

Home > Hajj (The Pilgrimage) > Mashar

Mashar

The sun is disappearing in Arafat and you must leave too! Arafat is lost and killed by the darkness of the night. You do not stay here overnight but leave at sunset since everyone has decided to move when the night comes forth, no Muslim is seen. The "Sunshine City" suddenly and hurriedly transcends the plain and disappears to the west. But to go where? To "Mashar"!

You cannot rest; every stage is a short stop and a fast leave Stop? – Never! Reside? – Nowhere! Stay for half a day overnight or a couple of days. That is all! The tents you pitched yesterday should all be picked up today.

You are being addressed – Yes you, Oh mankind! You live for a short time on this earth and no more! Oh man, you are only a moment of this eternal time! Oh man, you are nothing! Oh wave, your "existence" depends on your "movement" and you are dead if you are passive! On..."nothing"! You will be "complete" when you have absolutely decided! Oh...the "drop"! Join (enter into) the roaring river of the "people" and "flow"!

When you participate in the multitude from Arafat, remember Allah by the sacred monument. Remember Him since He has guided you, although before you were of those astray. Qur'an 2: 198

You must be in Mashar by nightfall. People are crowded together as they move down the valley from Arafat to Mina and then to Mecca. Arafat, this city in which you stop over for one day, is gone with the wind of the sunset and the roaring flood of "mankind". In one color and with one direction, the people circle the rock of "Jabal- al-Rahmah" as if they are afraid of the night, hurrying the slope of the valley and running away from the dark. Now night has covered the plain of Arafat.

And you, as a dot on this line, a drop and many other drops, flow as a flood! Struggle as those who surprisingly attack by night with hope and faith!

What a surprise! It seems that the "Sunshine City" has melted in the fire of Arafat. Now, the "dark city" has covered this land like a volcano!

Everyone is lost in this crowd. Darkness is everywhere, but what is there to fear? The road is solid and secure. THE TRAGEDY IS WHEN YOU HAVE DISCOVERED YOURSELF, BUT YOU HAVE LOST

THE WAY. SACRIFICING YOURSELF ON THE RIGHT WAY IS SALVATION! AND, TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF IN THE RIGHT WAY (ALLAH'S WAY) IS TRUE WORSHIP AND SERVITUDE!. Oh man, Allah is expecting you at the end of this path. Remember you are in Mashar (land of consciousness).

How delicate it is! Arafat or the symbol of "knowledge" is used in the plural form but Mashar it is the single form! This is to say: REALITIES MAY BE DESCRIBED INDIFFERENT WAYS, BUT THE FACT IS ONLY ONE! The only way is the way of the people for the cause of Allah.

Once, the Prophet (S), sitting with his companions, visualized this by drawing several lines on the ground with a stick in his hand showing different ways of discovering the existing relations between phenomenon. (In other words, ways of knowledge and learning.)

Science is the discovery of "pre-existing phenomenon". Arafat is like a mirror reflecting all the colors, designs and patterns as they are on a larger scale. The universe is like a mirror, when facing the world (worldly matters) it reflects "Physics" and when facing religion it reflects "Jurisprudence". That is all!

There is not good or bad knowledge. It can be in service or in treachery; purity and impurity means nothing to it. Knowledge is knowledge, forever and everywhere, the same for the Muslim and the non-Muslim, for the people as well as their enemies and for the servants or the traitors! Limitations exist only in "consciousness" – the power which will employ knowledge, give it direction and end up in morality or immorality, peace or war and justice or injustice!!!

In a capitalistic system, knowledge and science have the same meaning as in a communistic system. The Nazi (Fascist) physicists know as much about nature as their victims and the respected preachers of the Caliph are as knowledgeable about the religion as those preachers imprisoned by the Caliph.

What makes one an "executioner", the other a "martyr", one an oppressor, the other a freedom lover and one corrupt, the other righteous is not "knowledge" but "consciousness".

The question regarding the types of sciences and knowledge is not relevant, but what is important is the type of "consciousness". Hajj specifies this very well as "sacred consciousness"; that is, whatever is guarded by the sanctuary of chastity modesty and cleanliness.

The first stage (Arafat) is a single word, but the second stage is not just "Mashar". Rather, it is called "Mashar-ul-Haram" way. And, to our surprise, the stop at Mashar-ul-Haram is during the night time while the pause at Arafat is during the day time! Why? Because Arafat is representing the stage of knowledge and science which is an objective relationship between the thoughts and the existing facts of the world. Clear vision is necessary; therefore, it needs light (daytime). Mashar represents the stage of consciousness which is a subjective relationship between thoughts. Therefore, it is the power of understanding achieved by more concentration in the darkness and the silence of "night time".

Arafat is the stage of experience and objectivity. Mashar is the stage of insight and subjectivity. Arafat is a state of mind far from corruption and sickness. Mashar is a stage of consciousness with full

responsibility, pure and righteous in the sacred and secure land of Mashar-ul-Haram as in the Sacred Mosque and the holy month! Sin, corruption, aggression and fighting are forbidden; no one is allowed to hurt an animal or even uproot a plant! The earth and sky are safe and secure in freedom and modesty. A righteous environment needed for peace prevails. It is as clean and pure as a spirit and as glorious as nature.

So surprisingly, a "consciousness" born of "knowledge" and pregnant with "love" exists. It is the next door neighbor of "science" and "faith". This is the stage between Arafat and Mina. Intuition needs no light; it is illuminated by thought and able to solve any problems of "love"!

Hikma is the type of knowledge or acute insight that was brought to mankind by prophets and not by scientist or philosophers. This is the type of knowledge and self-consciousness that Islam talks about. It not only trains scientists, but conscious and responsible intellectuals.

It is not the subjectivity of phenomenon and regulations it is the clear light! It is the type of knowledge that our illiterate Prophet (PBUH&HF) inspired:

Allah will put this light in the hearts of those He likes (wishes).

This is the knowledge of the proper guidance. Anyone can learn the knowledge of Arafat, but the intuition of Mashar is the light that Allah puts in the hearts of those whom he wishes! Who are they? They are not those who work selfishly, but those who struggle for the cause of others.

As for those who strive in use, we surely guide them to our path. Qur'an 29: 69

This is the knowledge of "guidance", "self-consciousness" deliverance" and "salvation". In the light of this knowledge, an "illiterate Bedouin" became the leader of a tribe and the torch-holder of a caravan! This knowledge (Hikma) is not learned from books or taught in schools or universities. It is taught in the field of struggle and by Holy War. The students who learned this knowledge fight for the freedom of mankind and for the sake of Allah.

To learn this knowledge you need no light; it is light by itself. Luminosity is its nature. With this knowledge you can even see in the dark night – like the night of Mashar-ul-Haram. Why should you fear the night and the dark? Are you not on the right way? Are not the people with you? Are not you with the caravan? A drop going in the white-river of people? All on the right path?

Then hasten onward from the place whence the multitude hasteneth onward. Qur'an 2: 199

How sensational it is to search for arms in the dark land of "sense" and "feelings"! Why not wait until morning? What is the holy war for? The stop in Mashar is for you to think, to plan, to strengthen your spirit, to collect arms and to prepare yourself for the battlefield. On the night of holy war, all this must be done in the dissimulation of the night, in a hidden ambush and next to Mina (the state of oppression).

You are to collect arms in the dark of night, but with the light of "sense" and "feelings" (the sacred sense) and with the knowledge you gained in the light of Arafat! Wait all night; wait for the sunrise and see the

morning of light, victory and love in Mina!

The roaring and restless army has collected the pebbles from the stony land of Mashar. Now at the border of Mina, one waits with silence everywhere and thinks in this desert of "resurrection" ... No, Oh Allah, I meant the land of Mashar! There is no tent, no sign, no wall, no door, not a ceiling, not a street, not a tower – it is not a city! Do not waste your time to look for your friends or find your caravan. Everyone here is alone. There are only two of you here – you and night! Such a big crowd! All caravans and tribes are grouped together. "Resurrection":

On the day when a man fleeth from his brother and his mother and his father. And his wife and his children! Qur'an 53: 34, 35, 36

You had forgotten yourself; here again you will find yourself!

While in the state of Ihram and at Miqat, you forgot yourself and joined the people. In Tawaf, you were carried by them. After Say, you found yourself. At Arafat, you were drawn into the ocean. And then again, you will find yourself at Mashar.

Everyone is alone in such a crowd. Here you have discovered "Your truth"; you are with no cover-up, no color, no mask or make up, naked and pure. Tonight you will conduct a private talk with a Friend (Allah)! Declare yourself and confess your sins. It is sensational to confess and clearly proclaim what you want. Now is the time to ignore all those limitations and break the walls. Release what you have imprisoned inside you all these years! You are here by yourself.

You joined the crowd as an individual. Here in the crowd you will end up being alone again! The "individuality" which you have found by diving into the ocean of people and finding the pearl of yourself is wonderful; you are shoulder to shoulder with the people but simultaneously alone! How wonderful! The strait of Muzdalifa strongly embraces this army in its arms Millions of Muslims, undivided and unscattered, are packed shoulder to shoulder (as if they have crept onto each other). Nevertheless, everyone is alone facing the inspiring sky of Mashar!

You feel lonely among this absolute sovereignty of people. Nobody knows one another, but do not be afraid. The night has covered you in its modesty.

No one will look at you or call you by what you were called before. Free yourself and leave yourself in the hands of the night. What am I saying? The night of Mashar has covered the horizon and it appears as a heavenly screen.

In this silent palm grove full of moonlight, leave your searching eyes and restless heart in the shower of its silence, to fledge and flutter as a butterfly in love. Then, in the depth of your heart, feel the loneliness in this desert where you are sentenced to live. Amidst such glorious silence, you are able to hear Allah and the voice of "the great prisoner of the earth" and leader of humanity who bent his head into the well, painfully groaning and crying in the heart of this desert.

When Mashar is overcome by the glorious and mysterious Magnificence of night, everything becomes quiet and calm. Suddenly the invader's flood (Islamic Army) flows into this valley and irrigates the bed, the hills and the neighborhood mountains. Then Mashar is quiet again under its heavenly ceiling.

Night has come to Mashar and there is no light; yet, there is the moonlight and the shower of luminous stars – shining and illuminating the desert. The night of Mashar and its beautiful heavenly sky is unknown to those who have lived a city-life, spoiling their time by searching for worldly needs and greed. Their nights are quite different! The night of Mashar is a shadow of imagination and paradise – moonlight, cool, clear and kind with the tender smile of Allah. This is where your heart will witness Allah's swearing. "In the name of the moon and moonlight ..."

By the sun and his brightness, and the noon when she floweth him and the day when it revealeth him and the night when it enshroudeth him, and the heaven and He who built it, and the earth and He who spread it. Qur'an 91: 1-6

It is not like the nights of crowded and polluted urban areas where people exhale the damp infectious air and stars look pale and sick! It is the tenth night of Zul-Hijjah. The great army of tawheed (Unity) and learned freedom-fighters has camped on this mountain. Its soldiers are totally distracted from this world by their "rapturous thoughts of love" as they stare at the sky of Mashar. This inverted blue ocean is filled with germs of the sky (stars) that appear successively amidst this dark ceiling of the universe and open a window to another world. As the only fondling smile of nature in the face of cursed people of the earth, the moon sparkles radiantly from the top of the mountain, it illuminates the valley of Mashar. At the other corner of the sky, the smiling stars are busy hanging the luster of "Pleiades" from the ceiling of Mashar in order to illuminate the mysterious path which directs toward eternity. This so-called "Milky Way" is "The Way to Mecca" or "The Way of Ali".

Such great and important meanings are concealed in the language and interpretations of the illiterates. They will be laughed at by the educated (ulema) that are still at the stage of Arafat. The "facts" in these stories are more significant and deeper than the "History"; however, these "facts" are ignored because "they did not happen"! Those historians who realize and record "what happens do not know that these "facts" are overlooked by them nor are they aware of how their lives are wasted recording empty, ridiculous stories and hated falsehoods simply because "they happened" and are the objectives!

Look at the sky of Mashar!!! See the beams of the stars penetrating the heart of the night; they are the security angels of heaven. Should the devils and corrupt ones decide to secretly spy from a corner in the darkness, they will be knocked down by the beams of the shooting stars! Why? So that no evil-doer or stranger will dare to invade its holy and glorious privacy! Why? So that no evil-doer or stranger will understand and know the secret of its magnificence!

And you, who are "shoulder to shoulder with the people" and lost in the crowd, nevertheless, you are privately with Allah! Oh "soldier in love", "worshipper of the night of Mashar", "lion of the field of Mina" and

"member of the army of Jihad" awaiting in the stage of consciousness to fight with Satan on the following day – what are you carrying with you??? Wear your Kafan and hold your stones (arms) in your hands – nothing else!

Put your arms under your head and have privacy with Allah tonight. Only Him and you are together along with your arms and faith. Leave this "mean world" and ignore your "limitations"! Fly above this heavenly sky, pass through the openings in the stars and ascend to the roof of creation. If you are good follower of Muhammad (S), do what he did! "Let your heart be enlightened by love!"

Kill all of the weaknesses, fears, complexes and interests which you had in your life. Prepare for tomorrow by getting ready tonight! Oh "free creature", "soldier in love" and the devils are waiting in front of Mina. Train yourself tonight since there is going to be a serious battle tomorrow. In this land of consciousness, fill your hands with arms and fill your heart with love!

You may ask yourself – What am I supposed to see or do here??? The answer is – Nothing!!! You are free to sink in this ocean of people! You may spend the night as you want; you may even sleep! But ... wish and behave as if you are in Mashar where there is nothing to see! THE GLORY SHOULD BE IN YOUR VISION NOT IN WHAT YOU LOOK AT!!! There are no obligations here. What you are supposed to do is beyond a simple duty (i.e. thinking).

How wonderful!!! There are hundreds of thousands of nameless people who lack any sort of identification sitting on the ground and gazing at the star-filled sky of Mashar. Your thirst will be satisfied by the invisible showers of revelation which fall from the sky. In the midst of this crowd, silence can be heard! In the midst of this holy atmosphere, there is nothing to pre-occupy your mind – not even thoughts of Allah because Allah is everywhere! You can smell Him as simply as a rose can be smelled. You can feel His presence in your ears, eyes, heart and deep in your bones ... What is being said? You can feel Him on your skin as a caress, as love!

Spend the night at Mashar thinking so that you may attain self- discovery. In the darkness of the night, try to find your arms and prepare for the following day. What a beautiful view! The army is arriving from Arafat and hastily hiking on the mountains to gather arms. This is the army of Tawheed (v.y) wherein the only existing rank is in relation to Allah and not one another. Status is granted to the people on the basis of the nature and character of one's "self", the "self" of today, the "self" of yesterday and the "self" at any given time – NOT on the principle of names or selected individuals. Lastly, Ibrahim is the commander of this army of Tawheed.

At the mountains and in the darkness of the night, gather your arms collectively bearing in mind that everyone is responsible for himself. The next stage is Mina (the battlefield) which takes place on the following day, the day of "Sacrifice" (the time of Jihad). Your arms must be collected during the darkness of the night while you must fight during the daylight. This ocean of people appears stormy and restless. They are thinking about and preparing for the war. Thousand of mysterious ghosts, all brothers and

sisters and all soldiers form this ocean of people. All of them know each other, yet, one cannot identify his brother or sister; they are all the same.

In the darkness of Mashar, everybody is working diligently, bending over and searching the stony land to find the pebbles (Jamarah) that will be shed in the battlefield of Mina (Rami). Jamarah is a pebble but a special kind, so be careful! It is dark and the pebbles are difficult to find. Measure them and pick up the right size! You should follow the recommendation in your selection – disciplined, be united, stay together and feel completely responsible ... It is a serious matter.

These pebbles will be used as your weapons to kill your enemy. Choose the ones that are smooth, shiny, round, and smaller than a nut but bigger than a pistachio! What does the pebble represent? It represents a Bullet! Everything is in order and carefully evaluated. Each soldier in Ibrahim's army has to shoot seventy bullets at the enemies in Mina. They are to be shot at the head, trunk and heart of the enemy. Only those bullets which hit the enemy will be counted; if you are not an expert, select more bullets to compensate for your lack of skill. Regardless, you must have enough for the front line. If you hit one less than the recommended number, you are not considered a soldier nor is your Hajj accepted.

Follow the rules while you are in this army. Remember you have to stay in Mina for three days (tenth, eleventh, and twelfth). Be sure your bullets are not wasted because only those that strike the enemy are accredited. These are military acts. The facts and actions are as important as the objective results. The scene is a battlefield not an abbey! The orders are simple, punctual, exact, decisive, and unavoidable and need no theological or philosophical interpretations. The acts are not related to praying, interceding, mourning or supplicating. An action with consequences emerges.

Absolute obedience characterized by no disputes is expected. Nothing and nobody can be replaced at this point; excuses are accepted for no one! Do not forget that on these mountains no person has the authority. Even if Ibrahim (as) or Muhammad (S) hit less than the recommended number of bullets, his Hajj would not have been accepted. What does this tell you? If you make a mistake, you will be penalized. There is no place for "rationalization" or bribery in this situation.

On the first day, you attack once and shoot seven bullets each time. A total of forty-nine bullets are shot during these days. On the fourth day, you are free to leave or remain in Mina. If you stay, you must fight and conduct attacks as you did on the second or third day. In this case, you must have at least seventy bullets. Since Mina is the battle front, nobody should rest there. If you stay, you have to fight!

Once everyone has collected the arms, the military atmosphere suddenly changes to a spiritual one. There are no more discussions about arms, fighting, disciplines and absolute obedience. Instead, all conversations are regarding peace, love and ascension of the spirit to heaven. The roars of the restless lions will be converted to the moans of pain. The sound of flying bullets will be replaced by a silence in which one can hear the people whispering, ascending the sky and speaking with Allah in the middle of the night.

What a lovely scene! The night of Mashar first witnessed the shouts and restlessness of a dreadful army that planned a big conspiracy for the next day! And then what? A clear and waveless sea which under the moonlight and shower of the stars reflects a heaven on this earth appears! It is the land of the angels of beauty and mercy. Everyone is deeply astonished and so silent – as if there were a bird sitting on their shoulder. One can even hear the sound of the "tear drops" of those who cry modestly. No sound dares to break the silence of Mashar except the "heart-beat" of lovers!

Mashar is the camping area of the army in the world in which every soldier is a commander too. They do not only drink, entertain and enjoy preparations for the fight the following day; rather, they have celebrated the victorious battle ahead of time during the "Id night. All are engrossed in love, humility and silence. They face the future and the rapture of restlessness and eagerness of the front of eternity, quench their thirst with the shower of revelation, purify themselves through worship and strengthen their spirit by praying. Why all this? So that in tomorrow's battle ("as Jacob was restless to die when he was separated from Joseph") they may get the honor of Shahadat from the hand of the great commander, Allah!

How strange?!! Waiting for the day of struggle that is creeping closer and closer to them, the soldiers in Mashar have their hands filled with arms and their lips filled with prayers. The morning breeze has set such a mysterious movement in the camp when the harmonious sound of "Azan" is heard from every corner, freely casting an echo everywhere. It is as if the echo reaches the far horizon.

Hundreds of thousands of "figures are bending and prostrating in the ambiguity of the dawn. The breeze of Azan passes through this land of Tawheed so gently that nothing can disturb the glory of its unity! The time for the Morning Prayer has come. It is the same Morning Prayer that you always perform but the difference this time is in the atmosphere in which your prayers are said. Silence has overcome Mashar – as if everyone is asleep. The night has passed over and above the mountains, passed over and above those who sleep in Mashar and disappeared in the Strait of Mina. And now – the sun is rising!

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/hajj-pilgrimage-dr-ali-shariati/mashar>