



Calligraphy by Mohamed Zakariya [courtesy, American Muslim]

The Black Stone: A Blessing from the Hereafter

Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani



Allah's right over human beings is that they make hajj to His Holy House at Mecca. "*Pilgrimage to the House is an obligation on people towards Allah for one who is able to find a way to do it.*" [3: 97] Here Allah ﷻ emphasizes that it is His right—an essential duty on people to make the pilgrimage for His Sake, stressing its importance and making it the fifth pillar of Islam.

A building is constructed by laying its foundations—it starts out as something small and hidden. A building is completed in all its magnificence with finish work, the final wrap-up. The wrapping up of Islam comes with hajj. Islam begins with *shahada* when an individual declares of his own free will the oneness of Allah, by saying "*Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah.*" Hajj, the last pillar of Islam, wraps up the whole religion by unifying the Muslims around the world – they come in unity to declare with a single voice the oneness of Allah. So Islam begins with one person declaring oneness, and ends with all of humanity declaring oneness.

Hajj is the symbol of the believer's focus on Allah. Allah directed the Prophet ﷺ to the Ka'ba as the place to which He is sending His benediction, a special place at which He accepts the declaration of oneness from all who come there. Like a magnet, the Ka'ba draws humankind from the four corners of the globe. They come not only to celebrate at the great 'id for themselves and for every believer on earth, but to recite simultaneously and in unison "*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, labbayk allahumma labbayk. Labbayk ka laa sharika laka labbayk, inna al hamda wa ni'mata laka wal-mulk, laa sharika laka labbayk.*" On each cir-

cuit of the Ka'ba, they recite takbir, "*Allahu Akbar;*" raising their hands to the *Hajjarul As'ad* in a way that shows respect and the love for Allah ﷻ. Raising one's hands indicates unconditional surrender, as one in the army does when taken prisoner. Raising one's hands represents surrender to Allah's will, surrendering to His Oneness: He is the Lord, we are His servants, His slaves.

The Prophet ﷺ declared in a hadith, "The heart of the believer is the house of the Lord." Thus a believer praying in his own home, will focus on his heart completely, his gaze riveted to the location of prostration. Meditating and concentrating, the believer tries to focus his prayer as intently as possible on his heart. With every drop of blood the heart pumps, you can hear the sound "*hu, hu, hu, hu, hu...*" This is the heart's independent affirmation of the absolute Unseen—*al-ghaib ul mutlaq*—the Absolute unknowability of Allah's Divine Presence.

When the believer is on hajj, the focus turns from the heart to the Ka'ba. For those in its shadow, the Ka'ba—the House of Allah—represents the heart of humanity. When you arrive at the Ka'ba, your focus on yourself disappears, while your focus on Allah's ﷻ House becomes clear—because His house is there. Everyone is turned to the Ka'ba, focusing on the House of Allah ﷻ. So as the heart of the believer is the house of the Lord, the Ka'ba, when we are present before it, represents the heart of humanity, the heart of galaxies and constellations, the heart of creation. It is the heart of *bait-ul-haram*, the most sacred presence to which Allah ﷻ directs His Gaze, not only on Earth, but throughout creation.

Why are people attracted to the Ka'ba, as if dragged there? There is something secret and sacred about the Ka'ba that





Ali Nomachi

attracts humanity—an unfathomable secret. Is it because of the walls of the Ka'ba? What do these four walls represent? The walls are there, that's what we are seeing, but if these walls were to go, what would be there? What is behind them? Can we know? Allah knows why people are drawn to His House. This secret belongs to Allah's Own Absolute Unseen knowledge (*al-ghaib ul-mutlaq*).

IT IS NOT ONLY A STONE THAT HAS NO HARM AND NO BENEFIT. THIS STONE IS GOING TO BEAR WITNESS FOR YOU ON THE JUDGMENT DAY THAT YOU HAVE COME HERE AND YOU HAVE DECLARED THE ONENESS OF ALLAH ﷻ.

-SAYYIDINA ALI ﷺ

However, we can get a hint of the answer by focusing and meditating on this question: what is the Hajjar ul-Aswad and why did the Prophet ﷺ kiss it?

Sayyidina Umar (ra) addressed the Hajjar ul-Aswad saying, "I know that you are merely a stone, which doesn't harm or benefit anyone. Had I not seen the Prophet ﷺ kissing you, I would never kiss you." Then Sayyidina Ali (ra) said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, did you not hear what the Prophet ﷺ said about that? It is not only a stone that has no harm and no benefit. This stone is going to bear witness for you on the Judgment Day that you have come here and you have declared the oneness of Allah ﷻ."

That stone is alive. That stone has a secret that comes from Paradise. What comes from Paradise is living, not dead. Tirmidhi transmitted that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Black Stone is a jewel from

This article is dedicated with our appreciation to:
Dr. Muhammad Iqbal
President, Muslim Federation of New Jersey
&
Kazra Chaudry & Family
who have helped us from the beginning.

the jewels of Paradise. It will be raised up on the Resurrection Day. It will have two eyes and one tongue with which it will speak. It will bear witness for everyone who kissed it and testified to its truth." So when we go there, we are facing something that is living from Paradise. That is the source of attraction which drags our souls to be present there.

When we set out for hajj, our intention must not be to perform the pilgrimage and return in the same state as when we left. You set out with a sacred intention and you don the *ihram* with hope that Allah's Mercy will reach you being in that sacred state. You enter the *Haram ash-Sharif* for the first time eager for a glimpse of the Sacred House. Then you keep constantly to the remembrance of Allah, especially in front of Allah's House. That is where you supplicate, petition and plead with Allah. According to the Prophet's hadith, that prayers in Allah's House are equal to 100,000 prayers in any other place (other than the Prophet's Mosque), you worship more intently and you seek Allah's Pleasure with every action and in every moment, and you strive to avoid harming anyone, arguing and obscenities. There, you are constantly aware that Allah's Vision encompasses you and the consequences of any wrong actions will be the rejection of your hajj. Every pilgrim's hope is to return from hajj, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "...cleaned of sins like the day one's mother bore him."

Similarly, when you pass from this life, your ardent hope will be that you go from it, not in the worst of states, but in the same state as when your mother bore you. As pilgrims are attentive to their thoughts and deeds, the believer throughout life must be constantly on guard, realizing Allah is observing him or her. As pilgrims continuously declare Allah's Divine Unity throughout the hajj, a dying person is encouraged to recite the *shahada*

continuously. When someone dies we say, "To Allah we belong and to Him we return." The body passes away, but the believer's soul returns to its origin.

Our souls belong to Paradise, from which the Black Stone came. That is the root of the relationship between the soul and the *Hajjar ul-Aswad*. That relationship makes the soul and stone long for one another, attracting one to the other. Therefore when you visit the Ka'ba you are rebuilding your relationship to Paradise.

The Black Stone is a part of Paradise. Anyone seeing it in this *dunya* will be honored to see it in reality, by Allah's ﷻ grant, in Paradise. Therefore it is also called the *Hajjarul As'ad* – the Happy Stone. Whoever saw the *Hajjar ul-Aswad*, touched the *Hajjar ul-Aswad* or kissed the *Hajjar ul-Aswad*, by day or night, around the clock, will be granted forgiveness by Allah's leave by virtue of the testimony of the Black Stone. Even if through the thronging crowd one was unable to touch the *Hajjar ul-Aswad* but looked at it from far away with love and respect, *insha'Allah* he or she will be granted forgiveness. As Sayyidina Ali (ra) said, that stone will testify to that person's presence there, and that he or she declared the unity of Allah ﷻ. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "There is no reward for an accepted pilgrimage except Paradise."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Anyone who makes hajj without obscenity and without wickedness, emerges from it clean of his sins as the day his mother bore him." No sin! Why? Because *Hajjar ul-Aswad*, a part of Paradise, bears witness on your behalf. It is a witness of your presence there, experiencing difficulties and suffering, your taking on the great expenses and travel and your keeping patience among the millions of pilgrims present. Allah's House bears witness to all the trials you went through to reach it. That little piece from Paradise is witnessing how you took on the difficulties of where to sleep, where to eat, where to obtain water, where to make ablution, even where to use the restroom.

The *Hajjar ul-Aswad* is the only thing from the next life

on Earth. Even if everything on this Earth were destroyed, *Hajjar ul-Aswad* would not be destroyed, because it belongs to the Afterlife. It must return to its origin. That aspect is the essential spiritual secret of *Hajjar ul-Aswad*.

Many hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ mention the *hurul 'ayn* of Paradise. If one of them were to unveil even a fingernail to this world, all of this world would swoon from her lovely fragrance, and even the light of the sun would disappear in the light of her beauty. What then of *Hajjar ul-Aswad*, which is a part of Paradise, which Allah sent to Mecca and which the Prophet ﷺ picked up with his blessed hands and

put in its place in the wall of the Ka'ba? The Prophet ﷺ said, "The Corner and the Station are two of the sapphires of Paradise whose light Allah has obliterated. If He had not done so, they would have illuminated what lies between East and West." Therefore our spirit longs to reach back to its origin and establish a connection with Paradise in this wordly life before reaching the afterlife. Like a bridge or a tunnel, the *Hajjar ul-Aswad* is

**LIKE A BRIDGE OR TUNNEL,
THE HAJJAR UL-ASWAD IS OUR
CONNECTION BETWEEN DUNYA
[THIS WORLD] AND AKHIRA
[THE HEREAFTER].**

our connection between *dunya* [this world] and *akhirah* [the hereafter].

So during the hajj, with all its particulars and different stages, try to come to the House of Allah ﷻ, and spend as much time as possible there near the *Hajjar ul-Aswad*. Hug it in your heart, with a symbolic intention. Rebuild the relationship with the spirit, which longs for its origin as illustrated in the verse "To Allah we belong and to Him we are returning." When our body dies, we return, longing for our origin. During this life, we are longing for the *Hajjar ul-Aswad*, and it is longing for us. So when you are blessed to meet it, build that relationship up in your heart.

This good news should make us happy to go there, even every year if we are able, even if we emigrate to Mecca or Medina. Everyone wishes to be there, where people are in peace and happiness. It is our fervent hope and prayer that Allah ﷻ makes our home—at least in our hearts—in Mecca or Medina.◊

