

Foundations of the Ka'bah

source: *silsilat ul-ahaadeeth is-saheeha* – the series of authentic narrations – hadeeth no. 43

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

On the authority of 'Aaishah, the Mother of The Believers (رضى الله عنها)¹, that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)² said to her: “O 'Aaishah, if your people had not recently been polytheists and (if it wasn't for) me not having enough means that would support its construction, I would have spent the treasure of the Ka'bah in the path of Allaah, and demolished the Ka'bah to join it to the ground. Then I would build it upon the (original) foundation of Ibraaheem (Abraham) and make for it two doors attached to the ground – a door facing toward the east through which people would enter and a door facing toward the west from which they would exit. And I would expand (the Ka'bah) by six cubits³ of *al-Hijr*⁴ – [in one narration: I would include *al-Hijr* in it] – for indeed the Qur'aysh had reduced (the area of the Ka'bah) when they (re)built (it). So if it seems good to your people to (re)build it after me, then come so that I could you show what they left out from it.’ Then, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) showed her about seven cubits (of area from *al-Hijr*).”

In another narration from ('Aaishah (رضى الله عنها)), she said: “I asked the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) about the wall [i.e., *al-Hijr*]: ‘Is it a part of the House (the Ka'bah)?’ He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Then why didn't they include it in the House?’ He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, ‘The means was not enough for your people (to do so).’ I said: ‘But what's the matter with its door being raised (like this)?’ He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, ‘Your people did that to admit whoever they wished and to prevent whoever they wished – [in one narration: (They did it) out of pride so that no one could enter it except who they wanted. Therefore, if the man wanted to enter it, they would call him to climb until he would almost enter; they would (then) push him and he would fall]. If your people had not recently been in *jaahiliyyah*⁵ and so I fear that their hearts would deny (what I wish to do), I would have considered including the wall in the House and joining its door to the ground.’

Then, when Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضى الله عنه)⁶ ruled, he demolished (the Ka'bah) and made two doors for it – [in one narration: That was what urged Ibn uz-Zubayr to demolish it. Yazeed bin Rumaan said, ‘I saw Ibn uz-Zubayr at the time when he demolished it, (re)built it and included *al-Hijr* in it. And I saw the (original) foundation of Ibraaheem (عليه السلام)⁷ as stones joined together like camel humps that are joined together.’]”

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رحمته الله)⁸ comments:

“This hadeeth indicates two things:

First: that it is obligatory to delay carrying out rectification if an evil greater than (its good) results from it. And the scholars of fiqh took their famous principle – ‘repelling the evil (comes) before bringing the good’ – from (this).

¹ (رضى الله عنها) (rad iyallaahu `anhaa) May Allaah be pleased with her

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

³ 1 cubit is approximately ½ a metre

⁴ the area which is at present surrounded by a semicircular wall at the northern side of the Ka'bah

⁵ the pre-Islamic days of ignorance

⁶ (رضى الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

⁷ (عليه السلام) (alaihis-salaam) Peace be upon him

⁸ (رحمته الله) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

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Second: that the noble Ka’bah is now in need of the reconstructions that the hadeeth includes, due to the disappearance of the reason for the sake of which the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) left that; (the reason) was that the hearts of those who were recently polytheists in his time (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would have a dislike (for these reconstructions). And Ibn Battaal has reported from some of the scholars ‘that the dislike that he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) feared was that they would accuse him of boasting by himself over them.’

It is possible to list those reconstructions in the following:

- 1- Expanding the Ka’bah and building it upon the foundation of Ibraaheem (عليه الصلاة والسلام)⁹ by adding approximately six cubits of *al-Hijr*
- 2- Levelling its ground with that of the Haram (Al-Masjid ul-Haraam)
- 3- Opening another door for it from the Western side
- 4- Lowering the two doors to the ground in order to arrange and facilitate entering it and exiting it for whoever wishes

And indeed, ‘Abdullaah bin uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) had accomplished this reconstruction completely during his rule in Makkah, but the unjust political administration returned the Ka’bah to its previous state after him! And the following below is a detailed explanation of that as Muslim and Aboo Nu’aym narrated with their authentic chain of narration on the authority of ‘Ataa, who said:

‘When the House was burnt during the time of Yazeed bin Mu’aawiyah just after the people of Shaam¹⁰ attacked (Makkah), and whatever was meant to happen to (the Ka’bah) happened, Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) left it (in that state) until the people reached the season (of Hajj). He wanted to encourage them or provoke them against the people of Shaam. So when the people came, he said, ‘O people, advise me about the Ka’bah. Do I demolish it then (re)build it, or do I repair that which has fallen from it (due to damage)?’ Ibn ‘Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘An idea has occurred to me about it; I am of the opinion that you repair that which has fallen from it (due to damage), and leave a House upon which the people embraced Islaam, and (leave) stones upon which the people embraced Islaam and upon which the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was sent.’ So Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘If the house of one of you was burnt, he would not be pleased until he rebuilds it, then how about the House of your Lord?! Indeed, I will ask my Lord for guidance three times, then I will decide on my affair.’

When the three times passed, he fixed his opinion to demolish it. So the people kept away from it (in case) something from the sky would befall the first people to climb on it! Until a man climbed it and threw down stones from it. Thus, when the people did not see anything (bad) befalling him, they followed in succession and demolished (the Ka’bah) until they brought it to the ground. Then, Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) made pillars and placed coverings over them until its building went up. And Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘Indeed I heard ‘Aaishah (رضي الله عنها) saying that indeed the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: [he then mentioned the first part of the hadeeth, then said,] ‘Today, I have that which I will (need to) spend and I don’t fear the people.’ So he expanded (the Ka’bah) by five cubits of *al-Hijr* until he displayed a foundation that the people looked upon and he built the building upon (this foundation). The height of the Ka’bah was eighteen cubits, so when he had expanded it (from the width), he found it to be short; therefore, he expanded its height by ten cubits. And he also made two doors for (the Ka’bah), one of them was to be entered through and the other was to be exited from.

Then, when Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was killed, al-Hajjaaj wrote to ‘Abd ul-Maalik bin Marwaan informing him about that, and telling him that Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) had set up the structure (of the Ka’bah) upon a foundation which the reliable persons of the people of Makkah had seen. So ‘Abd ul-Maalik wrote to him: ‘Indeed, we having nothing to do with soiling Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) with

⁹ (عليه الصلاة والسلام) (alayhi as-Salaat wa Salaam) Upon him prayer and peace

¹⁰ Syria

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disgrace in anything. As for what he added to its height, safeguard it; and as for what he added to it from *al-Hijr*, return it to its (previous) structure, and close up the door which he opened.’ Thus, (al-Hajjaaj) demolished it and returned it to its (previous) structure.’¹¹

That is what al-Hajjaaj the oppressor did by the command of ‘Abd ul-Maalik the mistaken one, and I don’t think that his regret later on justifies his mistake. Muslim and Aboo Nu’aym have also narrated from ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Ubayd who said:

‘Al-Haarith bin ‘Abdillaah came to ‘Abd ul-Maalik bin Marwaan as an envoy during his Khilaafa (Caliphate), and ‘Abd ul-Maalik said, ‘I don’t think that Aboo Khubayb – i.e., Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) – heard from ‘Aaishah (رضي الله عنها) that which he claimed to hear from her.’ Al-Haarith said: ‘But of course, I (myself) heard it from her.’ (‘Abd ul-Maalik) said, ‘What did you hear her say?’ (Al-Haarith) said, ‘She said that the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: [he then mentioned the hadeeth].’ ‘Abd ul-Maalik said to Al-Haarith, ‘You heard her saying this?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ So (‘Abd ul-Maalik) scratched the ground with his staff for a while, then said, ‘I wish that I had left (the Ka’bah with Ibn uz-Zubayr’s (رضي الله عنه) reconstructions)...’¹²

And in one narration from both (Muslim and Aboo Nu’aym) from Aboo Qaza’ah, (it is mentioned) that:

‘While ‘Abd ul-Maalik bin Marwaan was going around the House, he said, ‘May Allaah fight Ibn uz-Zubayr as he told a lie upon the mother of the believers (‘Aaishah), saying, ‘I heard her say: [he then mentioned the hadeeth].’ So Al-Haarith bin ‘Abdillaah bin Abi Rabe’e’ah said, ‘Don’t say this O leader of the believers! For I (myself) heard the mother of the believers narrating this.’ (‘Abd ul-Maalik) said, ‘If I had heard it before demolishing (the Ka’bah), I would have left it upon that which Ibn uz-Zubayr had built.’¹³

I (Shaykh al-Albaanee) say: it was obligatory upon him, before the demolition, to make sure and **ask the people of knowledge** about whether it was allowed for him to criticise ‘Abdullaah bin uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and accuse him of telling a lie upon the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)! And his truthfulness (رضي الله عنه) became clear to ‘Abd ul-Maalik by Al-Haarith’s agreeing with him, as many a group from ‘Aaishah (رضي الله عنها) agreed. And I have combined their narrations with one another in this hadeeth, so the hadeeth is detailed from ‘Aaishah (رضي الله عنها). Therefore, I fear that ‘Abd ul-Maalik had prior knowledge of the hadeeth before he demolished the House, but he pretended that he did not hear about it except by way of Ibn uz-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه). So when Al-Haarith bin ‘Abdillaah opposed him that he also had heard (the hadeeth) from ‘Aaishah, the Mother of The Believers (رضي الله عنها), (‘Abd ul-Maalik) showed regret for what he had done, (but) it was too late for regrets.

On the other hand, it has reached us that there is an idea or plan to expand the area of tawaaf (circumambulation) around the Ka’bah and transfer the *Maqaam Ibraaheem*¹⁴ (عليه الصلاة والسلام) to another place. So in relation to this, **I suggest to those responsible (for the Ka’bah) that they hasten to expand the Ka’bah before everything (else) and rebuilt it upon the foundation of Ibraaheem (عليه الصلاة والسلام)**, fulfilling the clear, noble Prophetic (صلى الله عليه وسلم) wish in this hadeeth, and saving the people from the problems of crowding at the door of the Ka’bah that is witnessed every year and from the

¹¹ Saheeh Muslim no.1333

¹² Saheeh Muslim no.1333

¹³ Saheeh Muslim no.1333

¹⁴ Station of Ibraaheem

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domination of the guard over the door who prevents whoever he wishes from entering and allows whoever he wishes, for the sake of a few pennies!"¹⁵

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¹⁵ Shaykh al-Albaanee adds the following footnote: "I say, then it reached us that the above-mentioned project has been realized; so the *Maqaam* (Ibraaheem) has been transferred to a place far from the Ka'bah and it was not built upon but rather a crystal box was placed on top of it so that the *Maqaam* could be seen beneath it. Thus, perhaps they will also carry out this suggestion of ours, and Allaah is the granter of success."