

Appendix 9

Significant Places

1. The Ka'aba

The *Ka'aba* measures about 13.5 metres (45 ft) by 16.5 metres (55 ft) at the base, and about 11.7 metres (39 ft) high, built so that its corners are set to the four points of the compass. The polished stone walls are 1 metre (3 ft) thick and built with grey stones locally hewn from the hills around Mecca.

On the inside of the *Ka'aba* the stones are unpolished. The floor is covered by marble, making a base about 25 cm (10 in) high, having a 49 piece ceiling and roof of Burmese teak and capped with stainless steel. Three wooden pillars hold the roof up, which can be accessed by ladder. A door is set in the north-eastern wall 2 metres (6.5 ft) above the surrounding ground. The upper part of the inside walls is covered with some kind of curtain with the *kalimah* (statement of faith) written on it.

Set on the outside at the eastern corner, 1.5 metres (5ft) above ground level, is the Black Stone. This is now in pieces – three large parts with smaller fragments – held together with a silver band. There are several theories about the origin of the Black Stone: (1) a meteor; (2) lava; or (3) basalt. It is reddish black in colour, with some red and yellow particles. Its original diameter is estimated to have been 30 cm (1 ft). There is another stone, too, built into the *Ka'aba*, in the western corner: the Stone of Good Fortune, but far less sacred than the Black Stone. The wall between the door and the Black Stone is very sacred, and is considered to have a lot of *baraka* (blessing).

The black cover called the *kiswa* put over the *Ka'aba* is made of pure natural silk dyed in black, a new one being produced in Egypt every year. The cloth is 14 metres high, and fixed to the ground with copper rings. Over the upper third of the cloth is the 95 metres (300ft) wide and 45 metres (140 ft) long *hazam* or belt made of 16 pieces which surrounds the *kiswa* from all sides. This *hazam* is embroidered in gold threads making protruding designs of Qur'anic verses in Arabic calligraphy. Under this belt, at each corner of the *Ka'aba*, Sura 112 *Ikhlas* (Purity of Faith) is written inside a circle surrounded by a square shape of Islamic embellishment. At the same height, also under the belt, are six verses from the *Qur'an* – each one written in a separate frame. On the areas separating these frames there is a shape of a lamp on which other Qur'anic verses are written. In an interim period which lasts a little more than two weeks, the *kiswa* is taken off and the *Ka'aba* covered by a white covering – and at the end of *hajj* the new *kiswa* is presented.

Note: The measurements given by various sources may be somewhat inaccurate. A search on the internet for the size brings up a wide variety of claims, but these figures are the rough consensus. I doubt the measurements are actually variable!

Example 1: 35 ft wide x 40 ft long x 50 ft high (10.5m x 12m x 15m).

Example 2: 33 ft wide x 50ft long x 45 ft high (10m x 15m x 13.5m).

There is even a repeated claim that the base of the *Ka'aba* is 627 sq feet, which is somewhat difficult to reconcile with any of the figures given!



The Ka'aba Detailed (as [illustrated](#))

(1) *Al-Hajaru al-Aswad*, 'The Black Stone', is located on the Kaaba's eastern corner (8). Its southern is called *Ruknu I-Yamani*, 'the Yemeni corner' (9), its western corner the *Ruknu sh-Shāmī*, 'the Levantine (Syrian) corner' (10), and its northern corner is known as the *Ruknu l-Irāqī*, the Iraqi corner' (11). The four corners of the Ka'aba roughly point toward the four cardinal directions of the compass. Its major (long) axis is aligned with the rising of the star Canopus toward which its southern wall is directed, while its minor axis (its east-west facades) roughly align with the sunrise of summer solstice and the sunset of winter solstice.

(2) The entrance is a door set 2.13metres (7ft) above the ground on the north-eastern wall of the Kaaba, which acts as the façade. In 1979 the 300 gold doors made by chief artist Ahmad bin Ibrahim Badr, replaced the old silver doors made by his father, Ibrahim Badr in 1942. There is a wooden staircase on wheels, usually stored in the mosque between the arch-shaped gate of Banū Shaybah and the Zamzam Well.

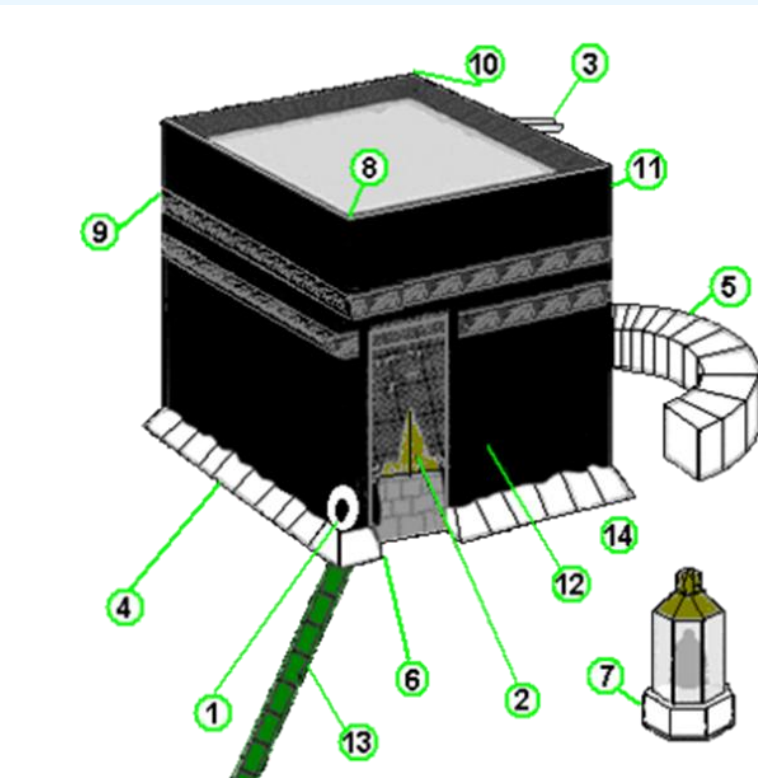
(3) *Meezab-i Rahmat*, rainwater spout made of gold. Added in the rebuilding of 1627 after the previous year's rain caused three of the four walls to collapse.

(4) Gutter, added in 1627 to protect the foundation from groundwater.

(5) *Hatim* (also romanized as *hateem*), a low wall originally part of the Ka'aba. It is a semi-circular wall opposite, but not connected to, the north-west wall of the Ka'aba known as the *hatim*. This is 90cm (35in) in height and 1.5m (4.9ft) in width, and is composed of white marble. At one time the space lying between the *hatim* and the Kaaba belonged to the Kaaba itself, and for this reason it is not entered during the *tawaf*.

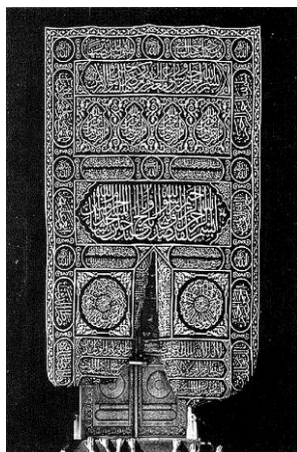
(6) *Al-Multazam*, the roughly 2metre space along the wall between the Black Stone and the entry door. It is sometimes considered pious or desirable for a hajji to touch this area of the Ka'aba, or perform *dua* (prayers) here.

(7) *The Station of Abraham (Maqam Ibrahim)*, a glass and metal enclosure with what is said to be an imprint of Abraham's feet. Abraham is said to have stood on this stone during the construction of the upper parts of the Kaaba, raising Is[h]mail on his shoulders for the uppermost parts.



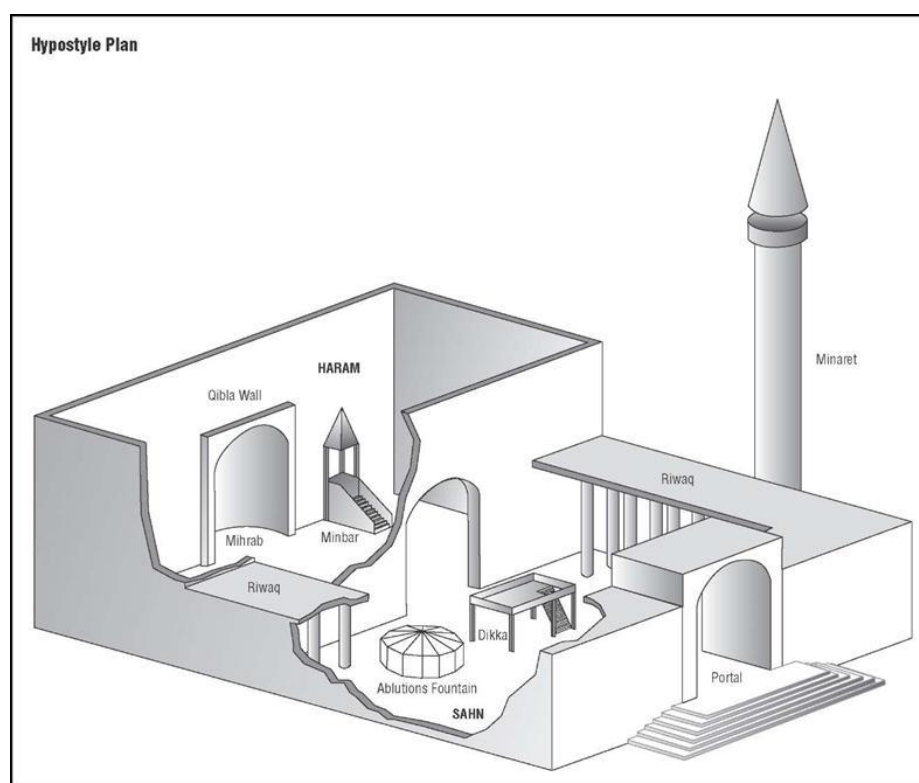
(12) *Kiswah*, the embroidered covering. Kiswah is a black silk and gold curtain which is replaced annually during the Hajj pilgrimage. Two-thirds of the way up is a band of gold-embroidered Quranic text, including the Shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith.

(13) Marble stripe marking the beginning and end of each circumambulation.



The door of the Ka'aba

2. A Typical Mosque



Muslims seek to construct something of beauty when they construct a mosque, built in Islamic tradition and architectural style. It will typically have a green dome similar to the Prophet's mosque in Medina, with a minaret (possibly more). The *mihrab*, a semicircular niche in the wall that indicates the *qibla*, the direction of praying is designed to keep the attention of worshippers focused on the Almighty on account of relevant Qur'anic verses and calligraphy that manifests divine unity.

Only Muslims can enter the inner Mosque where prayers are performed in rows on carpets. Before that area is reached provision is made for the washing of feet and arms, and head. Among the rules binding worshippers the following is included:

“Preparing to leave for the mosque:

1. When leaving your home, work or business, go toward the mosque with eagerness and enthusiasm for you would be meeting fellow believers who have come to worship Allah.
2. Demonstrate your eagerness by wearing perfumed, good and neat clothes.
3. Ensure that your body and clothes are all pure and clean (*tahir/pak*).

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) says: ‘One who goes to the mosque with (physical & spiritual) purity, Allah purifies this person from sins and includes him/her from the pilgrims of the mosque.’

4. Do not carry any unclean & impure items (*najasat*) in your pockets to the mosque.
5. If you have eaten garlic, onions, etc... do not go to the mosque, until the odour from your mouth has vanished.
6. It is forbidden for the one who is in the state of *janabat* and *haydh* to enter the mosque. Only after having performed the required *ghusl* (major ablution) can such a person enter the mosque. Sisters who are in the state *istihadha* can enter the mosque for prayers or otherwise. (For detailed rules on these please refer to books on Islamic Laws).”ⁱ

A perusal of the rules and etiquette for attending mosques is quite interesting, and a reading through the [website](#) page from which the above quote is taken will be enlightening.

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ⁱ Taken from '*Rules for the Masjid (Mosque)*' from the Academy of Learning Islam, at Al-Islam.org