

The Greater Pilgrimage

It is the ninth day of Zul-Hijjah and the greater pilgrimage has started. Where are you? It does, not matter! Wherever you may be – at Masjid-ul-Haram near Kaaba, in your hotel or on the street – now you must depart for the greater pilgrimage. Wear your Ihram attire and leave Mecca. How surprising, to leave Mecca behind you! Was not Qibla, here in Mecca? Yes it was, but the greater pilgrimage commences by leaving the Kaaba!!!

Were you not supposed to depart from your families, homes, lands and etc, in order to come to Mecca and face the Qibla? Yes, you were; however, that was during the lesser Hajj (Umrah). And, why should you leave Kaaba now? Because you are going to start the greater Hajj!

Deciding to go to Mecca is not the total actualization of Hajj nor are Kaaba or Qibla the goals of Hajj. These are misunderstandings on your part. The leader of monotheism (Ibrahim) teaches you that Hajj does not end in Kaaba, but begins the moment you leave the Kaaba. It is not your destination but the point from which you start!

Until now (at Kaaba), you were to become assimilated, ignore your personal interests, overcome your self-centeredness and your limitations and discover "yourself". Oh "immigrant" who is going to see "Him" (Allah), from here on you will be pursuing a different path and entering a new land. For Umrah and in Miqat you were to leave "your house", but here for Hajj you must leave the "house of Allah"!

At the verge of complete submission and the peak of your freedom, when you have discovered "yourself" – you are now qualified to obey this command: "Leave the Kaaba; and now you are closer to Me than Kaaba!" Visiting Kaaba during the lesser pilgrimage helped you to achieve self-discovery. Now you are going to approach Allah, not to visit the "house" but to see the "owner"!

Unto Allah is the journeying. Qur'an 25:42 & 35:18

Kaaba is only the "direction and not the "destination". You started off by coming "to Kaaba" but you are not to remain "in Kaaba". Anywhere you stop, you will be lost and dead.

– Oh Hajj who is starting this journey, who is always trying to approach Him,

- Oh man, the spirit of Allah,
- Oh the good deed,
- You came to Mecca,
- Do not stay here.
- Do not stop in the Haram.

To give you direction so that you would not be misled by other Qiblas, Kaaba was your Qibla. However, in Mecca, the Qibla is someplace else. You must decide to go there and start a greater journey than coming to Mecca (i.e. the greater pilgrimage)

So, on the day of departure (ninth of Zul-Hijjah), regardless of where you are, put on your Ihram, turn your back to Mecca and move on ...! What place is holier and more respectful than Mecca? Continue on; you will see ...!

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