-Qur'an in Arabic with Recitation' software interface. At the top, there are controls for 'Surah' (110), 'Ayah' (1), and 'Page' (603). The main window shows the title 'سُورَةُ النَّاسِ' and the Basmala 'بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ'. Below this, the text of the surah is displayed in large, clear Arabic calligraphy. A sidebar on the left lists various categories: 'Hadith & Fiqh', 'Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith and Subjects', 'Sahih Muslim Hadith (Abridged)', 'Al-Muwatta Hadith and Subjects', 'Al-Tirmidhi Hadith (Abridged)', 'Sunan of Abu-Dawood (Abridged)', 'Fiqh-us-Sunnah and Subjects', 'Hadith Qudsi', and 'Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon'. The main content area on the right shows 'Surah 110. An-Nasr' with a 'See Section' link. Below the title, it lists 'Name' and 'Period of Revelation'. The 'Name' section explains that the surah takes its name from the word 'nasr' occurring in the first verse. The 'Period of Revelation' section states that this is the last surah of the Quran to be revealed, and provides details about its revelation according to Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar, and others.

Reflections

Dr. Ahmed K. Noor

Avoiding Shirk

تجنب الشرك

Although all practising Muslims repeat the *shahadah* (there is no one worthy of worship except Allah) many times every day, only few understand its practical implications - liberating the individual from all forms of *shirk*, and freeing his/her conscience from servitude to any false gods. In this article an attempt is made to explain the Arabic word *shirk*, and to describe the different types of *shirk*.

Meaning, and Types of Shirk

The Arabic word *shirk* and its derivatives are mentioned 168 times in the Qur'an. *Shirk* refers to polytheism, i.e., the worship of others along with Allah. It implies ascribing to others besides Allah divine attributes. *Shirk* also encompasses any object which a person may hold in regard higher than, or equal to, Allah. Allah (SWT) and all His messengers have placed great emphasis on teaching us *Tawheed* (monotheism), and warning us against its antithesis - *shirk*, or associating partners with Allah. For example Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was commanded to say:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ وَمَا مِن إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
الوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ.
(سورة ص - آية ٦٥)

"Say: Truly I am a warner: no god is there but Allah, the One, Supreme, and Irresistible." (Qur'an 38:65)

Shirk is the most heinous of all sins; so much so that this is the only sin for which forgiveness is not possible (Qur'an 4:48). Just as the worst crime in an earthly state is that of treason, as it cuts at the very existence of the state, in the Divine Kingdom, the unforgivable sin is that of treason and rebellion against Allah - through associating partners in His being, His divine

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا
(سورة النساء - آية ٤٨)
"Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives everything else, to whom He pleases; to set up partners with Allah (in worship) is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."
(Qur'an 4:48)

attributes, His powers, and His rights. The Prophet (PBUH) informed us that anyone who dies without committing *shirk* will enter paradise.

من لقي الله لا يشرك به شيئاً دخل
الجنة .
(حديث شريف)

Over the years, the practice of *shirk* was manifested in the worship of variety of objects and creations of Allah,



"Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is indeed the highest wrongdoing"
(Qur'an 31:13)

including idols; the sun, moon and stars; angels; *jinns*; evil spirits; saints; spiritual leaders and prophets (see the article on page 5). However, the different categories of *shirk* can be grouped into three general types, namely (see the figure on page 3):

- The major *shirk* الشرك الأكبر
- The minor *shirk* الشرك الأصغر
- The inconspicuous *shirk*

الشرك الخفي

The three types are described subsequently.

Major Shirk

The major *shirk* can be divided into four categories: *shirk* in supplication
شرك الدعاء ; in intention
شرك النية والإرادة والقصد
; in obedience
شرك الحجة ; and in loving
شرك الطاعة .

The First Category is association in supplication. This involves directing one's supplications to other than Allah as a means of gaining provisions, being cured from sickness, relieved from distress, or for any other purpose.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ
وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مَنَّ
الظَّالِمِينَ. (سورة يونس - آية ١٠٦)

"Do not call on any other than Allah; such can neither profit you nor hurt you. And if you do, you shall certainly be of those who do wrong."

(Qur'an 10:106)

The Second Category of major *shirk* is association in the intention. This refers to performing acts of worship or religious deeds not for the sake of Allah, but directed either towards other deities or towards worldly gain.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا
نُوفَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا
يُخْسُونَ . أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا
وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ .
(سورة هود - آيات ١٥ ، ١٦)

"Those who desire this life and its glitter, to them We shall pay (the price of) their deeds in this same life in full measures. They are those for whom there is nothing in the hereafter but fire. Vain are their designs and of no effect are their deeds."

(Qur'an 11:15,16)

The Third Category is association in obedience. This refers to rendering obedience to any authority

(e.g., rulers or scholars) against the commands of Allah (SWT). The Prophet (PBUH) said:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق .

There is no obedience to any human being if it results in disobeying Allah.

The Fourth Category is association in loving Allah (SWT). This refers to loving someone or something (e.g., wealth) more than, or as much as, one loves Allah.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
أندادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ .

(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٦٥)

"There are people who take others besides Allah as equal with Him. They love them as much as they love Allah. But the believers have more love for Allah." (Qur'an 2:165)

Minor Shirk

This type of *shirk* refers to acts of worship or religious deeds performed for showing off, or for gaining fame or praise. Minor *shirk* does not take a person out of the fold of Islam, but it is nevertheless a grave sin. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

إن أخوف ما أخاف عليكم الشرك
الأصغر - الرياء ، يقول الله يوم
القيامة إذا جرى الناس بأعمالهم :
إذهبوا إلى الذين كنتم تراؤون في
الدنيا ، فإنظروا هل تجدون عندهم
جزاء .

The thing I fear most for you to fall into is minor shirk - showing off. Allah will say to the people who commit it on the day of judgment when every one will account for his/her deeds:

Go back to the ones whom you showed off your deeds for their sake, and see if they can reward you.

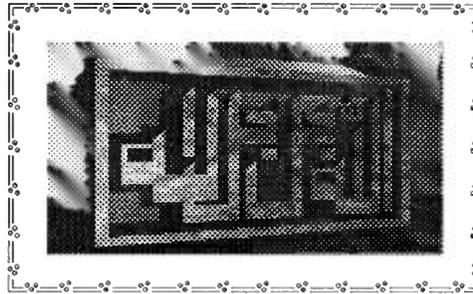
Inconspicuous Shirk

This type of *shirk* implies being inwardly dissatisfied with the inevitable

condition that has been ordained for one by Allah (SWT). For example, lamenting that had you done, or not done, such and such; or had you approached such and such, you would have had a better status.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

الشرك فيكم أخفى من ديب النمل ،
وسأدلك على شيء إذا فعلته أذهب
عنك صغار الشرك وكباره ، تقول :
اللهم إني أعوذ بك أن أشرك بك وأنا
أعلم ، وأستغفرك لما لا أعلم (تقولها
ثلاث مرات) .



The shirk in the Muslim Ummah (Nation) is more inconspicuous than the creeping of the ant. The major and minor forms of shirk can be expiated by saying (three times): O Allah! I seek Your refuge from that I should ascribe anything as partner in Your worship, being conscious of that, and beg Your pardon for that sin which I am not aware of.

Also the Prophet (PBUH) recommended that we disassociate ourselves from *shirk* by reciting at bedtime (Qur'an 109)

إقرأ (قل يا أيها الكافرون) عند
منامك فإنها براءة من الشرك

Epilogue

Today, many people who profess a faith in Allah and believe that He is their creator and sustainer, corrupt their faith by getting involved in one or more of the aforementioned types of *shirk* - believing in other things as if they were Allah's partners, or had some share in shaping of the world's destinies. In some circles, it is the power of nature or

of life, or of the human intellect personified in science, art, or invention. Allah (SWT) refers to this fact in the Qur'an:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُم بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ
مُشْرِكُونَ .

(سورة يوسف - آية ١٠٦)

"And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (others as partners) with Him." (Qur'an 12:106)

I pray to Almighty Allah to give us the strength to have the sincere intention of pleasing Him in all our actions; and to purify us and protect us from all forms of *Shirk*. Ameen

Continued from page 1
Editorial

produced, as yet, any visible results. Allah willing, the foundation for Islamic Knowledge will be working with interested groups in deploying the most advanced instructional facilities in Islamic schools.

May Allah guide us all and help us in making this effort useful to Islam and the Muslims. Ameen

Important Dates

On the basis of astronomical calculations, the important dates for the Islamic years 1417 and 1418 are listed subsequently. However, Muslims are encouraged to contact the National Muslim Organizations listed on the back page for decisions concerning the beginning of Ramadan and the two Eids.

1417:

Eid-ul AdhaApril 18,1997

1418:

Muharram 1,May 8,1997

Ramadan 1,..... December 31, 1997

Eid-ul FitrJanuary 30, 1998

Eid-ul AdhaApril 8, 1998

Worship of Objects and Creations of Allah

Among the manifestations of *shirk* (polytheism) is the worship of objects and creations of Allah. Some examples are discussed subsequently.

Worship of Idols

The most soul-corrupting *shirk*, practised in the past, is the worship of idols. Prophet *Ibrahim* (Abraham) led the movement for *tawheed* (monotheism) and prayed to Allah to protect him and his sons from the dangers and evil effects of idol worshipping.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا
الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ
الْأَصْنَامَ . رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ
النَّاسِ .

(سورة إبراهيم - من آيات ٣٥، ٣٦)

Remember Abraham said: "O my Lord! make this city one of peace and security; and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols. O my Lord! they have indeed led astray many among human beings."

(Qur'an 14:35,36)

Star Worship

People have worshipped the sun, moon, and stars thinking of them as powerful, permanent and unchanging. Some superstitious people read their fortunes in them. By contrast, rational people know that the stars cannot affect the destinies of human beings, but they are mere creatures and signs of Allah. The Qur'an teaches us this fact.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ
وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ .

(سورة فصلت - من آية ٣٧)

"Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun and the moon, but prostrate to Allah, who created them." (Qur'an 41:37)

Angel Worship

At times, some people believed that the angels were daughters of Allah. Others thought that angels were intermediaries or intercessors between Allah and human beings. Others still believed that the angels possess immense power, and can do good or harm to humans. The Qur'an cleared all these misconceptions. For example,

أَفَأَضْفَأَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَاثًا إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا
(سورة الإسراء - آية ٤٠)

"Has then your Lord preferred for you sons, and taken for Himself daughters among the angels? Truly you utter a most dreadful saying!"

(Qur'an 17:40)

Worship of Jinns and Evil spirits

This type of worship was a pagan practice, and is still prevalent in some communities. Some people think that the *Jinns* possess the knowledge of the unseen. The evil among humans make alliance with the evil *jinns*, and think falsely that they can benefit each other. The Qur'an has fully dealt with the subject of *jinn* worship.

وَيَوْمَ يَخْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ
أَهْؤَلَاءِ إِنِّي أَكُنُّمُ كَأَنَّا يَعْبُدُونَ . قَالُوا
سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّنَا مِن دُونِهِمْ بَلْ
كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ بِهِم
مُؤْمِنُونَ .

(سورة سبأ - آيات ٤٠ ، ٤١)

On the day He will gather them all together, and say to the angels, "Was it you that these people used to worship?" They will say, "Glory to You, You are our protector - not them. Nay, they worshipped the *Jinns*. Most of them believed in them".

(Qur'an 34:40,41)

Superstitious people believe in different kinds of evil spirits. The Prophet (PBUH) condemned all relations with evil spirits, as well as resort to sorcery and use of witchcraft.

Worship of Saints, Spiritual Leaders and Prophets

Some people sanctify their spiritual leaders. Others consecrate their prophets, saints and religious scholars. Some believe that righteous people are intermediaries or intercessors between them and Allah.

The Qur'an teaches us that the Prophets are chosen people of Allah. However, they are neither super human beings, nor do they have special powers, or share in the divinity of Allah. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasized this fact. For example:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا
إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِي
الْأَسْوَاقِ

(سورة الفرقان - من آية ٢٠)

"And the messengers whom we sent before you were all (men) who ate food and walked through the markets."

(Qur'an 25:20)

Undue belief in the glory, and exaggerated respect for the holiness, of Prophets, Saints, and spiritual leaders have led to the worship of their graves. Some people make images and statues of their prophets and saints. Some turn the graves of such righteous people into places of worship. They ask them for help, refuge and salvation, all of which should be asked only from Allah (SWT). Islam forbids praise and exaltation of righteous people to such an extent which amounts to their worship.

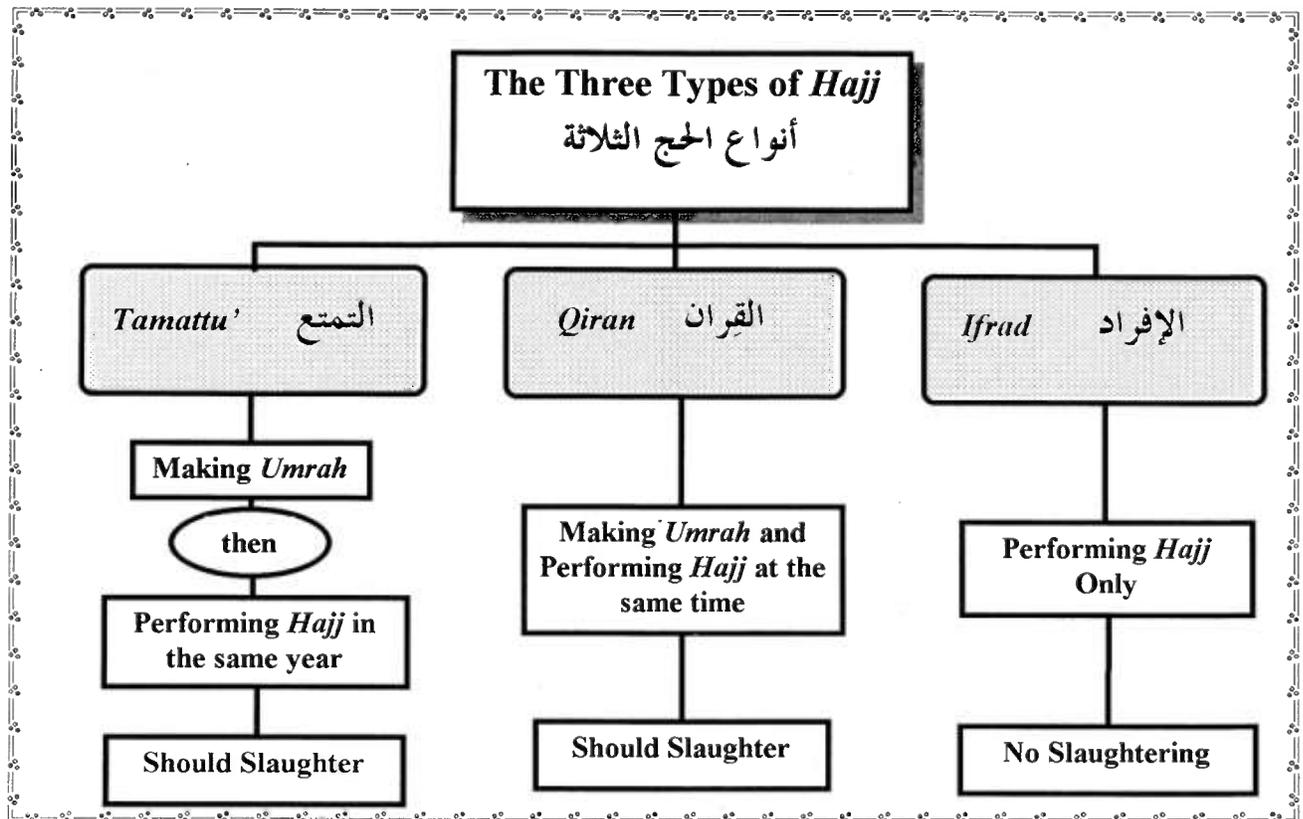
This is why the Prophet (PBUH) forbade us from praising and exalting him beyond proper limits.

لا تطروني كما أطرت النصارى ابن
مريم ، فإنما أنا عبد ، فقولوا : عبد
الله ورسوله (حديث شريف)

Do not exalt me as the Christians exalted the son of Mary. I am only a servant (of Allah). So say: The servant of Allah and His messenger.

We pray to Almighty Allah to protect us from worshipping any of His creations, and to bring clarity to our lives through the practise of *Tawheed*.

Ameen



Glossary

Arafat: The area that surrounds Mount *Rahmah*, southeast of *Makkah*.

Ghusl: Taking a shower/bath with the intention to purify oneself.

Ihram: The state in which one starts *Umrah* or *Hajj*, and during which certain acts are forbidden.

Jamarat Al-Aqabah: The closest stone pillar to *Makkah*.

Maqam Ibrahim: Abraham's station, a small glass station 30 meters from the *Ka'abah* door.

Mina: An area close to *Makkah* on the road to *Arafat*.

Muzdalifah: The place between *Arafat* and *Mina*.

Safa & Marwah: The hills on which a pilgrim begins and ends his/her *Sa'ee*. They are 200 m. south and 250m northeast of the *Ka'abah*.

Talbiyah: The response to Allah's call for *Hajj*.

Tarwiyah day: 8th of *Zul-Hijjah*.

Tashreeq days: 11th, 12th, and 13th of *Zul-Hijjah*.

Tawaf: Circumambulation of *Ka'abah*.

Tawaf Ifadah: *Tawaf* done by a Muslim when he/she comes from *Muzdalifah*.

Rituals for *Hajj Al-Tamattu'* مراسم حج التمتع

(From the special issue on Hajj of the Friday Report)

1 Ihram

- Clean yourself (*Ghusl*).
- Wear *Ihram* garments.
- Make intention for '*Umrah*'.
- Recite *Talbiyah*.
- Avoid forbidden acts of *Ihram*.

2 Umrah

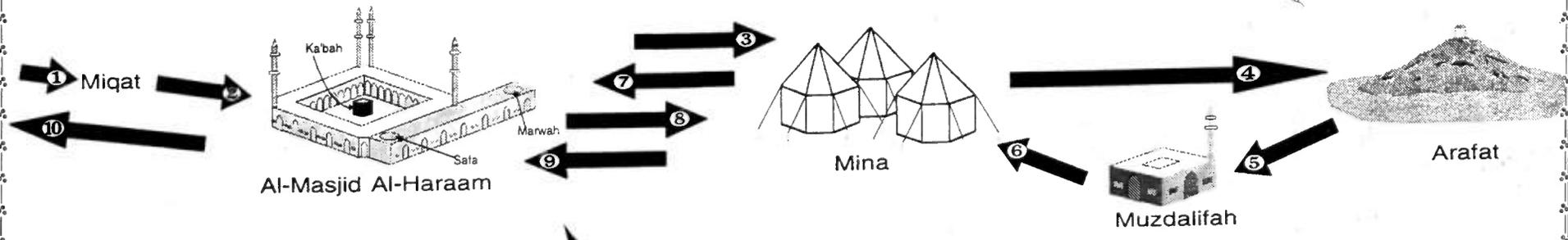
- Make *Tawaf* around the Ka'bah.
- Pray two *Rak'ah* behind *Maqam Ibrahim*.
- Make *Sa'ee* between *Safa* and *Marwah*.
- Trim hair and remove *Ihram* garments

3 Going to Mina
Noon, the 8th

- Put on *Ihram* garments again.
- Make intention for *Hajj*.
- Remain in *Mina* during the *Tarwaih* Day (the 8th day of *Zul-Hijjah*) and perform five prayers starting from the *Zuhr* prayer and ending with the *Fajr* prayer on the day of *Arafat*.

4 Going to Arafat
Morning, the 9th

- Leave for *Arafat* on the morning of the 9th of *Zul-Hijjah* and stay until sunset.
- Stay in any part of *Arafat*.
- Glorify Allah, repeat supplication, repent to Allah and ask for forgiveness.
- Pray *Zuhr* and *Asr* shortened and combined during the time of *Zuhr*



10 Going Home

It is preferred to visit the Prophet's Mosque in *Madinah* (before or after *Hajj*), but this is no part of *Hajj*

9 Farewell Tawaf
After the 12th

- Go to *Makkah* and make a farewell *Tawaf*. Perform two *Rak'ah* of *Tawaf*.
- Let the *Tawaf* be the last thing you do in *Makkah*

8 Return to Mina
10th, 11th, 12th, 13th

- Spend the *Tashreeq* days in *Mina*.
- After *Zuhr* of each day, stone the three *Jamarat*, starting from the small and ending with *Al-Aqabah*.
- You may leave on the 12th after stoning the

7 Tawaf Al Ifadah
the 10th or after

- Make *Tawaf Al-Ifadah*.
- Make *Sa'ee* between *Safa* and *Marwah*.
- After *Tawaf Al-Ifadah* all restrictions are lifted

6 Proceed to Mina
Sunrise, the 10th

- Shortly before sunrise, leave *Muzdalifah* for *Mina*. Go to *Jamrat Al-Aqabah* and stone it with seven pebbles.
- Slaughter your sacrifice.
- Shave your head or trim your hair.
- Take off *Ihram* garments.
- All *Ihram's* restrictions are lifted except sexual intercourse.

5 Going to Muzdalifah
after the sunset, the 9th

- Leave for *Muzdalifah* soon after sunset of the 9th of *Zul-Hijjah*.
- Perform *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers combined (*Isha* is shortened to two *Rak'ah*).
- Stay overnight and perform *Fajr* prayer