



Al-Hajar Al-Aswad -The Honorable Black Stone Phenomenon

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the phenomenon of sanctity, sacred concepts in the Islamic religion, the history of the phenomenon of the venerable black stone and its peculiarities. The teachings of Islam about the black stone are also mentioned.

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As countries progress, problems and shortcomings in various fields begin to appear, but the most important thing is in what ways they find solutions. One of the misunderstandings that arise in the religious field among people is the misinterpretation of the phenomenon of "sanctity". Therefore, in order to prevent misunderstandings in doctrinal issues, various superstitions, and the formation of corrupt beliefs among the population, a deep study of the phenomenon of "sanctity" is of urgent importance.

There are places, books, persons, days, months, objects, time, numbers, stones and other such phenomena which are considered sacred by the members of a particular religion based on their beliefs. All of these are considered sacred because they are related to God, a certain divinity is felt in them, or they are blessed by "Absolute Almighty" [1]. For example, the phenomenon of sacred place exists in all religions, and in Christianity, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth; Mecca and Jerusalem in Islam.

In this article discusses the phenomenon of al-Hajar al-Aswad (arabic: The black stone), a ruby stone that was sent down from Paradise by the command of Allah through Gabriel (a.s.) to Ibrahim (a.s.) when they were building the Kaaba. When Ibrahim (a.s.) was building the Kaaba, he wanted to make one column different so that people would know where they started the tawaf, and ordered his son Ismail (a.s.) to bring a stone. When Ishmael (a.s.) went looking for a stone, Gabriel (a.s.) brought a stone to Ibrahim (a.s.) and placed it in the southeast part of the Kaaba. Thus, the circumambulation begins and ends in front of the black stone. When the stone was sent down from heaven, it was whiter than snow and milk, and its length was about a dhira. Ibn Abbas (r.a.) said: The Messenger of Allah said: "The Black Stone descended from the Paradise, and it was more white than milk, then it was blackened by the sins of the children of Adam" (Narrated by Imam Tirmidhi, 892) [2]. Alikhontora Soghuni writes: "At first it was called "al-Hajar al-as'ad", i.e. "Blessed stone" due to its white light like a candle, but after the light of people's fortunes faded, it got the name "al-Hajar al-Aswad", i.e. "Black stone". Now, even though this blessed stone has lost its outward appearance with this quality, the divine spiritual grace remains forever in it" [3]. There are also opinions by scholars that the stone may have been blackened by the hands of polytheists before the advent of Islam. The reason is that even before the advent of Islam, the practice of circumambulating the Kaaba and kissing al-Hajar al-Aswad existed.

If a sinner sincerely repents and kisses al-Hajar al-Aswad or makes istilam (gesture with a hand-wave pointing at it, thereafter kiss the hands), his sins are transferred to that stone and become a black stone. It is clear from this that the reason why it is called “black stone” is derived from its external appearance, while the inside may have remained white. It is recorded in the books that its light was so strong that it illuminated all four directions.

The division of al-Hajar al-Aswad into parts is related to the capture of the Kaaba by the Qaramatites in 317 (AH). That year, Abu Tahir al-Qirmiti with nine hundred followers stormed the Masjid al-Haram and killed the pilgrims in it and they closed the zam-zam well. Then, he came to al-Hajar al-Aswad, beat it with a wooden stick and took with himself to Bahrain. They considered kissing the black stone and visiting it as superstition and idolatry. In this way, the honorable stone is divided into several pieces. Dr. Said Bakdosh wrote about this: “...In 332 (AH) Abu Tahir al-Qirmithi died and (seven years later) in 339 (AH) Sanbar bin al-Husayn Qirmithi returned it” [4].

It is currently divided into eight pieces, the largest of which is the size of a Arabic date. Eight pieces were placed in the middle of the black compound and this image forming a single combination surrounded by silver and was placed in the Kaaba. It is necessary to pay special attention to this aspect while visiting. So, al-Hajar al-Aswad should be kissed or held by hand (not silver or something else). In addition, if it is not possible to kiss or touch this precious stone during Hajj, it is correct to kiss hands without harming others, like the Prophet (s.a.w). Abdullah bin Zubair (r.a.) the grandson of Abu Bakr (r.a.) was the first to cover the silver coating.

One of the qualities attributed to this precious stone is the testimony it will give on the Day of Judgment in favor of the one who has rightfully made istilam. Making istilam is one of the pillars of Hajj (Sunnah). The Prophet (s.a.w) did not kiss anything except al-Hajar al-Aswad and Rukn al-Yamani, the Companions emphasized this. The words of Umar (r.a.) in order to prevent the people from equating kissing this stone with praying to idols and the emergence of various conspiracies among the masses are known and famous. Abbas bin Rabi'ah (r.a.) said: “I saw Umar bin Al-Khattab kissing the (Black) Stone and saying: “I am kissing you while I know that you are just a stone, and if I had not seen the Messenger of Allah kissing you, I would not kiss you” (Narrated by Imam Tirmidhi, 876) [2]. A similar situation happened when the Prophet (s.a.w.) died, and in order to prevent various disputes and depression among the people, Abu Bakr (r.a.) advised not to give too much freedom to the mind, and to perceive the events that are visible to the eyes and not consider them sacred and said: “O people, *Whoever worshipped Muhammad*, (should know that) *Muhammad is dead*, but *whoever worshipped Allah*, (should remember that) *Allah is Ever living; never dies*”. Then he recited this verse: “*Muhammad is but a messenger, there have been messengers before him. So, if he dies or is killed, would you turn back on your heels? Whoever turns back on his heels can never harm Allah in the least. Allah shall soon reward the grateful*” (Surah Ali ‘Imran, verse 144) [5]. From this it becomes clear that no one is sanctified and worshiped except Allah. The above mentioned deeds of Umar (r.a.) were mentioned for this very purpose, it can be seen that it was a rejection of those who said various wrong things and following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). While the Qaramatites, who are a group of misguided sects, have equated the attitude towards al-Hajar al-Aswad to idolatry, the group of Barlawis has gone to the level of deifying our Prophet (s.a.w.), which is irreconcilable to the teachings of Islam [6].

As a conclusion, it can be said that kissing Hajar ul-Aswad and making istilam is a Sunnah act and Allah sent it down from heaven to earth as a blessing. Just as Allah wants to make certain places, months, nights, days, and times better than other, He also made this stone better and more virtuous than other stones, it is a matter known to Him. At the same time, if a person does not know the wisdom of something, he should act according to Sharia in religious matters.

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