Why do Muslims pray facing the Ka‘bah?

Allah Almighty made the Ka‘bah [297], the Sacred House, the first House for worship and a symbol of the believers' unity since all Muslims from around the world form circles at the time of prayer with Makkah lying at the center. The Qur’an presents many scenes of the interaction between worshippers and nature like the glorification and recitation of the mountains and birds along with Prophet Dāwūd (David): {Indeed, We bestowed favors upon David: “O mountains, echo Allah’s praise with him, and the birds too!” And We made iron malleable for him.} [298] Islam confirms, in more than one occasion, that the whole universe with all its creatures exalt and glorify the Lord of the worlds. Allah Almighty said: Surat Saba’:10.

{The first House [of worship] established for mankind was the one at Bakkah [Makkah], full of blessings and guidance for the worlds.} [299] Surat Āl ‘Imrān: 96. The honorable Ka‘bah is a square-shaped structure, almost like a cube. It lies in the center of the Sacred Mosque in Makkah. It has a door but no windows. It has nothing inside and it is not the grave for anyone, rather, it is a prayer chamber. A Muslim who prays inside the Ka‘bah can face any direction. It was renewed several times throughout history. Prophet Abraham was the first to raise its foundations along with his son Ishmael. In one of its corners, there lies the Black Stone. It is believed that it belongs to the time of Adam (peace be upon him); however, it has no supernatural power but it represents a symbol for the Muslims.

The spherical nature of the earth, the alternation of day and night, and the Muslims' joining them with their circumambulation around the Ka‘bah and their five prayers every day from various spots on earth while facing the direction of Ka‘bah represent part of the universal system in terms of the constant and perpetual interaction to magnify and glorify the Lord of the worlds. It is a command addressed by the Creator to His Prophet Abraham to raise the foundations of the Ka‘bah and circumambulate it, and we were commanded to take the Ka‘bah as our Qiblah (direction) during the prayer.

Questions and Answers about Islam

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