

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

481 - Reason for circulating the Ka'bah counterclockwise

the question

I would like to know the significance and purpose of walking around the Kaabar Sha'rif. Why is it to be kept to the left? Is the walking only done at Mecca or is it done on a daily basis as well? Any information you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The basic reason for keeping the Ka'bah on ones left when performing tawaaf (circumbabulation) is to follow the suit of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Following the Prophet has been ordained in the Quraan (interpretation of the meaning):

"Obey the Prophet so that you may be blessed with mercy" and "Say (O Muhammad): if you really love Allaah, then follow my suit and Allaah will love you and grant you forgiveness of your sins".

The Prophet , furthermore, has said regarding the rituals of Hajj and Umrah, "Follow my suit in performing your rituals". (See Al-Nisaa'i as reported by Jaabir. Also, Sahih al-Jami', hadith No. 7882.)

This should suffice as the reason for a Muslim to perform tawaaf around the Ka'bah in the way it is done, and we do not need other reasons that attempt to tie this act to the movement of galaxies and stars or the revolving of planets, etc. Muslims by nature must believe, submit to and act according to what was validly and duly recorded as the behavior or statements of the Prophet. If on top of this a reason or some relevant wisdom comes to be known, then so be it, thanks to

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Allaah. Otherwise, a Muslim submits to the order of Allaah and His prophet and will accordingly be recompensed for his compliance and deeds.

Finally, we must note that circumbabulation is an act specified only for the Ka'bah as part of the worship and is not to be done in other places or situations as such.

Allaah is the Most Knowledgeable and knows best.