

E-BOOK

# SPECIFICITIES OF THE KA'BA



Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad al Dosary (PhD).

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## INTRODUCTION

Verily all praise is for Allah, we praise Him, seek His help and forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of ourselves and from the sinfulness of our actions. Whosoever Allah guides, then none can misguide him, and whosoever Allah misguides, there can be no guide for him. I testify that there is no deity except Allah alone and I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

*“O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims (in submission to Him)” Surat ‘Āli ‘Imrān (Family of ‘Imrān), verse 102.*

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

*“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.” Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), verse 1.*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

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*“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice. He will then amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly gained a signal victory”* Surat Al-'Aḥzāb (The Combined Forces), verses 70 – 71.

Certainly the best of speeches is the Book of Allah and the finest guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The most evil affair is a newly invented matter in religion and every newly invented matter is innovation (*bid'a*), and every innovation is misguidance and all misguidance is in the Hellfire.

In one of the most desolate and arid places of Earth, in a rocky and stony land surrounded everywhere by the desert, with no plantations and no water; a place that lacks everything that gives life and prosperity, Allah chose Mecca The Honoured to become His safe Sanctuary, the heart and capital of the World, the unique city on the face of the planet that acquired sanctity by a divine order and a Lordly decree to shine radiantly over all cities.

The will of Allah Most High chose for Mecca this barren land in spite of His power, exalted be He, to make it a gorgeous verdant garden with luxuriant vegetation, full of flowers, warbling birds and babbling streams. He made it a sign of His power and a miracle; Allah Most High said:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا وَيَتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ

*“Have they not seen that We made (Mecca) a safe Sanctuary, while people are being taken away all around them?”* Surat al-'Ankabūt (The Spider): 67.

And Allah Most High said:

أَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّن لَّدُنَّا

*“Have We not established for them a safe Sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from Us?”* Surat Al-Qaṣaṣ (The Stories): 57.



Mecca the Honoured is particular compared to all other cities on the planet; cities and lands are favoured, according to human habits, for their resources and the wealth Allah bestowed upon them; some lands are preferred thanks to their mineral resources, some for their oil resources, other for their agriculture or water or any other material perishable assets.

But the criterion of differentiation of the Holy Land that singles it out is not a material one: religion is the basis of its distinction from all other lands and countries; it is the Holy Land of Allah, on it lies the Honourable Ka'ba, the sacred and glorified places, it is the qibla (direction) of the Muslims, in it takes place the greatest gathering of people on Earth to worship Allah Most High by accomplishing the Hajj and 'Umra.

For this reason, Mecca holds a great and elevated status in the hearts of all the Muslims of the planet; a station stemming from this religious eminence bestowed by Allah. There is no doubt that what distinguishes a nation from another, what raises one above others is the scale of the exaltation of its sanctity, its bond to its History, its persistence in sticking to its authenticity and its development from its past towards its present and future. This is why ancient and modern Muslims have granted the Holy Land a great interest, dedicated to it volumes and devoted to it their times.

It is with my deep love for the Holy Land and my firm belief in the greatness of our religion and our convictions that I decided to write this book which I entitled "The Holy Land: Description – Names – Virtues – Specificities – Rules" for it to become a comprehensive reference; hoping it to be pleasant to read; I gathered in it what is related to the Holy Land as descriptions, virtues, specificities and rules linked to it. This book came into being with the help of Allah Most High, combining the splendour of sight, ease of reading and the charm of writing on this great and deep subject.

### **Our Lord creates what He wills and He chooses:**

It is according to the perfection of His power, His wisdom and knowledge that Allah Most High prefers, distinguishes, specifies and chooses between His creatures. Allah has His preference between angels, prophets and human beings. He preferred



some periods of times above others as He preferred some places above others; for instance He preferred the Firdaws amongst all the Heavens.

If you gaze at Creation you would see this divine choice and grant indicating His lordliness, exalted be He, His oneness and the perfection of His wisdom, knowledge and power; He is Allah, there is no god but Him and no one creates as He creates, no one chooses as He chooses, no one directs all things as He does. These choices and arrangements noticed in this World are amongst the greatest signs of His lordliness and the most obvious evidence of His oneness and of the characteristics of His perfection and the sincerity of His messengers.<sup>1</sup>

No one creates as He creates, no one chooses as He chooses and no one directs all things as He does; Allah Most High said:

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ

“And your Lord creates what He wills and He chooses” Surat Al-Qaṣaṣ (The Stories): 68.

Amongst the places that received this grace and greatness is Mecca the Honoured, the land of the Revelation and the cradle of the message where lays a house for which the hearts and souls are craving, is it not the Ancient House.<sup>2</sup>

**Amongst the signs of its preference:** Allah Most High informed us that Mecca is the Mother of Cities; all the cities are linked to it, they are its followers, it is their central axis and origin. Therefore, there cannot be any city equivalent to it; it is similar to the Fātiḥa: the Prophet (s) said of it that it was the Mother of the Qur’ān; this is why it is second to none in all the divine books.<sup>3</sup>

### Importance of the subject and method:

The importance of this book lies in its own nature: a comprehensive study of the Holy Land and what is relevant as history, virtues, specificities and rules based on sharia-authenticated sources approved by the standards of well-versed and eminent

<sup>1</sup> Zād al-ma’ād, Ibn al-Qayyim (42/1).

<sup>2</sup> See: Bayt Allah al-ḥarām al-Ka’ba, Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Allah Shabbāla p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Zād al-ma’ād, (49 – 50/1).



people in jurisprudence; regardless of what became famous concerning the Holy Land such as false ḥadīths, false events or false information linked to it. Therefore, the method of this book is based on the method of the people of ḥadīth whereas authenticity of information is the fundamental condition for being quoted in the text. This is the guideline followed, based on the prevailing opinion in Islamic jurisprudence: presenting evidence from the Qur'ān and the Sunna, sometimes with the addition of companions' statements and reasoning, evidence of the consensus if there is one, and quoting rules, wisdoms and benefits derived from said evidence. I avoided delving into too many details (except for important matters) or mentioning contradictions in order to ward off boredom, to make prevailing opinions more clear in the minds and to make the book easier and more comfortable for the dear reader.

This book is intended for all categories of Muslims ranging from the diligent student assiduous in the quest of knowledge to the uninitiated reader considering the easiness of the method, the fluency of the style and the distance taken from blameworthy controversy or sterile arguments.

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## Section I

# The First House Established For Worshipping Allah Most High

Among the most evident characteristics of the Old House is that it is the very first house established on Earth for all the peoples, for their rituals and worship. Allah Most High said: **“Indeed, the first House (of worship) established for mankind was that at Bakka, a blessed place, a guidance for the worlds”** (Surat ‘Āli ‘Imrān - Family of Imran – verse 96).

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا ۖ وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

## Meaning of the primacy in this verse:<sup>4</sup>

1. It is the first house that received Allah’s blessing and that was established for worshipping; this is the opinion of ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (r) among others.
2. It is the very first house that existed on Earth, according to as-Suddī.
3. It was created before all the Earths which were placed beneath it after its creation. This is the view of ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Amrū Ibn al-‘Āṣ (r2).

<sup>4</sup> See: *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī* (592/5), *Tafsīr al-Baghawī* (71/2), *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (384/1), *Tafsīr ar-Rāzī* (126/8), *at-Taḥrīr wa at-tanwīr* (160/3).



4. The location of the Ka'ba is the location of the very first house Allah placed on Earth, according to Qatāda (m).

**The true opinion** is the first, the view of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (r) and the attribution of this speech to him is authentic. Therefore this opinion cannot be subject to debate nor interpretation, as 'Alī could not have said so except if he had heard it from Allah's Messenger (s). This speech is therefore elevated and attributed to the Prophet (s). Moreover, this view is shared by Ibn Jarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr and other investigators.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the three other speeches, they do not rely on proofs or any text from the Qur'ān or the Sunna whereas they broach a subject linked to the Unseen.<sup>6</sup>

### View of the exegetes concerning the interpretation of the verse:

1. **Ibn Kathīr (m):** Allah Most High informs us that the first House appointed for mankind, for all people, for their acts of worship and religious rituals, for going around in circumambulation (ṭawāf), praying in its vicinity and remaining in its area in retreat **was that at Bakka (Mecca)**, لِلَّذِي بِنَاكَ meaning the Ka'ba that was built by Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (p).<sup>7</sup>
2. **Ar-Rāzī (m):** Know that this verse necessarily denotes the primacy of the House in honour and grace, because the first aim of mentioning this primacy is a blessing, giving it preference over the Mosque in Jerusalem... **The nations agreed:** the builder of this House is Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (p) and the builder of Jerusalem's Mosque is Sulaymān (p). There is no doubt that Ibrāhīm is higher in degree and more eminent than Sulaymān (p). In this regard, the Ka'ba has to be more venerable than Jerusalem's Mosque.<sup>8</sup>
3. How beautiful is the word of **Ibn 'Āshūr (m):** Without any doubt the Ka'ba was built by Ibrāhīm (p), this is mentioned many times in the Qur'ān. If it had been built before him by other prophets, this would have been mentioned and this would have increased its eminence. It is impossible that the first building established on earth was at the time of Ibrāhīm (p) as there were other nations

<sup>5</sup> See: *Bayt Allah al-ḥarām al-Ka'ba*, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (384/1).

<sup>8</sup> *At-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (427/8).



and eras that had buildings... The objective is not to know who the first builder in History was, but who paved the way for guidance. Primacy in the verse is given to underline the beginning of monotheism and its importance: the House was the first built for the true worship of the one God, it has been “established for mankind” *وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ*, in their interest. If it was an inhabited house, the verse would have said that the people established it. This is backed by the following words “guidance” and blessed” *مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى*.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Ka'ba is the first structure set up for the oneness of Allah:**

As Ibn 'Āshūr (m) confirmed: No doubt the first sanctuary established for the proclamation of the oneness of Allah and His transcendence and for eliminating idolatry is the Ka'ba which was built by Ibrāhīm (p); the first to argue with the idolaters with proofs, the first who fought idolatry with the power of his hands crushing the idols into dust. He set up this great structure for immortalizing the remembrance of Allah and His oneness, for everyone who will come to visit it to know that it was built to make vain the worship of idols. Ages have passed on this House and its vision became a reminder of Allah Most High; it has the quality of primacy and the prestige of having been built by the hands of Ibrāhīm and his son Ismā'īl (pb) themselves alone. In this regard, it is the most ancient tangible proof regarding monotheism and its message, which are both the two poles of the believers, and nothing is equivalent to it in this characteristic.

Then, the Ḥajj was instituted to renew this remembrance and to generalize it to the other nations. It is therefore not surprising that the Ka'ba became the most visited place on Earth by those who want to evoke the majesty in the oneness of the true Lordship and no house of Allah was built except long centuries later, like the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem (the Temple of Sulaymān) which was the qibla (direction) of the Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Ka'ba transformed the abstract conceptual monotheism into concrete physical reality:**

The Ka'ba symbolizes monotheism. Monotheism is fixed in the heart and it is an abstract concept. The human being always needs something concrete and physical

<sup>9</sup> *At-Tahrīr wa at-tanwīr* (160/3).

<sup>10</sup> *At-Tahrīr wa at-tanwīr* (32/2).



symbolizing abstract concepts he bears inside himself, and here comes the Honourable Ka'ba; this is the secret of the attachment of the souls and the craving of the hearts for it.

The Honourable Ka'ba draws its greatness and sanctity from this pure monotheism which unifies the hearts of the monotheist believers in Allah Most High and makes them as the heart of one single person.

The Ka'ba also unified the direction of the believers: it is their qibla for the prayers, their destination for the Hajj. It changed the abstract concept of monotheism into a tangible concrete reality; we notice that in the *talbiya* recited by the pilgrims: Here I am O Allah! (in response to Your call – *talbiya* in Arabic) Here I am! Here I am, You have no associate, here I am! Affirming by these words a pure monotheism purified from idolatry and dedicated to Allah Most High and His oneness which transcends all stains of polytheism. This *talbiya* is recited only on one occasion: when one is heading to the Ka'ba, the Sacred House of Allah, claiming this relation between pure monotheism for Allah Most High and the Ka'ba, the Ancient House.



## Section II

# Allah Ordered The Purification Of The Ka'ba

Among the virtues of the Sacred House is that Allah Most High ordered its physical and moral purification for it to become a place to worship Allah by different religious rituals and good deeds. Allah exalted chose for this mission Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (p) and his son Ismā'īl (p) when He said: “And We charged Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl, (saying): Purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who are staying there for worship and those who bow and prostrate in prayer”

وَعَهَدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ  
وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

(Surat al-Baqara – The Cow – verse 125).

And He Most High said: “And purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who stand in prayer and those who bow and prostrate”

وَطَهَّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

(Surat al-Hajj – The Pilgrimage – verse 26).



**General meaning:**

His words exalted be He: “Purify my House” طَهَّرَا بَيْتِي i.e. We revealed them both, We ordered them both<sup>11</sup>, or it is said: We charged them, We appointed them to do so.<sup>12</sup>

His word, exalted be He: “My House” بَيْتِي i.e. the Ka'ba. He attributed it to Himself and gave it preference, in other words: Build it both of you on the basis of purity and monotheism.<sup>13</sup>

Allah Most High revealed them both to purify His sacred House; on a moral basis from polytheism, unbelief, the worship of idols and disobedience, and on a physical basis from uncleanness, impurities and dirt.

“In the verse, the meaning of “those who perform ṭawāf” means the circumambulators of the House; “those who are staying for worship and those who bow and prostrate” means those who pray; i.e. purify My House for the worshippers in ṭawāf or prayer, the bowers and the prostrators.”<sup>14</sup>

**Different forms of purification of the House:**

Ibn 'Āshūr (m) said: **What is meant by purification of the House is on the one hand the physical meaning of the term purify:** to protect it from dirt and filth so the worshipper can practise his cult without being disturbed; **and on the other hand a moral purification:** to move away from it what stands against the purpose of its construction, such as idols and acts contrary to Truth like aggression, immorality or performing ṭawāf naked for men and women.

**Here there is a hint that the polytheists are not worthy of the edification of the Sacred Mosque** as they did not purify it from what it should be purified of; Allah Most High said: *“They obstruct people from the Sacred Mosque and they were not fit to be its guardians”*

وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ

(Surat Al-'Anfāl – The Spoils of War: 34), and *“indeed the polytheists are unclean”*

<sup>11</sup> See: *Tafsīr as-Sa'dī*, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> See: *at-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (598/1).

<sup>13</sup> See: *Tafsīr al-Baghawī* (114/1).

<sup>14</sup> *Aḍwā' al-bayān* (456/4).



إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ

(Surat at-Tawba: 28).<sup>15</sup>

### Completion of the purification by rejecting the polytheists

After the rise and victory of the Islamic religion, the Prophet (s) forbade idolaters to perform Ḥajj or to circumambulate the House naked.

It has been narrated that Allah's Messenger (s) sent Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (r) during the Ḥajj before his Farewell Pilgrimage to make a public announcement to the people on the Day of Naḥr: **No idolater is allowed to perform Ḥajj after this year and no naked person is allowed to perform ṭawāf around the Ka'ba.**<sup>16</sup>

### The Prophet's purification (s) of the Ka'ba is the continuation of Ibrāhīm's purification (p):

If Allah Most High gave the honour of building and purifying the Ka'ba to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl, peace be upon both of them, He gave our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (s) a greater, more beautiful and more complete honour: the purification of the House from the stain of polytheism and from all the idols around it brought by the infidels and the associators which were worshipped instead of Allah exalted be He. In the beginning, Ibrāhīm built the Ka'ba purely for Allah Most High without associating anything with him; but with the passage of time the polytheists surrounded it with idols worshipped with Allah the exalted Majestic. This mission on the shoulders of our Prophet Muḥammad (s) was greater and this responsibility was bigger and he accomplished it perfectly. More than this, he reached the highest honour when Allah Most High ordered that neither idolater nor infidel will make the Ḥajj anymore, nor practise anything that is incompatible with ethics and morality; he delimited the sanctity of the place with beacons to prevent any infidel or idolater entering it, as a hyperbola in the purification of the Sanctuary and of this Honourable Ka'ba. Allah Most High guaranteed this purity until the Day of Judgment as a great honour to our Prophet Muḥammad (s).

<sup>15</sup> *At-Taḥrīr wa at-tanwīr* (114/1).

<sup>16</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (158/4), H. 1622.



## Section III

# The Honourable Attribution Of The Ka'ba To Allah

Among the particularities of the Sacred House is that Allah Most High honoured it and elevated it by linking it to His honourable self in many verses of His Noble Book, which indicates the extent of His care, exalted be He, of this great House, His praising of it by quoting it, His laudation of it and His exaltation of its status, as in the following verses:

1. “Purify My House” طَهَّرَا بَيْتِي Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 125.
2. “and purify My House” وَطَهَّرْ بَيْتِي Surat al-Hajj – The Pilgrimage: 26.

There is no doubt that the addition of a possessive pronoun referring to Allah is an honour and praise to the Sacred House, this addition suffices as a blessing and homage.<sup>17</sup>

### Lessons to draw from the addition of the pronoun:

Among the lessons to draw from this blessed addition: what was reported by as-Sa'dī (m): The Creator linked the House to Himself by the addition of the pronoun for us to draw some lessons; **among them:** that this bond required the full attention of Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl (pb) to purify the House, Allah's House, they both then devoted all their efforts and energy to the task. **Another lesson** is that the addition

<sup>17</sup> See: *at-Tahrīr wa at-tanwīr* (241/17).





of the pronoun implies honour and respect and therefore it implies an order to His Servants to praise it and respect it. **This addition** is also the reason for the attraction of the hearts towards it.<sup>18</sup>

Truly, this attribution has turned the hearts of the Universe towards it, it gave love for it to the souls and made them crave for the vision of it, it is the meeting place of the lovers of Allah, and they never get weary of coming there, the more they visit it, the more they love it and crave for it.<sup>19</sup>

3. His word Most High: “Let them worship the Lord of this House”

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ Surat Quraysh: 3.

**This House** is the Honourable Ka'ba, the demonstrative here is for exaltation<sup>20</sup>, Allah bestowed Lordship on the House, as a grace and honour, is He not the Lord of everything, exalted be He?<sup>21</sup>

**There are two aspects in the introduction of Himself as the Lord of this House: the first one:** the Quraysh used to worship idols and Allah distinguished Himself from them. **The second one:** the Quraysh were honoured by the House above all the Arabs and He reminded them of this blessing from Him.<sup>22</sup>

4. His word Most High: “I have only been commanded to worship the Lord of this land, who made it sacred and to whom belongs all things”

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ۗ

Surat an-Naml – The Ants: 91.

Here Allah linked Himself to the land, i.e. Mecca the Honoured.

It means: I was ordered to devote my adoration and monotheism to Allah who is the Lord of this land, Mecca. He singled it out among all lands by mentioning it; as it is linked to Him and it is most beloved and honoured by Him. He designated it in order to exalt it, for it is the land of His Prophet and the land of His Revelation.<sup>23</sup> In it are His Sanctuary and His House.

<sup>18</sup> Tafsīr as-Sa'dī p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> Tafsīr ar-Rāzī (101/32).

<sup>21</sup> See: Tafsīr as-Sa'dī, p. 935.

<sup>22</sup> Tafsīr al-Māwardī (348/6).

<sup>23</sup> Tafsīr al-Khāzin (191/5).



### Wisdom of choosing Mecca for the Ka'ba:

**One may ask, or one can wonder:** if Allah Most High related the House to His honourable self, **what is the wisdom behind choosing Mecca for it to be built on? An arid and sterile land** while everywhere on Earth are lands where rivers flow and gardens bloom, does it fit with the honour of being related to Allah Most High? Let us leave it to the Prince of poets Aḥmad Shawqī to answer this question with his magnificent words:

If Allah Most High wanted, He would have built His House in Egypt, near a munificent river and a valley full of gardens; if Allah wanted, He would have taken His House to the Levant between shady brooks and hills capped with flowers, warbling birds, picking busy paths, branches laden with fruit easy to gather; if Allah wanted He would have unleashed His power and elevated His House under the very noses of the powerful, kings of bygone eras, above their important gods superimposed on one another in elevated chambers with ornamented domes, **but He Most High looked at The Mother of Cities (Mecca), and He saw in it a humbling to the power of His Majesty, a lack of His richness and bounty,** He saw a humbleness that was in accordance with faith, a sobriety that was fit for worship, He saw an isolation going in the sense of monotheism. He then ordered Ibrāhīm, His intimate and close friend, His Prophet, to elevate in this valley the foundations of His House, He established between these rocks the lighthouse of His oneness... and the House was constructed, majesty as covering curtain and veil, truth as walls, monotheism as appearance and finality, the prophets as its constructors and builders, and Allah almighty as its Lord and neighbour... Allah awarded it elegance in remembrance and eminence such as no other place in the past or recently: righteousness of worship, grace of Ḥajj, honour of the builder, splendour of majesty and prestige of History.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Aḥmad Shawqī, *al-a'māl an-nathariya, al-majlis al-a'lā li-thaqāfa*, Egypt (2007), p. 731-733.



## Section IV

# In It Is The Maqām Ibrāhīm

Among the specificities of the Old House is that in it is the Maqām Ibrāhīm (p) (the Station, the Standing place of Ibrāhīm), the stone upon which he stood when he was building the upper parts of the House; he had difficulty reaching the top of the structure, so he used to stand on the stone and build while Ismā'īl (p) handed him the stones and followed him all around the House until he finished.<sup>25</sup>

## Maqām Ibrāhīm in the Qur'ān:

Allah Most High mentioned the Maqām Ibrāhīm (p) twice in the Noble Qur'ān:

**The first time:** “And take, (O believers), from the Station of Ibrāhīm a place of prayer.”

وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ

Surat al-Baqara: 125.

It was reported that ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r) said: O Allah's Messenger, I wish we took the Station of Ibrāhīm as our praying place for some of our prayers. So came the Divine Inspiration: “And take, (O believers), from the Station of Ibrāhīm a place of prayer.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See: *Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī* (232/13).

<sup>26</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (157/1), H. 393.



It was narrated that ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umar (r2) said: **The Prophet arrived and circumambulated the Ka’ba seven times and then offered a two rak‘a prayer behind the Maqām Ibrahim.**<sup>27</sup>

**The second time:** His word Most High: “*In it are clear signs (such as) the Station of Ibrāhīm*”

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ط

Surat ‘Āli ‘Imrān: 97.<sup>28</sup>

Az-Zamakhsharī (m) said: The expression “clear signs” indicates a plural whereas the Maqām is one. There are two explanations: **firstly** because this stone itself gathers many signs showing the power of Allah and the prophethood of Ibrāhīm (p) with the appearance of the footprints of Ibrāhīm’s feet on a solid rock. Allah said: “Indeed, Ibrāhīm was a comprehensive leader” إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً Surat an-Nahl: 120. **Secondly:** it encompasses many signs: the footprints on a solid rock is a sign, his feet sinking into it until the ankles is a sign, only some parts of the rock going soft is a sign and for it to remain, unlike all the other prophets’ signs, peace be upon them, is a particular sign for Ibrāhīm (p). Moreover, it has been preserved in spite of its numerous enemies, ranging from polytheists, people of the Book and atheists for thousands of years.<sup>29</sup>

The signs of the Maqām Ibrāhīm (p) whose footprints entered a solid rock demonstrate Allah’s power and the sincerity of Ibrāhīm (p).<sup>30</sup>

### **The Maqām prevented from being associated to idolatrous practices:**

In addition to all the previously quoted indications and signs found concentrated on the Maqām Ibrāhīm (p); the miracle reached its climax in that Allah Most High prevented it from being taken as an idol and worshipped throughout the ages of polytheism, granting it even more honour. Allah, exalted be He, protected the footprints of His prophet Ibrāhīm (p), the love of the people for him and the remains of his law and cult. Though idolatrous practices were widespread at that time, no idolater ever venerated the Maqām or the Black Stone. In this lies manifest wisdom: if

<sup>27</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (588/2), H. 1547.

<sup>28</sup> See: *at-Tibiyān fī i’rāb al-Qur’ān*, Abū al-Baqā’ al-‘Akbarī (281/1). *Al-Kashshāf* (415/1).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *Zād al-masīr*, Ibn al-Jawzī (427/1).



they had been worshipped during the time of ignorance of divine guidance, before Islam came to exalt them by prescribing the touching of the Black Stone and the prayer behind the Maqām, hypocrites and enemies of Islam would have argued that Islam established the respect of some idols and did not get rid of the stain of polytheism, and that whoever used to worship one of them clung to this custom.<sup>31</sup>

**There never was among all the nations a vestige preserved by Allah Most High through the passing ages like the Maqām Ibrāhīm and the Black Stone among the Islamic community, and they will remain safeguarded until the Day of Resurrection.**

**Newly invented matter in religion and heretical doctrine (bid'ā):**

Among the innovations invented by some people at the Maqām: **they touch it and kiss it** without any justified ground in the Islamic law. Qatāda (m) said on this matter: People were ordered to pray behind it, they were not ordered to touch it; those people constrained themselves to do something that never anyone constrained himself to do previously.<sup>32</sup>

**Though such a custom is heretical innovation, it does not represent any aspect of polytheism;** it has emerged from some ignoramuses controlled by their emotions; the innovation appeared because they were carried away by their passion, it is neither the expression of a religious belief nor a creed.

<sup>31</sup> *Maqām Ibrāhīm*, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Kurdī al-makki, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Manāsik*, Ibn Abī 'Arūba, p. 35.



## Section V

# The Craving Of Hearts For The Ka'ba

Among the most obvious virtues of the Old House is the craving of hearts towards it and the clinging of souls to it; Allah Most High said about that: “*When We made the House a place of recourse for the people and a place of security*” Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 125.

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا ۗ

It is a reminder and a notice of Allah’s grace and bounty to His servants: He made the Sacred House, for the Arabs in general and the Quraysh especially, a place of recourse (*mathāba*) for the people, i.e. a place of return every year; *thāba* in Arabic means returning.<sup>33</sup>

### “A place of recourse” (*mathāba*) in the language:

Ar-Rāzī (m) said: **The linguists said:** *mathāba* derives from the verb *thāba*, which stands for returning; it is said: the water returned (*thāba*) to the river after an interruption, or so-and-so recovered (*thāba*) his reason, i.e. his reason returned; or if a group of people was separated and then gathered again.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, Ibn al-‘Arabī (57/1).

<sup>34</sup> *At-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (57/4).



**The meaning:** We made the House a place of recourse; they visit it every year and return to their homes, and then visit it again and never feel bored.<sup>35</sup>

### Summary of the interpretation of the verse:

Ibn Kathīr (m) said: “These Imam’s interpretations of this verse is that Allah Most High honoured the Sacred House, in His legislation and in the Unseen. Allah made it a safe refuge and safe haven, a place of recourse. Therefore, the souls are eager, never bored, to conduct short visits to the House, even every year. This is because Allah accepted the supplication of His Khalīl Ibrāhīm (p), when he asked Allah to make the hearts of people eager to visit the House. Ibrāhīm said: “O! Our Lord! I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make the hearts of the people incline towards them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful...”

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا  
لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ  
الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ ابراهيم: ٣٧

.....

رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ

... and accept my invocation.” Surat Ibrāhīm: 37 - 40.<sup>36</sup>

### The wisdom behind making the House a place of recourse:

Allah Most High decided so for it has benefits for the worldly life and the Hereafter. **Among the benefits in this life:** people of East and West gather there and make profitable commercial exchanges. Moreover, thanks to the Hajj, roads are built and the country develops itself. It also makes it possible to contemplate all the diversity of this world gathered there. **Among the religious benefits:** the person

<sup>35</sup> Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabarī (532/1).

<sup>36</sup> Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (169/1).



heading to the House intending to accomplish his religious rituals, to get closer to Allah Most High, to show Him his devotion, to be assiduous in his 'Umra and ṭawāf, to pray in this honoured Mosque and to make a retreat in it will harvest a great reward from Allah Most High.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Ka'ba and its religious and worldly benefits:**

Among the religious and worldly assets: the gathering of Muslims every year makes it possible to get acquainted with their way of living, conditions and affairs, knowing that it is a worldwide gathering without any equivalent, second to none, unequalled. Nothing can gather so many people from different colours, diverse tendencies and various origins except for the Ḥajj to the Sacred House of Allah, with all claiming the oneness of their Lord Most High, showing the power of Islam, its strength and invincibility, striking the eyes of the whole world and drawing its attention to religious rituals venerated by Muslims. How many people converted to Islam because of this majestic sight? How many Muslims who were going astray repented and turned to Allah after seeing this most noble spectacle?!

### **The attraction of hearts for the Ka'ba is greater than the magnetic attraction of steel:**

Ibn al-Qayyim (m) said in this regard: The secret of this preference and particularity appears in the attraction of hearts, their passion, love and sympathy for this secure city (Mecca); its force of attraction on hearts is greater than the magnetic attraction for steel; for this reason Allah Most High defined it as a place of recourse for the people, they return to it year after year from all countries and they do not get bored; on the contrary, the more they visit it the more they crave for it.

By Allah! How many people died, were despoiled or hurt; how much money was spent, how many self-sacrifices for the vision of the Ka'ba? And the lover finds satisfaction in leaving his own flesh and blood and family, his beloved and his homeland, facing all kinds of fears and heading for vast deserted lands, dangerous places and hardship; he is valuing it and savouring it. He considers all this better and sweeter than comfort, pleasures and amenities if the power of love is shining in his heart.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *At-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (57/4).

<sup>38</sup> *Zād al-ma'ād* (51/1).





## Section VI

# Undertaking A Journey To The Ka'ba

Among the virtues of the Ka'ba is that it is the first and the best of the three mosques to undertake a journey to.

## Evidence:

1. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (r) narrated: the Prophet (s) said: **Journey<sup>39</sup> should not be undertaken to visit a mosque except towards three: The Sacred Mosque, this mosque of mine and the Mosque of al-Aqṣā (The Mosque of Jerusalem<sup>40</sup>).**<sup>41</sup>
2. Abū Hurayra (r) narrated: Allah's Messenger (s) said: **One should undertake journey to three mosques: the mosque of the Ka'ba, my mosque and the mosque of Elia<sup>42</sup>.**<sup>43</sup>
3. Abū Hurayra (r) narrated: he said: I went out to aṭ-Ṭūr (Mount Sinai) and met Baṣra Ibn Abī Baṣra al-Ghifārī (r). He said: From where have you come? I said: From aṭ-Ṭūr. He said: If I had met you before you went there, you would not

<sup>39</sup> See: *Faṭḥ al-Bārī'* (64/3).

<sup>40</sup> The Mosque of al-Aqṣā: "The Farthest Mosque" named al-Aqṣā for its distance from the Sacred Mosque. See: *Sharḥ an-Nawawī 'alā ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (168/9).

<sup>41</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (703/2), H. 1893, Muslim (1014/2), H. 1397.

<sup>42</sup> The mosque of Elia: Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). See: *Sharḥ an-Nawawī 'alā ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (168/9).

<sup>43</sup> Reported by Muslim (1015/2), H. 1397.



have gone. I said to him: Why? He said: I heard the Allah's Messenger (s) say: **A mount is not saddled for a journey<sup>44</sup> especially to visit a mosque except three: The Sacred Mosque (in Mecca), my mosque (in Medina) and the Mosque of Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem).**<sup>45</sup>

4. Jābir Ibn 'Abd Allah (r2) narrated: Allah's Messenger (s) said: **The best journey undertaken to visit a mosque is this mosque of mine and the Old House.**<sup>46</sup>

**The meaning:** these three mosques are distinguished among all others, they have eminence and travelling to visit them is of great merit.

### **The reason of undertaking a journey to visit them:**

The reason for distinguishing the visit to these three mosques from all others among the houses of Allah is that they are prophets' mosques, peace be upon them: the Sacred Mosque is the qibla (direction) of the people and they perform Ḥajj in it, the Prophet's Mosque (in Medina) was built on the consciousness of Allah and the al-Aqṣā Mosque was the qibla (direction) of the nations that preceded<sup>47</sup>. The Sacred Mosque comes first because of its eminence above both of them.

Imam Mālik (m) said: Whoever takes the vow to pray in a mosque he can only reach by travelling has to pray in his country; except if his vow was to pray in the mosque of Mecca, Medina or Jerusalem; in which case he has to go there.<sup>48</sup>

During the pre-Islamic time of ignorance, people used to visit some allegedly venerated places, seeking blessing there, whereas they were openly and publicly full of misrepresentation and distortion. The Prophet (s) put an end to corruption to avoid Islamic rituals being mixed with idolatrous practices and so there would not be any pretext to worship other than Allah.<sup>49</sup>

### **Ibn Ḥajar (m) reported from as-Sabakī (m) this word:**

There is no place on Earth enjoying a grace in itself that deserves to undertake a journey to visit it except the three mosques. What I mean by grace is a grace validated by Islamic law and followed by a religious duty; other countries can be

<sup>44</sup> See: *an-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-l-'āthār* (301/3) and (340/4).

<sup>45</sup> Reported by an-Nasā'ī (114/3), H. 1430 authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ sunan an-Nasā'ī* (461/1), H. 1429.

<sup>46</sup> Reported by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (350/3), H. 14824. Authenticated by al-Albānī in *silsilat al-aḥādīth aṣ-ṣaḥīḥa* (392/2), H. 1648.

<sup>47</sup> See: *'Umda al-qārī Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-'Aynī (253/7).

<sup>48</sup> *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ibn Baṭṭāl (1015/3), *al-istidhkār* Ibn 'Abd al-Birr (41/2).

<sup>49</sup> Ḥujja Allah al-bāligha, Shāh Walī Allah ad-Dihlawī, p. 408.



visited, not for any grace in themselves but for purposes like tourism, jihad, science or any other permitted reason.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Mosque of the Ka'ba is the best of the three to undertake a journey to:**

The Mosque of the Ka'ba comes in precedence before the Mosque of Medina and the al-Aqṣā Mosque for all its excellence, virtues and qualities over both of them; it is the best to undertake a voyage to.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Sacred Mosque substitutes for the two other mosques to fulfil a vow:**

In order to be more specific about what has been previously quoted about the Sacred Mosque's superiority over the two others is the fact that if a Muslim takes the vow to make a retreat or to pray in one of these two, the Sacred Mosque compensates for both of them, without expiation, and he does not have to travel to them, according to the majority of the ulama except for the Mālikī School which prefers Medina.<sup>52</sup>

### **Cause of its superiority:**

The Muslim who took a vow can go to Mecca to accomplish his duty and more; whereas the two other mosques cannot fulfil that function and they do not cancel the obligation, as they are inferior considering their positions and virtues; the inferior cannot take the place of what is above it.<sup>53</sup>

### **Evidence:**

1. Ibn 'Umar (r2) narrated that 'Umar (r) said: O Messenger of Allah! I vowed to perform a retreat for one night in the Sacred Mosque during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. The Prophet (s) said: **Fulfill your vow.**<sup>54</sup>
2. Jābir Ibn 'Abd Allah (r2) narrated that a man stood on the day of the Conquest of Mecca and said: Messenger of Allah, I have vowed to Allah that if He grants conquest of Mecca at your hands, I shall pray two rak'a in Jerusalem. He

<sup>50</sup> *Fath al-Bāri' Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (66/3).

<sup>51</sup> See: *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-'āthār* (125/3), *Sharḥ Fath al-Qadīr* (128/3), *Bidāya al-mujtahid* (312/1), *al-Mughnī* (83/3).

<sup>52</sup> See: *Sharḥ Fath al-Qadīr* (128/3), *Bidāya al-mujtahid* (312/1), *al-Mughnī* (83/3).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (2464/6), H. 6319.



replied: **Pray here.** He repeated his statement to him and he said: **Pray here.** He again repeated his statement to him. He (the Prophet) replied: **Pursue your own course, then.**<sup>55</sup>

3. It has been reported that a woman fell ill and she said: In case Allah cures me I will certainly go and perform prayer in Jerusalem. She recovered and then made preparations to go out to that place. She came to Maymūna, the wife of Allah's Messenger (s) and after greeting her she informed her about it, whereupon she said: Stay here, eat the provisions (which you had made) and observe prayer in the mosque of the Messenger (s) for I heard Allah's Messenger (s) say: **Prayer in it is better than a thousand prayers performed in other mosques except the Mosque of the Ka'ba.**<sup>56</sup>

**Significance:** The Mosque of the Ka'ba comes in precedence to undertake a voyage to, before the Mosque of Medina and the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, regarding its excellence, virtues and qualities over both of them.

Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyib (m) said: Whoever took the vow to make a retreat in the Mosque of Elia (the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem), he can go for his retreat in the Mosque of the Prophet (s) which is a substitute for it, without expiation; and whoever took the vow to make a retreat in the Mosque of the Prophet (s), he can go for his retreat in the Sacred Mosque, which is a substitute for it, without expiation.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Reported by Abū Dāwūd (236/3), H. 3305. Authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ sunan Abī Dāwūd* (326/2), H. 3305.

<sup>56</sup> Reported by Muslim (1014/2), H. 510.

<sup>57</sup> *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ibn Baṭṭāl (179/3).



## Section VII

# The Ka'ba Is The Qibla Of The Muslims

## Part I Muslims' qibla for their prayers

Among the specificities of the Sacred House is that Allah Most High established it as a qibla<sup>58</sup> for the Muslims, they face it every day for all their prayers until the Day of Judgment.

Allah's Messenger (s) used to face Jerusalem and the Ka'ba together for three years when he was in Mecca, before he migrated to Medina<sup>59</sup>. After his migration to Medina, he kept on facing only Jerusalem for all his prayers during sixteen or seventeen months in accordance with an order from Allah Most High<sup>60</sup>. After that, the qibla was changed towards the Ka'ba and all over the world Muslims performing their prayers are facing it until the Hour comes.

### Evidence:

1. Ibn 'Abbās (r2) narrated: **The Prophet (s) used to face Jerusalem for prayer when he was in Mecca and the Ka'ba was in front of him;**

<sup>58</sup> Linguists say that qibla had the original meaning of direction, orientation, face; the Ka'ba was named qibla, as the people performing their prayers face it and it faces them. See: *al-Majmū'* (191/3).

<sup>59</sup> See: *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (158/1), *Fath al-Bārī'* (502/1).

<sup>60</sup> See: *Fath al-Bārī'* (502/1).



**and sixteen months after he migrated to Medina the qibla was changed towards the Ka'ba.**<sup>61</sup>

**In this ḥadīth there is an insinuation:** When the Prophet (s) was in Mecca, it was possible for him to combine his heart's inclination, namely praying towards the Ka'ba, with the divine order of praying towards Jerusalem. He was facing the Ka'ba and Jerusalem at the same time. When he migrated to Medina, which is located to the North of Mecca, he could not face Jerusalem and the Ka'ba together anymore; he then prayed towards Jerusalem, obeying to His Lord, in spite of his own feelings, until Allah asked him to turn his noble face towards the Ka'ba.

2. Al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (r2) narrated: **Allah's Messenger (s) used to pray towards Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months but he loved to face the Ka'ba, so Allah revealed: "Verily, We have seen the turning of your face to the heaven! And We will surely turn you to a qibla with which you will be pleased" (2:144).**

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا

**So the Prophet (s) faced the Ka'ba.**<sup>62</sup>

### The combination of the two narrations:

The ḥadīth narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (r2) indicates that the Prophet (s) and his companions (rp) kept on praying towards Jerusalem after their arrival at Medina for sixteen months, whereas in the ḥadīth narrated by al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (r2) there is a doubt about this period: sixteen or seventeen months. This is why **the ulama diverged:** an-Nawawī (m) gave preference to sixteen months<sup>63</sup>, while al-Qāḍī 'Ayyāḍ claimed seventeen months was correct<sup>64</sup>, others combined both opinions, like Ibn Ḥajar (m) who said: It is easy to combine the two narrations: some concluded the period was of sixteen months, they added the month of the shift to the month of the arrival and withdrew some days; others claimed it was seventeen months by counting those days; those who doubted hesitated as the month of the arrival was rabī' al-

<sup>61</sup> Reported by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (325/1), H. 2993. Investigators of the musnad (136/5), H. 2991 said it is ṣaḥīḥ (sound) according to the standards of the two sheikhs.

<sup>62</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (155/1), H. 390.

<sup>63</sup> See: *al-Majmū'* (190/3).

<sup>64</sup> See: *Ikmāl al-mu'lim sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, al-Qāḍī 'Ayyāḍ (250/2).



awwal without divergence, and the change occurred in the middle of the month of rajab in the second year of the Hegira (migration), this is what the majority said.<sup>65</sup>

## Part II The Wisdom Of Changing The Qibla

The change of the qibla from Jerusalem to the Sacred House of Allah is a great event in the History of the Muslim community. It contained many obvious wisdoms and important benefits; we mention some of them as follows:

1. **Revealing who would obey the rule of Allah Most High and who would reject it;** Allah exalted be He said: *“And We did not make the qibla which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels”* (Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 143).

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيَّهَا ۗ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ  
عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ

The believers submitted and the foolish turned their backs as the Lord of Glory described them: *“The foolish among the people will say: What has turned them away from their qibla, which they used to face? Say: To Allah belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path”*

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا ۗ قُلْ  
لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ۗ

(Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 142).

**The foolish here** were a small group of insignificant people assembling Arab idolaters, rabbis and hypocrites.<sup>66</sup>

This event was an examination and a final test for the Prophet (s) to discern who was with him body and soul and who was with him only in

<sup>65</sup> *Fath al-Bāri'* (96-97/1).

<sup>66</sup> See: *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī* (230/2), *al-Kashshāf* (223/1), *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (190/1).



appearance; especially because formidable tasks and grandiose objectives were in store for the Muslims. They needed to clean their ranks of hypocrites, people without courage and defeated, in order to become stronger for carrying out their tasks and achieve those great objectives; and for the Prophet to enter this new period in the life of the community safe, confident and in full possession of his faculties.

2. **The Prophet used to love praying towards the Ka'ba, as it was the qibla of his father Ibrāhīm (p)**, Allah Most High addressed him saying: *“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, (O Muḥammad), towards the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qibla with which you will be pleased”* (Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 144).

قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا ۗ

Hearts and minds are bound and linked to the Ka'ba for this excellence that Allah bestowed upon it and which distinguishes it from everything else: is it not the craving and yearning of souls after it? The Prophet's heart was bound to the Ka'ba; he was pining for it until his Lord granted his prayer, answered his request and fulfilled his wish.

In this lies another good: it reflects the eminence of the Prophet before his Lord Most High and Allah's generosity upon him by realizing what came to his mind and what his heart was craving for, but this reason was not the sole cause as we shall see:

3. **The distinction of the Muslims from the idolaters and the Jews.** Allah Most High ordered the Muslims to turn towards Jerusalem, when they were in Mecca, to distinguish themselves from the idolaters; but after they migrated to Medina where Jews lived, they were ordered to face the Ka'ba, in order to distinguish themselves from the Jews.<sup>67</sup>
4. **Depriving the Muslims of any type of vanity and clannishness and making them sincere about Allah in all their affairs.** During the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, the Arabs used to venerate the Sacred House and to consider it as the jewel of their national glory. Allah put His servants to the test by shifting their qibla from the Ka'ba to Jerusalem first, and then towards

<sup>67</sup> At-Tafsīr al-kabīr (87/4).





the Ka'ba again, in order to purify their hearts and souls from the remains of the period of ignorance, to break their commitment to other things that Allah Almighty and also for relieving them from chauvinism, national fanaticism and sectarianism based on historical grounds.<sup>68</sup>

5. **Conditioning the Muslims to conform to the orders of Allah Most High without controversy or question.** If the order comes from Allah Most High, the Muslims have to listen and obey, without looking for wisdom or motive behind the order, as the essence of wisdom is the order itself, coming from Allah Most High to His servants.
6. **Paving the ground for the acceptance of the Prophet's message (s).** He was sent with the same message of the prophets before him, without innovations.

Ibn al-Qayyim (m) said in this regard: The deep wisdom in the rule of the prayer firstly towards Jerusalem lies in the fact that it used to be the qibla of the prophets. The Prophet was sent with the same message of the prophets before him, a message known by the People of the Book. The facing of Jerusalem for prayer was a way of confirming his prophethood: he came with what came the prophets before him and his preaching was the preaching of all the messengers in its essence; he is not an innovator regarding the messengers and he is not opposing them, instead he came to confirm them and to believe in them. When the signs of his prophethood were well established, the evidence of his sincerity in all aspects confirmed and when the hearts bore witness that he was really Allah's messenger, in spite of their denial of his message with stubbornness, jealousy and envy, Allah knew that it would be in his favour and good, as well as his community to face the Ka'ba of the Sacred Mosque, the best place on Earth, the most loved by Allah, the most great, blessed and honoured of all houses.<sup>69</sup>

7. **In the changing of the qibla towards the Ka'ba is a divine statement containing many points,** among them the following:
  - a. **Transmission of the prophethood from the blessed family tree** of the descendants of Ishāq, son of Ibrāhīm (pb), to the

<sup>68</sup> See: *Fī zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Quṭb (126/1).

<sup>69</sup> *Miftāḥ dār as-sa'āda* (30/2).



descendants of Ismā'īl, son of Ibrāhīm (pb), who helped his father in the construction of the Ka'ba and whose name was bound to it.

- b. **Transmission of the Trust of preaching and conveying the Message to the community of Muḥammad (s)**, and transmission with it of the preference which was previously bestowed to the Children of Israel: Muslims enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.
- c. **For the Muslim community to become the community of the golden mean**, not only from the perspective of values, ideals, principles, legislations and beliefs, but also for its location; for the golden mean is the best and most honourable thing, and there is no place on Earth more honoured and better than the Ka'ba, the Sacred House of Allah.

## Part III Repetition of the order about facing the Ka'ba

### The verses concerning the change of the qibla:

The Prophet (s) loved facing the qibla of Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (p) and he remained constantly for sixteen or seventeen months eagerly looking up to the sky, praying fervently to his Lord Most High, until he received from Him the order to turn his face towards the Ka'ba. In this regard, Allah Most High revealed verses that will be recited until the Day of Resurrection:

1. *“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, (O Muḥammad), towards the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qibla with which you will be pleased. So turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque”*

قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً ۖ تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ

Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 144.

2. *“So from wherever you go out for prayer, (O Muḥammad) turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque”*



وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ

Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 149.

3. “And from wherever you go out for prayer, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you (believers) may be, turn your faces toward it”

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ

Surat al-Baqara – The Cow: 150.

### Opinions of the ulama about the repetition of the order of facing the Ka'ba:

**Opinions of ulama are numerous** concerning the repetition of this divine order, and the benefits of it are the following:

1. The repetition comes to insist on the abrogation as it was the very first abrogation that occurred in Islam. The insistence put a stop to the desire of the people of the Book to see the Muslims returning to their qibla.<sup>70</sup>  
Al-Qurṭubī (m) said: They ulama unanimously agreed that the qibla was the very first abrogation to appear in the Qur'ān.<sup>71</sup>
2. The first time, the order came for those who could see the Ka'ba, the second time for those in Mecca who could not see it and the third for the rest of the people outside Mecca.<sup>72</sup>
3. The first time, the order came for those in Mecca, the second time for those outside Mecca and the third for the people travelling; al-Qurṭubī gave his preference to this opinion.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> See: *an-Nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*, al-Qāsim Ibn Salām, p. 20, *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī* (502/1).

<sup>71</sup> *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* (151/2).

<sup>72</sup> See: *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (196/1).

<sup>73</sup> See: *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* (168/2).



## Section VIII

# The Legality Of Ṭawāf Around The Ka'ba

## Definition of ṭawāf:

In the Arabic language ṭawāf means rotation, whirling.<sup>74</sup>

In religious terminology it means circumambulating the Ka'ba in obedience to Allah Most High<sup>75</sup>; His word: “those who perform ṭawāf” لِلطَّائِفِينَ Surat al-Ḥajj: 26. And His word: “perform ṭawāf around the Ancient House” وَالْيَطُوفُوا بِالنَّبِيِّ الْعَتِيقِ Surat al-Ḥajj: 29.

## Ṭawāf is an exclusivity of the Old House:

Allah Most High characterized His Sacred House among all the nations on Earth with a religious practice that is forbidden elsewhere: it is ṭawāf; this unique ritual in its aspects and meaning. It is utterly forbidden except around the Ka'ba and anyone circumambulating something else like a tree, a stone, a tomb or a mosque has gone astray; and anyone believing ṭawāf around anything else is a religious act or a way of getting closer to Allah almighty is an idolater infidel; we ask Allah salvation.<sup>76</sup>

This is the difference between ṭawāf around the House and ṭawāf around anything else. Ṭawāf around the Ka'ba has a particular form and ritual defined by the honourable Islamic legislation (sharia) to become an act of worship of Allah Most

<sup>74</sup> See: *Lisān al-'Arab* (225/9), *Mu'jam lugha al-fuqahā'*, Dr. Muḥammad Rawwās Qal'ah, p. 293.

<sup>75</sup> *Fath al-Bāri'* (470/3).

<sup>76</sup> See: *aṭ-Ṭawāf wa aḥamm aḥkāmuhu*, Dr. Sharaf Ben 'Alī ash-Sharīf, majalla al-buḥūth al-islāmiya bi-r-riyad n°44, p. 178.



High. It has the meaning of obedience, observance and submission to Allah Most High who forbade all kinds of ṭawāf and defined them as idolatry – we seek refuge in Allah – except around the Ka'ba; for the believer to know that Allah imposes on His servants the rituals He wants. The servant has no choice but to carry out the order of Allah without using his mind and reason; the Muslim has to obey as the order comes from his Lord Most High. This is one of the meanings contained in the ṭawāf around the Old House.

The legality of ṭawāf around the Ka'ba gives it a particularity and eminence that make it unique among all the countries and nations on Earth, which therefore honours it and exalts it.

### The order of making the most of the ṭawāf:

Ṭawāf around the Old House is an opportunity to seize as long as it is possible, as we were ordered by the Noble Messenger (s), for we may be prevented from it soon. The reason for him (s) to speak about the necessity of making the most of the ṭawāf before it is too late is expressed in this ḥadīth: Ibn 'Umar (r2) narrated: Allah's Messenger (s) said: **Enjoy this House, for it has been destroyed twice and it will be raised the third.**<sup>77</sup>

### Types of Ṭawāf:

There are six types of ṭawāf<sup>78</sup> as explained below:

1. **Ṭawāf when entering Mecca:** it has many names: it is called ṭawāf al-quḍūm (the arrival ṭawāf), the first of the covenant, the entry, the meeting, the arrival, the arriving, the first, the greeting. The most known of these names is ṭawāf al-quḍūm (the arrival ṭawāf).
2. **Ṭawāf al-ifāḍa**<sup>79</sup>: it is called ṭawāf of the visit, the pillar, the duty, the heart.
3. **Ṭawāf al-wadā'**: it is called ṭawāf of the return, the end of the covenant. It starts before leaving Mecca after having accomplished all the rituals.

These three types of ṭawāfs are obligatory during the Ḥajj; I will broach the subject more deeply, Allah willing.

<sup>77</sup> Reported by Ibn Khuzayma in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (128/4), H. 2506 and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ mawārid az-ẓama'ān*, (410/1), H. 804.

<sup>78</sup> See: *Qawānīn al-'aḥkām*, Ibn Jazī, p. 150, *al-Mabsūṭ* (34/4), *al-Majmū'* (220/8), *al-Mughnī*, *ash-Sharḥ al-kabīr* (469/3).

<sup>79</sup> After the return of the pilgrim from 'Arafāt.



4. **What is permitted outside the Ḥajj.**
5. **Ṭawāf nadhr**, vow ṭawāf.
6. **Ṭawāf tatawu'**, spontaneous ṭawāf.<sup>80</sup>

No doubt the grace of ṭawāf is great because Allah ordered it in His Noble Book. The Prophet (s) used to circumambulate a lot and exhorted Muslims to do so. Allah does not order something if there is not a great blessing in it and benefits for the people in this life and the Hereafter and Allah's Messenger would not have done something unless if there was in it benefits for this life and the next, even if it was already enough grace for him to obey Allah and carry out His order.

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<sup>80</sup> See: *aṭ-Ṭawāf wa aḥamm aḥkāmuhu*, p. 188.



هذا الكتاب منشور في

