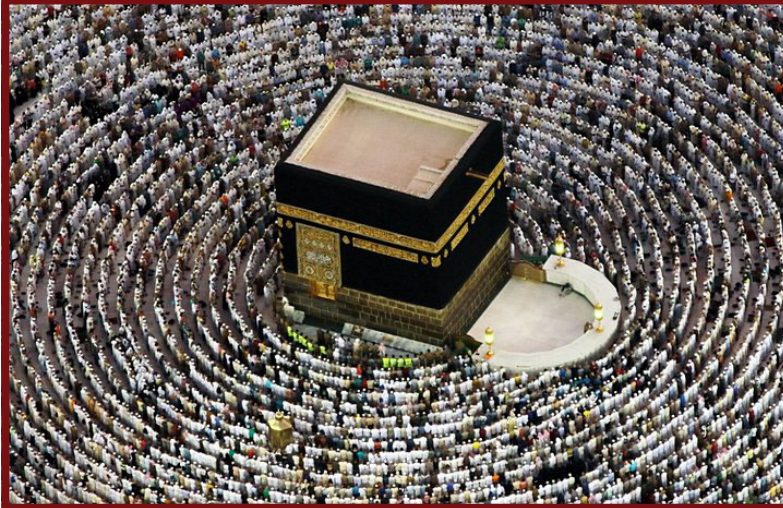


The Ka'bah



The Ka'bah, also known as Baytullah (The House of Allah), is the first house built for humanity to worship Allah (ﷻ). The small, cubed building may not rival other famous buildings in terms of size but its impact on history and human beings is unmatched. It functions as the Qibla, the direction to which all Muslims pray five times a day.

- ❖ Regarding the Ka'bah, Allah (ﷻ) mentions in the Quran in Surah Al-Ma'idah: "Allah has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security and benefits (e.g. Hajj and Umrah) for mankind." [5:97]
- ❖ The Ka'bah has been built or adjusted on several occasions throughout history. The most famous builders are; the angels who originally constructed it; the first man and prophet, Adam (عليه السلام); Ibraheem (عليه السلام) with the help of his son Ismail (عليه السلام); by the Quraysh during the Jahiliyyah period (this was witnessed by the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was 25 years old) and by Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) in 65 AH who rebuilt it according to the wish of the Prophet (ﷺ).
- ❖ Directly above the Ka'bah, at its zenith, there is a corresponding place in the heavens called the Baytul Ma'moor which holds the same status there as the Ka'bah does here on earth. Each day seventy thousand angels engage in worship there and none of them get a second opportunity to present themselves there again. The Baytul Ma'moor is such a sacred and honoured place that Allah (ﷻ) takes an oath on it in the Quran in Surah Toor: "And I swear by the Baytul Ma'moor." [4:52]
- ❖ Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "One hundred and twenty mercies descend upon the Ka'bah every day and night; sixty for those performing tawaf, forty for those engaged in salah and twenty for those who are merely looking at the Ka'bah." [Bayhaqi]
- ❖ During the Night of Ascension (mi'raj) when the Prophet (ﷺ) reached the seventh level of heaven, he met the Prophet Ibraheem (عليه السلام) resting against the Baytul Ma'moor. Ibraheem (عليه السلام) returned the greeting of his descendant and testified that Muhammad (ﷺ) was the Prophet of Allah.
- ❖ The noblest shade on earth is that of the Holy Ka'bah. Khabbab (رضي الله عنه) reports, "We once approached the Prophet (ﷺ) with a difficulty and found him sitting in the shade of the Ka'bah, leaning on his shawl." [Bukhari]
- ❖ The north corner of the Ka'bah faces towards Syria, Jordan and Palestine; the east corner (where the Hajar al-Aswad is) faces towards Oman, India and Malaysia; the south corner (Rukun Yamani) faces towards Yemen, Mauritius and Kenya; and the west corner faces towards Egypt, Morocco and Spain.
- ❖ The covering of the Ka'bah is known as the Kiswah and was first placed by the prophet Ismail (عليه السلام).
During the era of Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) the Ka'bah was damaged by catapult fire in 64 AH when the army of Yazeed-bin-Muawaiya laid siege to Makkah. One of Abdullah bin Zubair's companions lit a fire, a spark flew off and set alight the kiswah (covering) of the Holy Ka'bah. The wooden portions of the Ka'bah were burned which necessitated its demolition and reconstruction. Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) reconstructed it on the foundations of Ibraheem (عليه السلام), thus fulfilling what the Prophet

(ﷺ) had wished for, as the construction made by the Quraysh was about three meters short because they had run out of lawful earnings to finance the build.

- ❖ When Hajjaj-bin-Yusuf had the governorship over Makkah he informed the Ummayyad Khalifah Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan that Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) had changed the Ka'bah to something that was different to how it was in the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ). He gave permission to change it again and in 73 AH it was changed to its previous state. However, when Abdul Malik came to know the Hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) of how he had desired the Ka'bah to have been on the original foundations of Ibraheem (عليه السلام) he was full of remorse about what he had done.
- ❖ Muslims do not pray to the Ka'bah, it functions merely as a unifying direction point. During his time in Makkah, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to pray towards Bait-al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), with the Ka'bah in front of him. When he migrated to Madinah, he prayed towards Jerusalem for 16 months, but he hoped it would be changed to the Ka'bah. Allah (ﷻ) then revealed the following verse in the Quran in Surah al-Baqarah: “Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad’s) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qibla (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of al-Masjid al-Haram (at Makkah). And wheresoever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction.” [2:144]
- ❖ There are Ahadith that confirm that the Ka'bah will be destroyed towards the end of time. Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Ka'bah will be destroyed by Dhus-Suwaikatain (a man with thin legs) from Abyssinia (Ethiopia).” [Bukhari]

A model of how the Ka'bah looked in the time of Ibraheem (عليه السلام):



Inside the Ka'bah



This photo shows a rare view of what the interior of the Ka'bah looks like. The construction made by Ibraheem (عليه السلام) had no roof, it was the Quraysh who raised the walls of the Ka'bah and added a roof. Today, only a privileged few have had the opportunity to step inside the Ka'bah.

- ❖ When Islam began to spread, the Quraysh became more embittered and could not tolerate the Prophet (ﷺ) any longer. The chiefs drew up a document which called for the social and economic boycott of the Prophet (ﷺ) and all those who supported him and his family. They all signed this document on 1st Muharram of the seventh year of the Prophethood and the scroll was hung inside the Ka'bah to give it full sanctity. For three long years the Prophet (ﷺ) and his kinsmen were expelled to a narrow valley in Makkah. Food was so scarce that they had to resort to eating leaves of trees and their children's cries could be heard all over the valley. At last by the Grace of Allah, the scroll was eaten up by white ants save for the name of Allah and the boycott was lifted.
- ❖ When the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived in Makkah on the day of victory (in 8 AH), he made tawaf around the Ka'bah seven times and touched the Hajar al-Aswad with his staff. He then asked Uthman bin Talha to open the door of the Ka'bah. The Prophet (ﷺ) entered the Ka'bah accompanied by Usama bin Zaid, Bilal and Uthman bin Talha (رضي الله عنهم). The Prophet (ﷺ) closed the door, performed prayer, and stayed for some time.
- ❖ The two horns of the ram which Ibraheem (عليه السلام) slaughtered were hung inside the Ka'bah. When Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) demolished the Ka'bah to rebuild it, he found the horns had disintegrated due to previous damage and age.
- ❖ The Quraysh had erected their chief idol, Hubal, within the centre of Ka'bah. It was made of red carnelian (a type of mineral) and shaped like a human with the right hand broken which the Quraysh had replaced with gold. In front of the idol were seven arrows of fate and when the pagan Arabs were undecided on a matter they would go to Hubal and throw the arrows in front of him and took 'advice' based on how the arrows appeared.
- ❖ Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet (ﷺ) had made a vow that if he ever had ten sons he would sacrifice one of them to God in front of the Ka'bah. When he subsequently fathered ten grown up sons up he announced his vow to them and had their names written on arrows of fate which were mixed and then one drawn out. Destiny fell upon Abdullah, his youngest and dearest son, who was to become the father of the Prophet (ﷺ). Not wanting to sacrifice Abdullah, Abdul Muttalib consulted a soothsayer to see how he could be exonerated from his vow and in return for Abdullah's life he gave away 100 camels. Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) is called the descendant of the "two sacrificed ones" (Ismail (عليه السلام) and his own father, Abdullah).
- ❖ The Prophet (ﷺ) had Hubal destroyed after the conquest of Makkah.

Hajar al-Aswad (The Black Stone)



The Hajar al-Aswad is set in the eastern corner of the Ka'bah. Tawaf is started and ended by facing this sacred stone. Throughout the ages, innumerable people including many of the Prophets (ﷺ), the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself, the Sahabah (رضي الله عنهم), many pious personalities and millions of Muslims who have performed Hajj and Umrah have placed their blessed lips on it.

- ❖ The Hajar al-Aswad was brought from Jannah and presented to Ibraheem (عليه السلام) to be placed on the corner of the Ka'bah. Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The Black Stone came down from Paradise and it was whiter than milk, but the sins of the sons of Adam turned it black." [Tirmidhi]
- ❖ Du'as are accepted at the Hajar al-Aswad and on the Day of Judgement it will testify in favour of all those who kissed it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By Allah! On the Day of Qiyamah, Allah will present the Hajar al-Aswad in such a manner that it will have two eyes and a tongue to testify to the Imaan (faith) of all those whokissed it." [Tirmidhi]
- ❖ When the Quraysh demolished the Holy Ka'bah in order to reconstruct it, a dispute arose when the building reached the level of the Black Stone. They differed on the issue of who was eligible to restore the Black Stone to its original place. A civil war was about to break out. Banu Abdu'd-Dar brought a bowl full of blood and all of the tribes inserted their hands in it, which meant that they had made up their minds to fight one another. But Abu Umayya Ibn al-Mugheera, their elder, asked Quraysh to agree on the judgement of the first person to come through the Bani Shaibah gate and they all agreed on this suggestion. The first to come through this gate was the Prophet (ﷺ). This was five years before his mission. He put the Black Stone in the middle of a piece of cloth, and asked a representative of each tribe to hold one of the edges of the cloth and raise it close to its place. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) picked it up with his own noble hands and restored it to its original place. This was how the Prophet (ﷺ) prevented a war from breaking out among the Quraysh by a supreme demonstration of wisdom.
- ❖ Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه) relates that the Prophet (ﷺ), while leaning against the Ka'bah said: "The Hajar al-Aswad and al-Maqam (Ibraheem) are two jewels from the jewels of Paradise. Had Allah (جل جلاله) not concealed their radiance, they would illuminate everything between the East and the West." [Tirmidhi]
- ❖ Umar (رضي الله عنه) once kissed the Hajar al-Aswad and said, "I know well that you are just a stone that can do neither good nor harm. Had I not seen the Prophet (ﷺ) kiss you, I would not have done so." Umar (رضي الله عنه) made the statement because there were many people who were newly converted to Islam and he did not want them to get the impression that Muslims also revered stones as the Arabs revered and worshipped stone idols during the Period of Ignorance. Umar (رضي الله عنه) made it clear that he was following the Sunnah practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that although the stone is blessed, it can do neither harm nor good.
- ❖ The Hajar al-Aswad was stolen from the Ka'bah around 930 CE by Qarmatian warriors who were an Ismaeeli Shia sect. They ransacked Makkah, desecrating the Well of Zamzam with Muslim corpses and carried the Black Stone away to their base in Ihsaa, in medieval Bahrain. According to the historian Al-Juwayni, the stone was returned in around 952 CE and restored to its original location.

- ❖ The Hajar al-Aswad was originally a complete stone but due to various historical incidents now consists of eight pieces of varying sizes affixed to a large stone and encased in a silver frame. The silver frame was first made by Abdullah bin Zubair (رضي الله عنه) and replaced by later Khalifas as the need arose.
- ❖ Six (additional) pieces are claimed to be in Istanbul, Turkey. One is displayed in the mihrab of the Blue Mosque, one above the entrance of the tomb of Sulaiman the Magnificent and four in the Sokullu Sehit Mehmet Pasa Camii mosque (one over the mihrab, one below the lower pulpit, another is above the upper pulpit and the last is over the entrance door). The authenticity of these additional pieces has been questioned, although the Turks did rule over what is now Saudi Arabia for many years and hold many historical Islamic relics. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.
- ❖ Note that when kissing the Hajar al-Aswad, one should neither push people nor harm anyone because while kissing the Hajar al-Aswad is Sunnah, causing harm to people is a forbidden act (haram). When the area is crowded, it will suffice to merely point towards the Hajar al-Aswad with one's hand or a stick while reciting the Takbeer and then to kiss the hand or stick. Although the Prophet (ﷺ) kissed the Hajar al-Aswad directly, he also pointed towards it when the area was crowded, it is therefore clear that both kissing it and pointing towards it are Sunnah.

Detail of the Hajar al-Aswad showing the position of the 8 pieces:

