

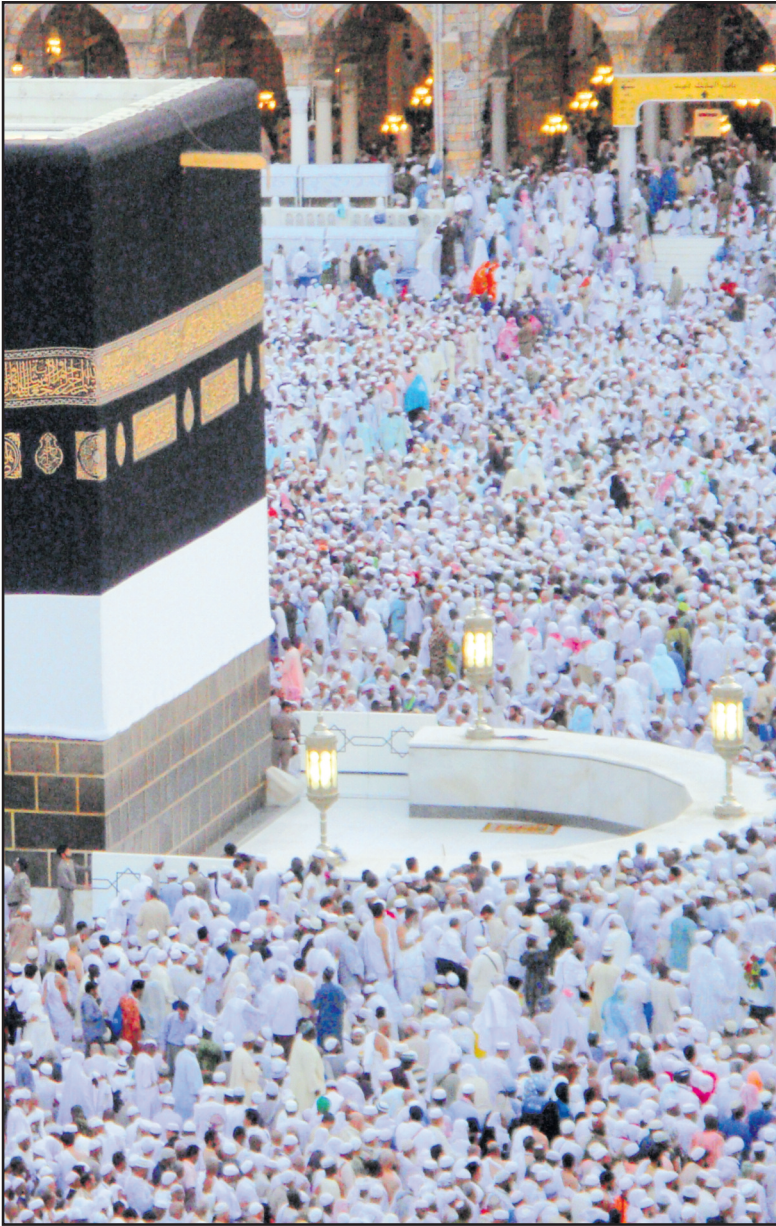


Stories from the Hijaz

THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



The Hateem in relation to the Kaabah



The Kaabah and Hateem – also known as the Hijr Ismail – where it is believed Nabi Ibrahim (AS) built a shelter for Nabi Ismail (AS) and Sayyida Haajer (RA). The Hateem was originally part of the Kaabah but after the Kaabah was damaged in a storm, the Quraish did not rebuild the complete structure but built a small walled area – the Hateem – on that part of the Kaabah's original foundation to demarcate the original Kaabah area.

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SALIM PARKER

NABI Ibrahim (AS) initially constructed a shelter for his baby son, Ismail (AS), and his wife, Haajer (RA).

It is believed that that area is where the Hateem, also called the Hijr Ismail is situated.

It comprises the crescent shaped area to the north of the current structure of the Kaabah and is enclosed by a low wall.

Though there are reports that Nabi Ismail and Haajer are buried there, there are no authentic hadiths that verify this.

The Hateem is considered part of the Kaabah and people clamour to pray there whenever possible.

A hadith alludes to this. Aishah, the wife of the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "When I expressed the wish to perform salaah within the Kaabah, the Prophet (SAW) took me by the hand and led me into the Hijr (Hateem) where he said, "Perform salaah here if you wish to enter the Kaabah because this is part of the Baitullah."

She was curious as to why it was not included in the actual physical structure of the Kaabah.

History informs us that when the Prophet (SAW) was about 35-years-old, a devastating flood damaged the Kaabah.

The tribe of Quraish, who were responsible for its maintenance, were acutely aware that it could collapse as its structure had already been weakened by a fire previously.

Even at that time it was their house of worship and they were eager to rebuild it.

There was consensus not to taint the reconstruction with ill-gotten gains.

Thus, any resources or money accrued through usury (interest), prostitution or thieving were excluded.

The Quraish were made aware of a Roman ship that had been wrecked at a port not too far away. A decision was made to buy the wood of this wreck and a group of them succeeded in doing this.

Baqoom, a carpenter who was one of those stranded by the shipwreck, was contracted to restore the walls of the Kaabah.

Each of the tribes involved were allocated specific duties. Some of the nobles among them carried pieces of stone and then piled them up in one place.

Others, including such luminaries as the Prophet (SAW) himself, and his uncle Abbas, carried the stones from these collection areas to the construction area.

Unfortunately, the tribes were unable to collect enough untainted money to rebuild the Kaabah completely and the area known as the

Hateem was excluded.

It was at that point that a small wall was then built on that part of the original foundation that Nabi Ibrahim (AS) had laid to demarcate this area.

The above is verified in a hadith reported by Bukhari. Aishah (RA) reports that when she asked the Prophet (SAW) whether the Hateem was part of the Kaabah, he replied that it was.

When she further asked why it was then not included in the walls of the Kaabah, the Prophet (SAW) replied: 'Because your people (the Quraish) did not have sufficient funds.'

Abu Dawood added: The Prophet (SAW) said: 'Your people (the Quraish) shortened the Kaabah and took it (the Hateem) out of the house.'

Another narration states that Nabi Muhammad (SAW) said: 'O Aishah! Had your people not very recently been in the Period of Ignorance, I would have had the Kaabah demolished and included the left-out portion within its walls.'

These facts carry implications when performing salaah and tawaaf.

When it involves the compulsory (fard) salaah, it is known that these have to be performed behind the imam.

Since the imam is outside the Kaabah, it stands to reason that no one may be inside the Kaabah or the Hateem.

Only additional prayers that are not led by an imam may be performed inside the Kaabah or the Hateem.

As far as tawaaf is concerned, this requires circumambulation around the Kaabah and not through it.

Since the Hateem is considered to be an integral part of the House, the pilgrim may not enter it during one of his seven circumambulations, as it would render that round void.

The Hateem is noted for at least two events in the history of religion.

The first is the rediscovery of the well of Zam-zam by Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of Nabi Muhammad (SAW).

Abdul Muttalib had the constant desire to be near the House of Allah and would at times have a couch put in the Hateem for him to rest on.

It is believed that he was sleeping in the Hateem when he was visited by a shadowy figure in a dream and was instructed to dig for the hidden well.

The second event pertains to the Prophet's (SAW) Miraj visit to Jerusalem.

It is reported in Bukhari that Abdullah heard the Prophet (SAW) say: 'When the people of Quraish did not believe me (of the journey to Jerusalem), I stood up in the Hateem and Allah displayed Jerusalem in front of me and I described it to them while I was looking at it.'

There is a water outlet that channels water from the roof of the Kaabah down to the Hateem area.

This was first constructed by the Quraish and is known as the 'Meezab-e-Rahmah' (the water outlet of mercy).



Since the Hateem or Hijr Ismail is situated within the boundary of what used to be the original Kaabah, one is not allowed to pass through it while performing tawaaf. People clamour to perform salaah there as it is like performing salaah inside the Kaabah.

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