



## Editorial

The last two decades have witnessed a significant growth in the Muslim population and the Islamic activities in North America. Several full-time and many week-end schools are currently teaching Islam. But Most of these schools neither engage nor challenge the students, and almost all of them do not use the advanced technology, including the multimedia facilities that are currently available, in their curriculum. Little attention is given by the present Islamic schools to the fact that we are living in a highly technological society, and that the Muslim students do compare the facilities available in their secular public and private schools with those of the Islamic schools.

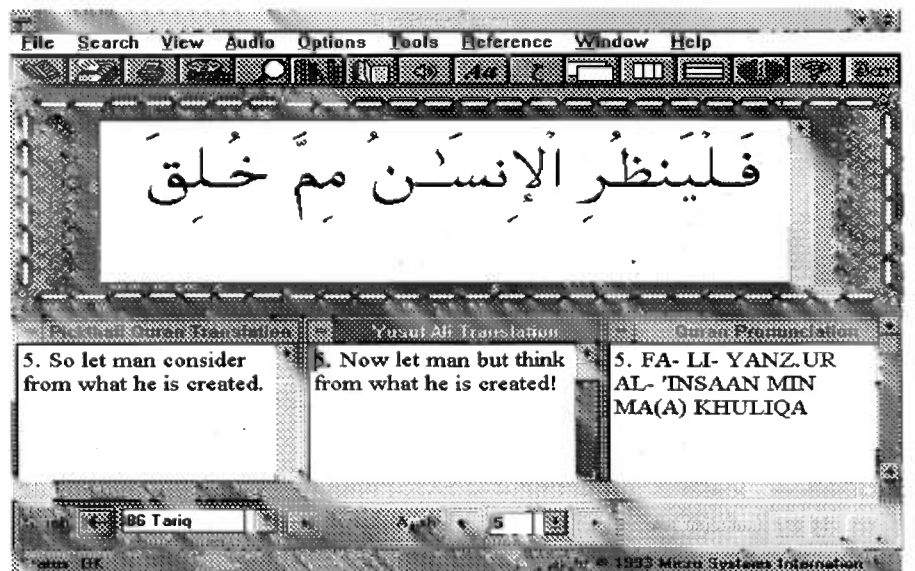
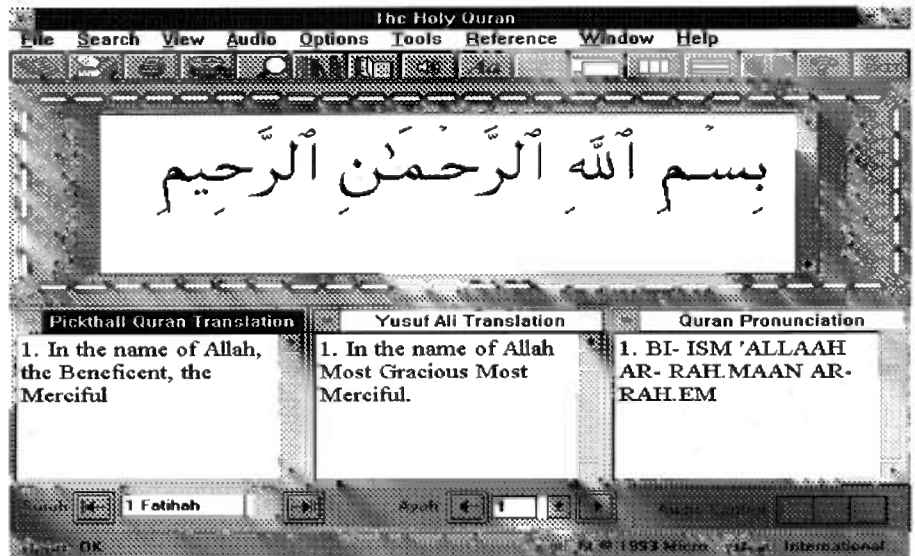
The use of advanced technology in teaching Islam to Muslim youths and children is very important since it can significantly enhance the effectiveness of education, and makes the students feel not inferior to other religious groups. It also dispels the notion that Muslims are backward. Therefore, more effort is needed by Muslim communities to explore the advanced technology in their educational programs.

A large number of newsletters are published by Muslim organizations and groups. However, there has not been enough emphasis in these newsletters on either providing accurate information about Islam or acquainting the readers about the advanced technology, including multimedia facilities, for teaching Islam. This newsletter will attempt, with the Grace of Allah (SWT), to fill this void. Specifically, the scope of the newsletter includes the following:

■ Articles on Islamic subjects. The authenticity of all the Hadiths quoted in these articles will be carefully checked.

## Second Generation Islamic Software Packages

With the Grace of Allah a second-generation of Islamic software packages is being developed by a number of companies. Two of the packages that have just been released for the IBM PC are: *An upgraded version of Windows Qur'an on CD-ROM* with elaborate search facilities, English translation, Arabic interpretation, detailed description of the rules of correct recitation, and sound. It is available from Al-Alamiah Software Co., Free Zone Nasr City, P.O. box 5189 H. West Code 11771, Cairo, Egypt, Tel. 011-202-274-9929, Fax 011-202-274-0044. *The second package is a revised version of Qur'an on CD-ROM.* It simultaneously displays the Arabic text, two English translations, and the transliteration. It also provides the recitation by Sheikh Mahmood Al-Husari (see figure). The new version has search facility and is available from Micro Systems International, 505 S. Neil, Champaign IL 61820; Tel. (217) 356-7226, Fax (217) 356-4501.



## Reflections

Dr. Ahmed K. Noor

### The Ka'aba and the Sacred House

#### الكعبة والبيت الحرام

Although all Muslims know that the Ka'aba and the sacred house (Al-Bait Al-haram) are the most revered places of worship in Islam, only few Muslims know their history and understand their full significance in Islam. In this article some facts are given about the Ka'aba and the sacred house, and the blessings they contain.

To begin with, the Ka'aba is not the sacred house, rather it is the landmark which identifies the location of the sacred house. The sacred house is also referred to in the Qur'an as the sacred mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Haram), and the ancient house (Al-Bait Al-Atiq).

ثُمَّ مَجَلَّهَا إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

(سورة الحج - من آية ٣٣)

"And afterwards they (the cattle) are brought (for sacrifice) into the ancient house." (Qur'an 22:33)

The verse cited at the beginning of the article shows that the sacred house was appointed for all human beings, starting with Adam and continuing till the end of the present world. According to Muslim scholars, the sacred house was put by Allah(SWT) in that particular location (center of Mecca) at the time of creation of the universe

أول مسجد وضع في الأرض

المسجد الحرام ، ثم المسجد

الأقصى

The Prophet(PBUH) said: the first mosque put on earth is the sacred mosque.

Of all the places of worship in the world, the sacred house is the only one that no human being participated in selecting its location. Allah(SWT) dignified the sacred house by selecting Himself its location and making it Qibla (direction) for all the other mosques. Moreover, Allah(SWT)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

(سورة آل عمران - آية ٩٦)

"The first house (of worship) appointed for human beings was that at Bakka (one of the names of Mecca), full of blessings and a guidance for all kinds of beings." (Qur'an 3:96)

referred to Himself in the Qur'an as the Lord of this House (the sacred house):

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

(سورة قريش - آية ٣)

"so let them worship (Allah) the Lord of this House." (Qur'an 106:3)

Allah(SWT) also referred to the sacred house in Qur'an 2:125 as His house, and commanded Prophet Ibrahim(PBUH) and his son Ismail to purify this house for those who are circumambulating it, staying for devotion and prayer in it, or bowing down, or prostrating themselves there, in prayer.

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَشَاءةً لِّلنَّاسِ

وَأَمَّا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ

لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ

السُّجُودِ

(سورة البقرة - آية ١٢٥)

■ Of all the places of worship in the world, the sacred house is the only one that no human being participated in selecting its location. Allah (SWT) dignified the sacred house by selecting Himself its location and making it Qibla (direction) for all other mosques.

■ According to the Prophet (PBUH) one prayer in the sacred mosque is rewarded hundred thousand times more than a prayer in other mosques.

According to Muslim historians, at the time of Prophet Noah(PBUH), the flood covered the sacred house, and its location could not be recognized. However, Allah(SWT), guided Prophet Ibrahim(PBUH) to its site.

وَإِذْ بَرَأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ

لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا

(سورة الحج - من آية ٢٦)

"Behold! We guided Abraham to the site of the (sacred) house, (saying) [Do not associate anything (in worship) with Me]." (Qur'an 22:26)

Allah(SWT) identified the location of the sacred house to Prophet Ibrahim(PBUH), inspired him to take his wife and his son Ismail to that location, and live near it. Allah(SWT) provided them with water from the well of zamzam to sustain their life.

Allah(SWT) also commanded Prophet Ibrahim(PBUH) and his son Ismail to raise the foundations of the sacred house, so that its location becomes known to the people. So the foundations of the sacred house were not raised until Prophet Ismail was old enough to be able to help his father. This is clearly stated in the following verse.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ

الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

(سورة البقرة - آية ١٢٧)

"And remember Abraham and Ismail raised the foundations of the house (with this prayer): "Our Lord! accept (this service) from us: You are the All Hearing and the All Knowing." (Qur'an 2:127)

As to the significance of the sacred house (and the Ka'aba), the following can be noted:

■ Even before the advent of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), the Ka'aba occupied a central position in Arabia. It was a sacred place of worship, and the means of stabilizing the economy and culture of Arabia. People came from all over Arabia to perform Hajj (Pilgrimage) and the huge gathering helped to create the feeling of unity among the Arabs, who were otherwise torn by tribal strife. The Pilgrims who came from different tribes and places met together and established cultural relations. Poetic contests helped to enrich the Arabic language and literature. Trade and commerce which were transacted during Hajj helped to satisfy the economic needs of the people.

■ Muslims were first directing their faces in prayer towards the Farthest Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa) in Jerusalem. After sixteen months of praying towards the Farthest Mosque, Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) to change his face towards the sacred Mosque. Since then, the sacred Mosque has become the Qibla (the direction), and all Muslims are commanded to turn their faces towards it in prayers.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ  
شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا  
كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ  
(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٥٠)

"At whatever place you may be, you must turn your face towards the sacred mosque, and whenever you may be, you must turn your face towards the same at prayer."  
(Qur'an 2:150)

■ The sacred mosque was selected as the site from which the Isra'a and Mira'aj (night journey and ascension to heavens of the Prophet (PBUH)) started.

■ The sacred mosque has to be visited by every Muslim while performing Hajj (pilgrimage).

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ  
اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا  
(سورة آل عمران - من آية ٩٧)

*And Pilgrimage to the House is duty that the people owe to Allah, those who can afford to reach to the House.*  
(Qur'an 3:97)

■ The blessings of the sacred mosque are numerous, including;  
a. According to the Prophet (PBUH) one prayer in the sacred mosque is rewarded *hundred thousand times* more than a prayer in other mosques. A prayer in the Mosque of the Prophet (PBUH) is rewarded *one thousand times* more than a prayer in other mosques.

فضل الصلاة في المسجد الحرام  
على غيره مائة ألف صلاة، وفي  
مسجدي ألف صلاة

b. whoever enters the sacred house attains peace, harmony, concord, and tranquility.

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا  
(سورة آل عمران - من آية ٩٧)

"Whoever enters it (the sacred mosque) attains security". (Qur'an 3:97)

c. According to the Prophet (PBUH) the black stone at Ka'aba descended from Heavens. It was white, but the sins of the children of Adam made it black.

نزل الحجر الأسود من الجنة، وهو  
أشد بياضا من اللبن، فسودته

خطايا بني آدم  
The black stone descended from heaven while it was whiter than the color of the milk. The sins of the children of Adam made it to be black. The Prophet (PBUH) said that touching the black stone washes the sins of the individuals.

Wiping the (black) stone and the right corner (of the Ka'aba), washes the sins one after the other.

ان مسح الحجر الأسود، والركن

اليمنى يحطان الخطايا حطا

I pray to Almighty Allah to guide us and make us realize the opportunities provided by visiting, and praying at, the Ka'aba and the sacred house. Amen

Continued from page 1

### Editorial

■ Prayer Schedules and Qibla information for the city of residence of each of the subscribers.

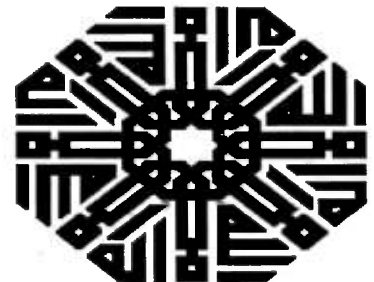
■ Information, and where appropriate, evaluation of new computer software, multimedia facilities, video tapes and books on Islam.

■ Information about national Islamic conferences and meetings.

Controversial topics and views will not be published in the newsletter.

The Foundation for Islamic Knowledge (with offices in Lombard, IL. and Walnut, Calif. - addresses given on the back page) has undertaken the tasks of publishing and distributing the newsletter. This is done as part of the foundation's mission in disseminating accurate and useful information about Islam. A branch of the foundation was established in Hampton, Virginia for the newsletter. We pray to Almighty Allah (SWT) to guide us and help us in making this effort useful to Islam and the Muslims.

Amen



## Pilgrimage and Umrah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

الحج والعمرة

(سورة آل عمران - من آية ٩٧)

"And Hajj to the House is a duty that the people owe to Allah, those who can afford to reach the house; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah stands not in need of any creature of the worlds." (Qur'an 3:97)

With the Hajj (Pilgrimage) season only a few weeks away, it is useful to give some facts about Hajj, briefly describe the Hajj rites, and present a schematic for the Hajj journey. The schematic is based on a graphical representation published in the Friday report in 1994.

The Arabic word Hajj refers to a "lofty goal" or a "noble objective". In Islam, Hajj refers to the visit to Mecca to perform prescribed rites. The word Umrah is taken from "I'temar" which means visiting. It refers to visiting Mecca and performing some of the rituals performed during the Hajj. Hajj is distinguished from Umrah in that it is the fifth pillar of Islam and is an obligatory duty on every Muslim who can afford it. In addition to the two terms Hajj and Umrah, Allah (SWT) uses the words "Yawm Al-Hajj Al-Akbar", the day of the greatest pilgrimage in the Qur'an:

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ

الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ

الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ

(سورة التوبة - من آية ٩٧)

"And an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to the people (assembled) on the day of the greatest pilgrimage that Allah and His Apostle dissolve treaty obligations with the pagans". (Qur'an 9:3).

The Prophet (PBUH) defined the term in his saying:

يوم الحج الأكبر يوم النحر

The day of the greatest pilgrimage is the day of sacrifice.

Of the five pillars of Islam, the Hajj is the only one whose time and place have been prescribed by Allah (SWT). If we examine the five pillars of Islam, we find the following:

■ **Shahada** (declaration of faith) is not restricted to any particular time, or

to any place. We can make the shahada during the day or at night, in our home, in the mosque, or at work.

■ **Salat** (prayers). The times for the obligatory prayers are prescribed, but the place is not.

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

كِتَابًا مَّقْشُورًا

(سورة النساء - من آية ١٠٣)

"For prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times."

(Qur'an 4:103)

■ **Hajj** refers to visiting Mecca to perform certain rites at prescribed times, including: putting on Ihram garment, Tawaf (circumambulation) around the Ka'aba, Sa'ay (the going for seven times) between the mountains of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa, staying at Arafat, Muzdalifah and Mina, Ram'y Al-Jamarat (stoning the pillars at Mina with pebbles), Slaughtering of Had'y (animal).

■ **Umrah** refers to visiting Mecca, at any time, to perform some of the rituals of Hajj: putting on Ihram garment, Tawaf around the Ka'aba, Sa'ay between the mountains of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa.

■ **Of the five pillars of Islam, the Hajj is the only one whose time and place have been prescribed by Allah (SWT).**

■ **The reward for the properly performed Hajj is no less than paradise (Prophetic wisdom).**

The Prophet (PBUH) informed us that we can pray in any clean place, except the graveyard and the bathroom.

الأرض كلها مسجد إلا المقبرة

والحمام

■ **Saum** (fasting). The month and period of the obligatory fast are prescribed, but the place is not.

فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ

مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ

(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٨٥)

"So everyone of you who is present (at his/her home) during that month (the month of Ramadan) should spend it in fasting, but if any is sick, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later."

(Qur'an 2:185)

■ **Zakat** (alms tax, or obligatory charity). The amount of Zakat and the time of its payment are prescribed, but the place is not. For example, Zakat-ul-Fitr has to be given before Eid-ul-Fitr prayers; Zakat on plants and fruit is to be given at the time of harvest; Zakat on gold and silver that exceed nisab (a prescribed amount), and is owned for a year, is to be paid at the end of the year.

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ،

لِّسَائِلٍ وَالْمَخْرُومِ

"And those in whose wealth there is known right for the beggar who asks, and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth". (Qur'an 70:24,25)

■ **Hajj** (pilgrimage). Both the times and the places for rites of Hajj are prescribed. The pilgrims must perform the rites of Hajj during the prescribed days of Zul-Hijjah. They have to stand

on the mount of Arafat on the ninth day of Zul-Hijjah.

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ

(سورة البقرة - من آية ١٩٧)

"The Pilgrimage is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months." (Qur'an 2:197)

The hajj rites can be briefly summarized as follows (see the schematic on page 6):

□ The pilgrim should put on the pilgrims' garment (Ihram) as soon as they reach a "miqat", one of the fixed points on all the roads to Mecca, and if he/she wishes to make Umrah before Hajj, should make intention for it. After this they should abide by the code prescribed for Hajj.

□ If on reaching Mecca, a pilgrim wishes to perform Umrah, he/she should make Tawaf (circumambulation) around the Ka'aba, pray two raka'a behind Maqam Ibrahim (the stone on which Prophet Ibrahim stood while he was raising the foundations of the Ka'aba), go for seven times between the mountains of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa, then remove Ihram garment and release himself/herself from restrictions imposed by it, up to the 7th of Zul-Hijjah.

□ On the 8th of Zul-Hijjah, the pilgrim should again put on Ihram garment, make intention for Hajj, then go to Mina, a valley about six miles from there.

□ On the 9th of Zul-Hijjah the pilgrim proceeds to the valley of Arafat which is about five miles further from Mina and stay there up to the evening. Staying in Arafat is one of the essential ceremonies (Rukn) of Hajj. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

الحج عرفة

The Hajj is staying (for the prescribed period) in Arafat

□ The pilgrim should then return to Mash'ar-Al-Haram (Muzdalifah) which is midway between Arafat and Mina, and pass the night between the 9th and the 10th of Zul-Hijjah there in prayer, meditation, and devotion.

□ On the morning of the 10th, the pilgrim should come back to Mina, go

to Jamrat-al-Aqabah (one of the three stone-built pillars situated at Mina), and stone it with seven pebbles, and offer sacrifice.

□ After this the pilgrim should put off the Ihram and return to Mecca and perform Tawaf-al-Ifadah (circumambulation of the ka'aba). This Tawaf is one of the essential ceremonies (Rukn) of the Hajj.

□ The pilgrim should then go to Mina and stay there for two or three days (11th to 13th of Zul-Hijjah, which are called the days of Tashriq).

□ After the 12th day of Zul-Hijjah, the pilgrim can go to Mecca and perform the farewell Tawaf.

Since the Hajj is the only obligatory duty for which the time and place are prescribed, Allah (SWT) rewards the one who performs it properly with paradise, as clearly stated in the saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

الحج المبرور ليس له جزاء إلا

الجنة

The reward for the properly performed Hajj is no less than paradise.

The Prophet (PBUH) informed the Muslim women that their Jihad (striving hard in the way of Allah) is performing Hajj.

جهادكن الحج

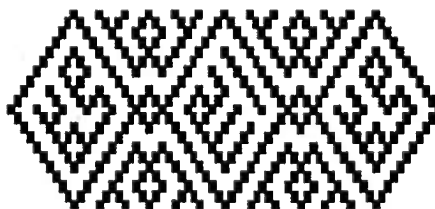
The Prophet (PBUH) recommended that we should perform Hajj as early in our adult life as possible, since we cannot guarantee what happens to us in the future.

تعجلوا إلى الحج ، فإن أحدكم لا

يدرى ما يعرض له

We pray to Almighty Allah (SWT) to help the sincere loving Muslims in performing the Hajj and enjoying its full blessings and benefits.

Amen



## Important Dates

On the basis of reliable astronomical calculations, the important dates for the Islamic years 1416, 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.

### 1416:

Muharram 1, ..... May 30, 1995  
 Ramadan 1, ..... January 22, 1996  
 Eid-ul Fitr ..... February 20, 1996  
 Eid-ul Adha ..... April 28, 1996

### 1417:

Muharram 1, ..... May 19, 1996  
 Ramadan 1, ..... January 10, 1997  
 Eid-ul Fitr ..... February 9, 1997  
 Eid-ul Adha ..... April 18, 1997

### 1418:

Muharram 1, ..... May 8, 1997  
 Ramadan 1, ..... December 31, 1997  
 Eid-ul Fitr ..... January 29, 1998  
 Eid-ul Adha ..... April 8, 1998

