



Stories from the Hijaz

THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



Allah SWT orders the building of the Kaabah



The Maqam Ibrahim: While building the Kaabah, Nabi Ibrahim (AS) stood on a rock. The rock, which bears his footprints is encased in this structure. Photo SALIM PARKER

SALIM PARKER

MAKKAH was a barren desert when Nabi Ibrahim (AS) left his wife Hajer (RA) and son Ismail (AS) there after being instructed by Allah to do so. Allah's blessing of Zam-zam water soon followed.

The Holy Quran, in the verse, 'O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Your Sacred House in order, O our Lord, that they may offer prayer perfectly. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks,' (14:37) indicates that Makkah was central to the worship of our Creator.

The Quran indicates the sacredness of the Haram area in the following verses, 'Whosoever enters it, he attains security,' (3:97) and, 'Have they not seen that We have made (Makkah) a secure sanctuary while men are being snatched away from all around them?' (29:67).

There are authentic ahadith that indicate that Allah made Makkah a sacred area before He created the heavens and earth.

The two sahihs recorded Abdullah bin Abbas saying that the Messenger of Allah said: 'Allah has made this city a sanctuary (sacred place) the day He created the heavens and earth.

Therefore, it is a sanctuary until the Day of Resurrection because Allah made it a sanctuary.

'It was not legal for anyone to fight in it before me, and it was legal for me for a few hours of one day. Therefore, it is a sanctuary until the Day of Resurrection because Allah made it a sanctuary.

'None is allowed to uproot its thorny shrubs or to chase its game or to pick up something that has fallen, except by a person who announces it publicly nor should any of its trees be cut.'

Al Abbas said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Except the lemon-grass for our goldsmiths and for our graves.'

The Prophet added: 'Except lemon-grass.'

Nabi Ibrahim (AS) tried to visit Ismail (AS) after Hajer (RA) had passed away and Ismail had married.

On one occasion, Ismail was not home and Nabi Ibrahim was informed by Ismail's complaining wife that they lived a hard life. Nabi Ibrahim left a cryptic message with Ismail's wife that he should divorce her, which he duly did, and later got married again.

When Nabi Ibrahim visited again, Ismail's new wife expressed her acceptance and satisfaction with their life and again Nabi Ibrahim left a cryptic message, this time advising Ismail to keep her.

Nabi Ibrahim again stayed away for a long time and when he went to visit his son, he found him under a tree, close to the well of Zam-zam sharpening some arrows.

They greeted each other with love and warmth.

Soon thereafter, Nabi Ibrahim said: 'O Ismail, Allah has given me an order.'

Ismail replied: 'Do what your Lord has ordered you to do.'

Nabi Ibrahim asked: 'Will you help me?' Ismail answered in the affirmative, like an obedient son would.

Ibrahim said: 'Allah has ordered me to build a house here,' pointing to a hillock that was higher than the land surrounding it.

Tradition goes that the Kaabah was ordained by our Creator to be built in the shape of the house in Heaven called Baitul Ma'amoor.

Allah, in His infinite Mercy, ordained a similar place on earth and Nabi Adam (AS) is believed to have been the first to build this place.

It was at the same site that Nabi Ibrahim was going to build the Kaabah.

Nabi Muhammad (SAW) is reported to have said: 'Then they raised the foundations of the House (Kaabah).

Ismail brought the stones and Nabi Ibrahim was building, and when the walls became high, Ismail brought this stone and put it for Ibrahim who stood over it and carried on building, while Ismail was handing him the stones, and both of them were saying: 'O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, Verily, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.' (2:127)

One of the clear signs in Makkah is the Maqam Ibrahim (station, standing place of Ibrahim).

When Nabi Ibrahim was building the upper layers of the Kaabah, he stood on a rock in order to reach there.

This rock was moved as he went on completing the Kaabah and was finally left in front, on the eastern side. It bears his footprints.

The Maqam Ibrahim was initially situated close to the Kaabah.

During the time of Caliph Umar (RA), it was moved eastwards away from the Kaabah in order to ease the movement of pilgrims performing tawaaf. It is currently enclosed in a dome.

The Quran refers to that area: 'And when We made the House (at Makkah) a resort for mankind and sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Ibrahim stood (to pray). And We imposed a duty upon Ibrahim and Ismail, (saying): Purify My house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship).' (2:125)

It is advised that whenever a tawaaf has been completed, two rakaats of prayer be performed behind the Maqam Ibrahim.



After performing a tawaaf, the pilgrim performs two rakaats sunnah salaah behind the Maqam Ibrahim, the structure that contains the rock on which Nabi Ibrahim (AS) stood when building the Kaabah. Photo SALIM PARKER