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TEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE KAABA

By Muhammad Wajid Akhter (modified)

There is no place on Earth as venerated, as central or as holy to as many people as Makkah. By any objective standard, this valley in the Hijaz region of Arabia is the most celebrated place on Earth.

Thousands circle the sacred Kaaba at the centre of the Haram sanctuary 24 hours a day. Millions of homes are adorned with pictures of it and over a billion face it five times a day.

The Kaaba is the epicenter of Mecca.

Here are just a few things that most people may not know about the Kaaba:

10. It has been reconstructed several times

The Kaaba that we see today is not exactly the same Kaaba that was constructed by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail. From time to time, it has needed rebuilding after natural and man-made disasters.

Of course, we all know of the major reconstruction that took place during the life of the Prophet before he became a Prophet. This is the occasion when the Prophet averted major bloodshed by his quick thinking on how to place the Black Stone using a cloth that every tribe could lift up.

Since then, there has been an average of one major reconstruction every few centuries. The last renovation took place in 1996 and was extremely thorough, leading to the replacement of many of the stones and re-strengthening the foundations and a new roof. This is likely to be the last reconstruction for many centuries (inshaAllah) as modern techniques mean that the building is more secure and stable than ever before.

9. It used to have two doors ... and a window

The original Kaaba used to have a door for entrance and another for exit. For a considerable period of time it also had a window situated to one side. The current Kaaba only has one door and no window.

8. It used to be multi-coloured

We are so used to the Kaaba being covered in the trademark black Kiswah with gold banding that we can't imagine it being any other colour. However, this tradition seems to have started at the time of the Abbasids (whose household colour was black) and before this the Kaaba was covered in multiple colours including green, red and even white.

7. The keys are in the hands of one family

At the time of the Prophet, each aspect to do with the rites of Hajj was in the hands of different sub-groups of the Quraish. Every one of these would eventually lose control of their guardianship of a particular rite except one. On the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet was given the keys to the Kaaba and instead of keeping it in his own possession; he returned them back to the Osman ibn Talha of the Bani Shaiba family. They had been the traditional key keepers of the Kaaba for centuries; and the Prophet confirmed them in that role till the end of time by these words

"Take it, O Bani Talha, eternally up to the Day of Resurrection, and it will not be taken from you unless by an unjust, oppressive tyrant."

Whether Caliph, Sultan or King – the most powerful men in the world have all had to bow to the words of the Prophet and ask permission from this small Makkan family before they can enter the Kaaba.



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6. It used to be open to everyone

Until recently, the Kaaba was opened twice a week for anyone to enter and pray. However, due to the rapid expansion in the number of pilgrims and other factors, the Kaaba is now opened only twice a year for dignitaries and exclusive guests only.

5. You used to be able to swim around it

One of the problems with having the Kaaba situated at the bottom of a valley is that when it rains – valleys tend to flood. This was not an uncommon occurrence in Makkah and the cause of a lot of trouble before the days of flood control systems and sewage. For days on end the Kaaba would be half submerged in water. Did that stop Muslims from performing the Tawaf? Of course not.

4. The inside contains plaques commemorating the rulers who renovated it

For years many have wondered what it looks like inside the Kaaba. Relying on second or third hand accounts from those who were lucky enough to enter just wasn't satisfying enough. Then one lucky person who went inside took his camera phone in with him and Millions have seen the shaky footage online. The interior of the Kaaba is now lined with marble and a green cloth covering the upper walls. Fixed into the walls are plaques each commemorating the refurbishment or rebuilding of the House of Allah by the ruler of the day.

3. There are two kaabas

Directly above the Kaaba in heaven is an exact replica. This Kaaba was mentioned in the Quran and by the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah said narrating about the journey of 'Isra wal Miraaj

"Then I was shown Al-Bait-al-Ma'mur (i.e. Allah's House). I asked Gabriel about it and he said, This is Al Bait-ul-Ma'mur where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily and when they leave they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily)."

2. The Black Stone is broken

Ever wondered how the Black Stone came to be in the silver casing that surrounds it?

Some say it was broken by a stone fired by the Umayyad army laying siege to Makkah whilst it was under the control of Abdullah ibn Zubair. However, most agree that it was most damaged in the middle ages by an extreme heretical Ismaili group from Bahrain called the Qarmatians who had declared that the Hajj was an act of superstition. They decided to make their point by killing tens of thousands of hujjaj and dumping their bodies in the well of Zamzam.

As if this act of treachery was not enough, these devils took the Black Stone to the East of Arabia and then Kufa in Iraq where they held it ransom until they were forced to return it by the Abassid Caliph. When they returned it, it was in pieces and the only way to keep them together was by encasing them in a silver casing. Some historians narrate that there are still some missing pieces of the stone floating around.

1. It was not a cube shape

The original dimensions of The House included the semi-circular area known as the Hijr Ismail. When the Kaaba was rebuilt just a few years before the Prophet received his first revelation, the Quraish agreed to only use income from pure sources to complete the rebuild. That meant no money from gambling, looting, prostitution, interest etc. In the ultimate sign of how deeply mired in wrongdoing



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the Jahili Quraish were, there was not enough untainted money in this very wealthy trading city to rebuild the Kaaba to its original size and shape!

They settled for a smaller version of the Kaaba and put a mud brick wall (called "Hijr Ismail" although it has no connection to the Prophet Ismail (A) himself) to indicate the original dimensions. Towards the end of his life, the Prophet intended to rebuild the Kaaba on its original foundations but passed away before he could fulfill his wish. Apart from a brief interlude of a few years during the reign of Caliph Abdullah ibn Zubair, the Kaaba has remained the same shape that the Prophet saw it in.



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ETIQUETTES WHEN VISITING AL-MASJID AL-HARAAM

1 - To enter with the right foot and recite the supplication of entering the mosque: It is recommended, when entering Al-Masjid Al-Haraam, like other mosques, to supplicate with the following supplication: "A'oothu billaahi Al-'Atheem wa biwajhihi al-kareem wa sultaanihi al-qadeemi min ash-shaytaan ar-rajeem; al-hamdu lilaah; Allahumma salli wa sallim 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala aali Muhammad. Allahumma ighfir lee thunoobi waftah lee abwaaba rahmatik.

[I seek refuge with Allah, the Most Great, and with His bounteous Countenance and eternal Power from Satan the expelled (from the mercy of Allah). All perfect praise be to Allah. O Allah, send blessings and peace upon Muhammad, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and upon his family. O Allah, forgive my sins and open the gates of Your mercy before me.]"

Then, one should say, "In the Name of Allah," and proceed with the right foot to enter the mosque.

2 - Among the important etiquettes that the one entering the mosque should adhere to is to be free from any foul smell like the smell of onion, garlic, or smoke, as the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam: "Whoever eats garlic or onion should keep away from us [or from our mosque]." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

3 - Tahyyatul-masjid for Al-Masjid Al-Haraam: This is for the Muslim to pray two Rak'ahs (units) upon entry. However, whoever comes while being in the state of Ihraam should not do this and instead proceed directly to Tawaaf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah).

4 - To avoid quarrelling and raising voices in the mosque: Quarrelling and raising voices in the mosque are disliked acts, as is seeking lost property by raising one's voice and transaction, due to the Hadeeth narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said: "If you see somebody selling or buying in the mosque, say to him, 'May Allah not make your transaction profitable'; and if you see anyone seeking [in a loud voice] his lost property in it, say to him, 'May Allah not return it to you.'" [At-Tirmithi, Al-Albaani - Saheeh]

5 - Performing many acts of worship, as good deeds are multiplied in reward in Al-Masjid Al-Haraam. Therefore, a Muslim should perform much Tawaaf, prayer, recite Quran, make Thikr (mentioning and remembrances of Allah) and supplication, and waste no time on what would not do him any benefit in the Hereafter.

6 - Avoiding sins and misdeeds: the mosque is a place of worship, and sufficient as a warning against the committing of sins in Al-Masjid Al-Haraam is that Allah accounts therein even the intention to commit a sin, let alone actually committing it. In confirmation of this, Allah The Almighty Says (what means): {And [also] whoever intends [a deed] therein of deviation [in religion] or wrongdoing - We will make him taste of a painful punishment.} [Quran 22:25]

7 - Avoiding crowding with people, particularly at the Black Stone. It is true that touching the Black Stone is recommended, but should crowding with people lead to harming them, it becomes prohibited.



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8 - Reciting the supplication of leaving the mosque: If the Muslim wants to leave the mosque, it is recommended for him or her to exit with his left foot and say while leaving: "Allahumma inni as'aluka min fadhlik. [O Allah, I ask You (to provide me) from Your bounty]" or say, "Rabbi ighfir li waftah li abwaaba fadhlik. (O my Lord, forgive me, and open the gates of Your bounty before me.)" This should be said after invoking blessings and peace upon the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Supplementary:

1. Sleeping and resting in Masjid Al Haram and Masjid Al Nabawi:

First of all people should not be sleeping in Masjid Al Haram and Masjid Al Nabawi except during the period of I'tikaf. They should have arrangements for their stay such as hotels, etc. However, people do get tired after Tawaf and Sa'ee and they want to sit and rest for few minutes. Many pilgrims treat Masjid Al Haram and Masjid Al Nabawi as casual places when they take their rest. Some men and even women lay down in any position they like and show no HAYA (modesty). This is certainly a greatly negligent act of the pilgrims in the holy mosques. Masjid Al Haram and Masjid Al Nabawi and their surroundings are always filled with millions of people. While people sleep among these great number of people walking around them at all times, they sometimes, accidentally and of course, unknowingly, have their AOWRAH (parts of body that must be covered in public) exposed to other people, especially for men in AHRAAM (its only two sheets). Therefore, it's not a good idea to sleep in Masjid Al Haram or outside Masjid Al Haram on a side walk or pathways OR in Masjid Al Nabawi. If someone is in need of rest for a few minutes, then they must ensure that they are properly covered at all times.

2. Quarrelling, using inappropriate language in Makkah:

Many pilgrims quarrel and use very inappropriate language with other Muslims. Sometimes they are in IHRAM and they still fight with others OR use inappropriate language (vulgarity and vanity) when they speak. If a pilgrim quarrels or uses inappropriate language in IHRAM, he/she must pay a penalty (KAFFARAH) by sacrificing an animal. Their Umrah or Hajj will not be accepted unless they offer the KAFFAARAH (penalty). If someone is not in the state of Ahraam but is still present in the city of Makkah, this person must still not fight or use inappropriate language with anyone. It is a sin against his soul and destroys his good deed.

3. Anger:

No doubt, pilgrims are under enormous stress and greatly fatigued because performing Hajj or Umrah is not easy for everyone. Umrah and Hajj require physical work to a considerable extent. Hajj requires far more physical movements than Umrah. Therefore, people get tired and cranky and lose patience. In case of a dispute or disagreement, some pilgrims become very angry. This is what exactly Shaitan (Satan) looks for. Pilgrims go to Makkah to please Allah, which makes Shaitan unhappy. However, when a pilgrim gives himself up to anger and quarrels with another pilgrim, Shaitan is certainly pleased while Allah is surely displeased with this pilgrim's act.

4. Parents and Children:

Some parents when they get angry at their children they curse at them (BADDU'A). They forget that they are in Makkah where supplications and Du'a are accepted very fast. Therefore, parents should control themselves and never curse at their children in the city of Makkah and Madinah. They should be making du'a for their children. Similarly, children must obey their parents and serve them to their best, which will be rewarded by Allah.



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Etiquettes When Visiting Al-Masjid Al-Haraam

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SIGNIFICANCE OF DRINKING ZAMZAM WHILST STANDING AND FACING THE QIBLA

By Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam

Standing up or being seated whilst drinking Zamzam

Classical scholars and jurists (fuqaha) have differed over whether one should drink Zamzam water standing up or seated.

a) According to some scholars, it is 'recommended' to stand and drink Zamzam. This was chosen by a group of Hanafi scholars; such as Mulla Ali al-Qari, Imam al-Lakhnawi, and Imam Ibn Abidin who cited 'standing' as one of the etiquettes (adaab) of drinking Zamzam. (See: Ali al-Qari, Jam' al-Wasa'il; Lakhnawi, Umdat al-Ri'aya 1/267; and Radd al-Muhtar 2/524)

Their evidences are the following Hadiths:

Sayyiduna AbdAllah ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) says, *"I served Zamzam water to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace), and he drank from it whilst standing."* (Sahih al-Bukhari 1528 and Sahih Muslim 2027)

Sayyiduna AbdAllah ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) relates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) drank Zamzam water from a bucket whilst he was standing. (Sahih Muslim 2027)

The great Hadith scholar and Hanafi jurist, Imam Mulla Ali al-Qari' (Allah have mercy on him) explains that the general practice of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) was to drink whilst being seated, and this is the real Sunna. However, Zamzam (as well as leftover water after performing ablution) is to be exempted from this in that one should stand and drink. The reason is that it is encouraged to drink Zamzam as much as possible to one's fill, and this is better achieved in a standing position. (Jam' al-Wasa'il fi sharh al-Shama'il 1/308)

b) According to many Shafi'i and other jurists, it is a Sunna to be seated whilst drinking Zamzam water, and mildly disliked (makruh tanzih) to stand. This is due to the general prohibition in various Hadiths of drinking water whilst standing up – which, according to them, includes Zamzam water. For example: Sayyiduna Anas ibn Malik (Allah be pleased with him) relates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) disapproved the drinking of water while standing. (Sahih Muslim 2024)

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) relates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) said, *"None of you should drink while standing; and if anyone forgets, he must vomit."* (Sahih Muslim 2026)

The great Hadith scholar and Shafi'i jurist, Imam Nawawi (Allah have mercy on him) explains in his Commentary that the prohibition in the above hadiths refers to this practice being mildly disliked (makruh tanzih), and not unlawful (haram). This is because it is established that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) drank whilst standing up. He (Allah Allah bless him & give him peace) would occasionally carry out certain actions in order to show their permissibility – despite his regular



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practice being to the contrary. As such; his regular practice was to drink water while being seated, but on a few rare occasions he stood up and drank to show that it was not unlawful to do so. (Nawawi, Al-Minhaj sharh Sahih Muslim p: 1532)

Thus, in accordance with the regular practice of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace), according to this group of scholars, it is a Sunna and better to drink even Zamzam water while being seated, and mildly disliked to drink it in a standing position.

c) According to many Maliki and Hanbali scholars, it is permitted without any dislike to drink Zamzam or any other drink whilst standing. This is due to the hadiths in which the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) drank Zamzam water standing up [quoted above]. (See: Mardawi, Al-Insaf 8/330 and Ibn Juzay, Al-Qawanin al-Fiqhiyya 646)

So, in conclusion, it is neither necessary to stand and drink Zamzam water nor be seated, as both are permitted. As for what is better, there is a genuine and valid difference of opinion on the issue. Some are of the opinion that it is better to stand, some say it is better to sit, and some say both are equal. As such, no one should be rebuked or looked down upon whether they drink Zamzam water standing up or being seated.

Allah knows best.



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Significance of Drinking Zamzam whilst Standing and Facing the Qibla
by: Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam

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HISTORICAL PLACES OF MEDINAH

Welcome to the land of Hijrah and victory, the land of the Chosen Prophet, the land to which the righteous Sahaabah migrated and the home of the Ansaar.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Madeenah is a Haram (sanctuary), so whoever commits evil therein or gives protection to an evildoer, the curse of Allaah, the angels and all of mankind may be upon him. Allaah will not accept any obligatory or naafil deed from him on the Day of Resurrection." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1867; Muslim, 1370.

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Do not travel to visit any mosques except three: al-Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah], this Mosque of mine [in Madeenah] and al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem]." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1189; Muslim, 1397.

The following are some of many historical places in Medinah which a pilgrim would like to visit.

1. Al-Baqee The graveyard of Medinah, where a large number of Sahabah (companions) including Usman, Abbas, Imam Hassan, and wives and daughters of the Holy Prophet are buried. This graveyard is close to the tomb of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), right after the courtyard of Masjid Al-Nabawi.
2. Masjid Quba This is the first mosque in the history of Islam whose foundation stone was laid down by Prophet Muhammad (S) himself on his migration to Medinah. To offer 2 raka's of nafl in it is equal to one Umrah. After visiting the Prophet's Mosque and his tomb every pilgrim should try his/her best to visit it and pray in this mosque as well. A visit to Masjid Quba is highly recommended since the Prophet (SWS) used to visit it quite frequently to pray 2 raka's.
3. Masjid Qiblatain In this mosque, Allah directed Prophet Muhammad (S), who was in the middle of a Salah along with his companions, to turn his face from Islam's first Qibla (Bait-ul-Muqqadis) to Ka'aba in Masjid Al-Haram. That is why this mosque is known as a mosque with two Qiblas.
4. Masjid Jumuah This mosque was built at a place where the Prophet (S) offered his first Jumuah prayer in Medinah.
5. Masjid Ghamama This mosque is not far from Masjid Al-Nabawi. The Prophet (S) used to offer his Eid prayers here. Once the Prophet led Istasqa prayer (prayer for rain) in it and suddenly the clouds appeared and it started raining, hence the name Ghamama (clouds).
6. Masjid Abu Bakr, Masjid Umar Farooq and Masjid Ali These three mosques that are near Masjid Ghamama.
7. Badr The plain of Badr is south west of Medinah where the first battle between 313 Muslims and 1000 Quraish of Makkah took place in 624 A.D. The Muslims had seventy camels and two horses whereas the Quraish had a cavalry of 200 Horses and 700 camels. They were superior in weapons too, but Muslims were victorious because they were strong in morale and strategy due to the leadership of the Holy Prophet (S).
8. Jabal Al-Uhad About four miles on the north of Medinah, famous battle of Uhad was fought at 3 A.H. Hazrat Hamza, the Holy Prophet's uncle, and other companions are buried here.



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Historical Places of Medinah

Facilitated by Muallima Farzanah Adam

9 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

By Muhammad Wajid Akhter (modified)

Deep in the mosque of the Prophet (Masjid Nabawi), covered by green carpets and the tears of millions, lies a "garden from the gardens of paradise." [1] It is a place known to every Muslim who has ever lived, yet there's still much we don't know about it. Here are just some of the interesting facts and mysteries of the Prophet's Mosque:

9. The first place in the Arabian Peninsula to have electricity

When the Ottomans introduced electricity to the Arabian Peninsula, the first place to be lit up was the mosque of the Prophet. [2] By some accounts, it would be a few more years before the Sultan himself had full electricity in his own palace in Istanbul. [3]

8. The current mosque is larger than the old city

The current mosque is more than 100 times the size of the original building. [4] [5] This means that the current mosque covers almost the entire area of the old city itself. [6] [7] This is evident from the fact that whereas Jannat Al-Baqi cemetery was on the outskirts of the city during the time of the Prophet, [8] it now borders the precincts of the current mosque grounds.

7. There's an empty grave in the Prophet's room

It has long been the stuff of legend that there is an "empty grave" next to where the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Umar are buried. [9] [10] [11] This was confirmed, however, when the individuals who went in to change the coverings in the hujrah* in the 1970s noted the presence of an empty space. [12] Whether or not it is meant for Isa when he returns is a matter of debate. [13]

*Note from author: What is meant by "hujrah" in this case is not the actual burial chamber / original room of Aisha (Ra.) This is enclosed in a pentagonal structure with no doors or windows and has not been visible for centuries. The area meant is the entire grilled area encompassing the chamber and area of other rooms.

6. It was destroyed by fire

The majority of the old mosque, including the original mimbar of the Prophet, was destroyed in a fire that swept through the mosque centuries after the Prophet died. The fire was so extensive that the roof and even some of the walls of the room of the Prophet collapsed, revealing his resting place for the first time in 600 years. [14]

5. There was no dome before, now there are two

For more than 650 years after the Prophet passed away, there was no dome over his grave. [15] The first one was built in 1279 by a Mamluk sultan and was made of wood. [16] The green dome that we see today is actually the outer dome over the room of the Prophet. There is an inner dome that is much smaller and has the name of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Umar inscribed on the inside. [17]

4. The dome used to be purple

It turns out that the dome has been through various colors and renovations before it reached its current form and colour about 150 years ago. [18] At one point it used to be white and for the longest period it was a purple-blue colour that the Arabs of Hijaz were particularly fond of. [19] [20]



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5. Speaking Loud and listening or participating in useless talks:

Some pilgrims talk very loudly inside Masjid Al Nabawi Sharif. This destroys all good deeds of a person.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an;

"O ye who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak loud to him in talk, as ye may speak aloud to one another, Lest your deeds become vain and ye perceive not.

(Surah Al Hujurat (49): 2)

The respect and honour of Masjid Al Nabawi remains the same as exemplified by the companions' behaviour in the presence of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).



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Etiquettes When Visiting Al-Masjid Al-Haraam

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3. It has 3 mihrabs

Most mosques only have one mihrab, but the Prophet's mosque has three. The current mihrab is the one used nowadays for the imam to lead prayers. The next mihrab is set back and is called the Suleymaniye or Ahnaf mihrab. [21] It was made on the orders of the Sultan Suleyman the magnificent for the Hanafi Imam to lead prayers whilst the Maliki Imam lead prayers from the Prophetic mihrab. The Prophetic mihrab completely covers the area that the Prophet used to lead prayers from except where he placed his feet. [22]

2. What lies in the room of Fatima ?

Items belonging to the Prophet were housed in his room or the room of Fatima which was incorporated into his room after a major expansion. [23] When Medina was under siege during World War I, the Ottoman commander had many priceless artifacts evacuated to Istanbul, hidden in the clothes of women and children. [24] [25] They can now be seen in the Topkapi Palace. However, intriguingly, some items still remain but are undocumented. [26]

1. Other signs

Each pillar, each dome, each window carries a story and indicates the location of events that carry historical and spiritual significance. The people who constructed the Prophet's Mosque realized that it would be impossible to put up signs everywhere as it would distract from the main purpose of prayers. Therefore, they came up with an ingenious way of indicating a location of importance through minor changes in the design of surrounding objects.

The mosque of the Prophet was never just a mosque. It was the center of the first Islamic community and nation. It was the scene of our greatest triumphs and tragedies. It was a community center, homeless refuge, university and mosque all rolled into one.

Like the Muslim community, it has grown over the years and become more modern with each passing generation. But despite the exponential growth and changes from the simple Hijazi date palm trunk interior to the marble and gold clad structure we have today – the inner core remains the same. Perhaps there's a lesson in there for us all.

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MISCELLANEOUS

We will touch on the following briefly:

- How many times did the Prophet (pbuh) perform 'Umra ?
- Main Adhkaar for `Umrah
- 'Ustuwaanah' – the pillars of Madinah
- Praying in hotel rooms versus praying in the sacred haram
- How to fill up a saff; standing next to a non-mahram in salaah; standing alone in a saff.
- Foot to foot or shoulder to shoulder?
- Why are Non-Muslims not allowed to Enter to Makkah and Madina?



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Miscellaneous

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