

Avoiding Certain Actions

There are certain things which you are expected to avoid while in the state of Ihram. These include any sort of reminders of your business, position, social class, or race. In essence, all worldly matters belonging to the life before Miqat, are tabooed. The following is a list of specific actions which must not be undertaken:

- Do not look in a mirror in order not to see your image. Therefore, forget the "self" temporarily.
- Do not use nor smell perfume in order not to recall the enjoyable times of the past. You are now in an environment of spirituality. Therefore, smell love!
- Do not give orders to anyone. Therefore, exercise a sense of brotherhood!
- Do not harm animals or insects. Therefore, for a few days live as Jesus!
- Do not break or uproot plants. Therefore, kill the tendencies of aggression by being peaceful toward nature!
- Do not hunt. Therefore, be merciful to others!
- Do not indulge in love making and intercourse, therefore, be inspired by real love!
- Do not marry or participate in marriage ceremonies.
- Do not use make up. Therefore, see yourself as you are!
- Do not be dishonest, argumentative, curseful, (i.e. swear), or arrogant.
- Do not sew your Ihram. Therefore, evade self – distinction!
- Do not carry weapons, but if it is necessary place it under your Ihram.
- Do not stay in the shade. Therefore, be exposed to the sun

- Do not cover your head (males).
- Do not cover your face (females).
- Do not wear shoes or socks. Therefore, let your feet be bare!
- Do not use ornaments.
- Do not cut your hair.
- Do not clip your nails.
- Do not use creams.
- Do not allow blood to flow (example cut yourself).

Hajj has begun; hurry toward Allah! In the state of Ihram Say: Labbaika! "God has called upon you. You are here to answer His invitation and be completely obedient to Him."

Praise, blessings, and the Kingdom, are for you. There is none like you.

Denying the dishonest, exploitative, and despotic super-powers of the world, the people shout:

"Labbaika, Allahomma Labbaika". Everyone, everywhere is addressing Almighty Allah! Imagine, Oh man, you are like an iron particle in a magnetic field! It is as if you are among a million white birds flying above the sky on your way to the Miraj.

You are approaching the Kaaba. The closer you get, the more excited you become. As if it were a wounded wild animal trying to escape from its cage, your heart beats against the wall of your chest. You feel as if your skin is too tight for you!

As the whole atmosphere is full of spirit of Allah, you cannot restrain your tears. The glory of Allah is felt in your heart under your skin, in your mind, in your senses, in the face of each rock and particle of sand, in the valley, in the desert and in the vague horizon.

You see nobody but Allah! He is the only one who "exists"; others are like waves and foam. He is the only truth; all beside Him are unreal!

While pursuing the different aspects of Hajj, you feel a digression away from yourself and a movement toward Allah. In a mood of excitement, you feel forced to move in one direction only. You have no right to turn back. The world appears as a beating heart. Allah is seen everywhere.

Next, you will enter the vicinity of Mecca. There is a sign designating the Haram Area. You feel a sense of security as you arrive. No fighting, hunting, killing, or uprooting of plants is allowed in the Haram section. This regulation was set forth after the Prophet Muhammad (S) conquered Mecca (in order to free the Kaaba from the idols). Since then, the tradition has been enforced whereby certain acts are

prohibited in the area.

Upon entering the vicinity of the Haram, the shouts of "Labbaik" will stop immediately. Silence prevails everywhere; it signifies your arrival. Here is the Host (Allah) and this is His house. Everyone is quiet but each person's heart is ignited with love!

The city of Mecca resembles a huge bowl encircled on all sides by mountains. Every valley, street and alley faces the floor of this great house. Kaaba is in the center. You will see a homogeneous crowd flooding downhill to the Masjid-ul-haram like a white river. Amidst all this, you will feel like a drop! The closer you get to Kaaba, the more glories you experience. Upon descending down the hills (toward Kaaba) you get closer to Allah.

It is only through humility and obedience that you can approach glory and dignity, finally reaching eminence. In other words, you do not search for Allah in the sky nor through metaphysics, but rather, the search is conducted on this earth. He can be seen in the depth of matter and even in the stones.

Always remember that to see Him you must be on the right path. Therefore, you must train yourself to see the right way! This "scene" refers to the fate of mankind. It symbolizes his descending deep into the earth (being buried) and his ascension toward Allah (rising for the hereafter).

Now you are still closer to Kaaba. The air is filled with silence, pensiveness and love. Each step you take with each moment endows you with more love and fear. The weight of Allah's presence seems to get heavier and heavier. Your eyes grow wider and wider and are focused on the Qibla. It becomes difficult to catch your breath. Your heart is filled with desires while your lips are full of silence. You wonder how weak shoulders and delicate heart membranes can endure the strain.

When descending the valley you may feel that you are going to collapse. But then, the Kaaba appears! The Kaaba, toward which Muslims face when praying, is the center of existence, faith, love and life. It is the direction in which the beds of patients in agony are placed. It is also the direction in which the dead are buried.

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