

Circumambulating

Like a roaring river circling around a stone, Kaaba is surrounded by a crowd of highly excited people. It is like a sun in the center while the people are like stars traveling in their orbit of the solar system. Centrally positioned, the people move around it in a circular pattern. Kaaba symbolizes the constancy and eternity of Allah. The moving circle represents the continuous activity and transition of His creatures.

CONSTANCY + MOVEMENT + DISCIPLINE

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CIRCUMAMBULATING

This is an equation of the whole world. It is an example of a system based on the idea of monotheism which encompasses the orientation of a particle (man). Allah is the center of existence; He is the focus of this ephemeral world. In contrast, you are a moving particle changing your position from what you are to what you ought to be. Yet in all positions and during all times, maintain a constant distance with "Kaaba" or with Allah! The distance depends upon the path that you have chosen in this system.

You do not touch Kaaba nor do you stop there. Everyone encircles Kaaba collectively. The movement is as one unit, one group of people. There is no individual identification, that is, as being a man or woman, nor black or white! It is the transformation of one person into the totality of a "people". All of the "I's" join and become a "We", establishing the "Umma" with the aim of approaching Allah.

Allah's way is the way of the people. In other words, to approach Allah you must first approach people. How is this done? To achieve righteousness you should genuinely become involved in the problems of people, not as a monk who isolates himself in a monastery but by becoming actively involved in the "field". This includes practicing generosity, devotion, and self-denial, suffering in captivity and exile, enduring torture pains and facing various types of danger. This is how you are with the people and where you may approach Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "Every religion has its monastic way of life. In Islam, it is JIHAD.

During Tawaf (circumambulating) you cannot enter the Kaaba nor stop anywhere around it. You must enter into and disappear from the crowd. You must be drawn into the roaring river of people who are

circumambulating. This is how you will become a Hajj. This is the collective invitation to whoever wants to come to this house. What can be seen? Kaaba is steadfast in the center while the white, roaring river goes around it. Everyone is dressed in one color and pattern. There is neither distinction nor personal promotion; true totality and universality is demonstrated.

Outside of Kaaba each person has his own ways and rights. "Totality" is only a theoretical concept. "Humanity" is only an idea, a logical and theoretical concept. Away from Kaaba people are identified by their names, nationality or race, but at Kaaba these characteristics are replaced by the concept of totality and universality which serves to identify them. Therefore, it is "people" representing "mankind" who are making Tawaf!

If you remain in the state of self-centeredness, you are not really a part of the Tawaf circle. You will be like a visitor standing at the bank of a river, but not in it. Those who are detached from themselves are alive and moving collectively. Those who are not separated from themselves are stagnant and dead. They are like wandering particles in the air of its systemic orbit. Furthermore, at Kaaba you are taught to prove yourself, to demonstrate your existence and to become eternal. You must reject self-centeredness.

By exercising generosity, kindness to others, and devotion to the community (ummah), you will attain self-discovery and envision the reality. When you give up your life in the way of Allah, in your warm blood you will approach Shahadat' and be called a Shaheed. Shahadat is being present, alive, palpable and visible. A Shaheed is an everlasting witness and visitor; he exemplifies an "eternal living".

Think not of those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead; Nay, they are living. With their Lord, they have provision. Qur'an 3:69

Because the way of Allah is the way of people, it should be pursued collectively not individually. But what about prayers which are performed individually? They are done in order to train you to practice devotion, demonstrate maximum generosity, deny self-centeredness, and sacrifice for the sake of others.

The ultimate goal is to become the ideal man/woman. Man is the representative of Allah. His representative and trustee (Adam) will exist as long as Allah desires. A person will live eternally if he dies as a "man" because one (the individual) is perishable but "man" is eternal! A drop of water which is not part of a river or does not flow into a sea is like dew. It lasts overnight only, and will disappear with the early smile of sunshine.

Oh man, join the river to flow, to meet the sea and to become eternal! Oh dew, why are you waiting near the bank of the river which reminds you of the harmony of creation? Go ahead and join the people! But before coming together you must be fully conscious of what you are doing and why. You must admit it is for Allah, not for yourself and for the facts, not for the politics! Here every act has an important meaning. This eternal movement is governed by accurate discipline. It reflects the organization of the world.

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