

## *The foundations of the Ka'bah*

*source: silsilat ul-ahādīth us-sahīha ~ the series of authentic narrations ~ hadīth no. 43*

On the authority of 'Āaisha رضي الله عنها (that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to her:) “O 'Āaisha, 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 Allāh, and demolished the Ka'bah to join it to the ground. Then I would build it upon the (original) foundation of Ibrāhīm (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 cubits<sup>1</sup> of *al-Hijr*<sup>2</sup> – {in one narration: I would include *al-Hijr* in it} – for the Quraish 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 ('Āaisha), she said: “I asked the Messenger of Allāh 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

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 cubit is approximately ½ a meter

<sup>2</sup> the area which is at present surrounded by a semicircular wall at the northern side of the Ka'bah

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 *jāhiliyyah*<sup>3</sup> 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* 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. *Yazīd bin Rūmān* 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 *Ibrāhīm* عليه السلام as stones joined together like camel humps that are joined together.’}”

~\*~\*~\*~

*Shaykh al-Albānī* comments:

“This *hadīth* 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).

Second: that the noble *Ka'bah* is now in need of the reconstructions that the *hadīth* includes, due to the disappearance of the reason for

---

<sup>3</sup> the pre-Islamic days of ignorance

the sake of which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ left that; (the reason) was that the hearts of those who were recently polytheists in his time ﷺ would have a dislike (for these reconstructions). And *Ibn Battāl* has reported from some of the scholars 'that the dislike that he ﷺ 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 *Ibrāhīm* ﷺ by adding approximately six cubits of *al-Hijr*
- 2- Leveling its ground with that of the *Haram* (*Al-Masjid ul-Harām*)
- 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, 'Abdullāh 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 *Abu Nu'aym* narrated with their authentic chain of narration on the authority of 'Atā, who said:

'When the House was burnt during the time of *Yazīd bin Mu'āwiyā* just after the people of *Shām*<sup>4</sup> attacked (*Makkah*), and whatever was meant to happen to (the *Ka'bah*) happened, *Ibn uz-Zubayr* 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 *Shām*. 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

---

<sup>4</sup> Syria

has fallen from it (due to damage)?' *Ibn 'Abbās* 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 Islām, and (leave) stones upon which the people embraced Islām and upon which the Prophet ﷺ was sent.' So *Ibn uz-Zubayr* 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 (incase) 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* made pillars and placed coverings over them until its building went up. And *Ibn uz-Zubayr* said, 'Indeed I heard *'Āisha* saying that the Prophet ﷺ said: {he then mentioned the first part of the *hadīth*, 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* was killed, *al-Hajjāj* wrote to '*Abd ul-Malik bin Marwān* informing him about that, and telling him that *Ibn uz-Zubayr* 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-Malik* wrote to him: 'Indeed, we having nothing to do with soiling *Ibn uz-Zubayr* with 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-Hajjāj*) demolished it and returned it to its (previous) structure.<sup>5</sup>

That is what *al-Hajjāj* the oppressor did by the command of '*Abd ul-Malik* the mistaken one, and I don't think that his regret later on justifies his mistake. *Muslim* and *Abu Nu'aym* have also narrated from '*Abdullāh bin 'Ubayd* who said:

'*Al-Hārith bin 'Abdillāh* came to '*Abd ul-Malik bin Marwān* as an envoy during his *Khilāfa* (Caliphate), and '*Abd ul-Malik* said, 'I don't think that *Abu Khubayb* – i.e., *Ibn uz-Zubayr* – heard from '*Ā'isha* that which he claimed to hear from her.' *Al-Hārith* said: 'But of course, I (myself) heard it from her.' ('*Abd ul-Malik*) said, 'What did you hear her say?' (*Al-Hārith*) said, 'She said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: {he then mentioned the *hadīth*}.' '*Abd ul-Malik* said to *Al-Hārith*, 'You heard her saying this?' He said, 'Yes.' So ('*Abd ul-Malik*) 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 reconstructions)...'<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Sahīh Muslim* #1333

<sup>6</sup> *Sahīh Muslim* #1333

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

'While *'Abd ul-Malik bin Marwān* was going around the House, he said, 'May Allāh fight *Ibn uz-Zubayr* as he told a lie upon the mother of the believers (*Āaisha*), saying, 'I heard her say: {he then mentioned the *hadīth*}.' So *Al-Hārith bin 'Abdillāh bin Abī Rabī'ah* said, 'Don't say this O leader of the believers!, for I (myself) heard the mother of the believers narrating this.' (*'Abd ul-Malik*) said, 'If I had heard it before demolishing (the *Ka'bah*), I would have left it upon that which *Ibn uz-Zubayr* had built."<sup>7</sup>

I (*Shaykh al-Albānī*) 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 criticize *'Abdullāh bin uz-Zubayr* and accuse him of telling a lie upon the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ! And his ﷺ truthfulness became clear to *'Abd ul-Malik* by *Al-Hārith's* agreeing with him, as many a group from *Āaisha* ﷺ agreed. And I have combined their narrations with one another in this *hadīth*, so the *hadīth* is detailed from *Āaisha*. Therefore, I fear that *'Abd ul-Malik* had prior knowledge of the *hadīth* before he demolished the House, but he pretended that he did not hear about it except by way of *Ibn uz-Zubayr*. So when *Al-Hārith bin 'Abdillāh* opposed him that he also had heard (the *hadīth*) from *Āaisha*, (*'Abd ul-Malik*) 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 *tawāf* (circumambulation) around the *Ka'bah* and

---

<sup>7</sup> *Sahīh Muslim* #1333

transfer the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*<sup>8</sup> ﷺ 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 *Ibrāhīm* ﷺ, fulfilling the clear, noble Prophetic wish in this *hadīth*, and saving the people from the problems of crowding at the door of the *Ka'bah* that is witnessed every year and from the 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!”<sup>9</sup>

~ *asaheeha translations* ~

---

<sup>8</sup> Station of *Ibrāhīm*

<sup>9</sup> *Shaykh al-Albānī* adds the following footnote: “I say, then it reached us that the above-mentioned project has been realized; so the *Maqām (Ibrāhīm)* 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 *Maqām* could be seen beneath it. Thus, perhaps they will also carry out this suggestion of ours, and Allāh is the granter of success.”