



Stories from the Hijaz

THE MAKKAH CHRONICLES



Masjidul Nimrah: only a part on Arafah



SALIM PARKER

Masjidul Nimrah has been expanded on numerous occasions. The mosque can now accommodate about 350 000 people, has six minarets, three domes and ten main entrances that include 64 doors. It also has a broadcast room from where the khutbah and prayers on the day of Arafah are beamed to the world.

Photo SALIM PARKER

MASJIDUL Nimrah is open only on the day of Hajj every year, the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah. It is a mosque that spans two areas of great significance to Muslims but staying in one part of the mosque on the day of Arafah can invalidate that person's Hajj.

Only one khutbah is given there a year, and that is the khutbah of Hajj on the day of Wuqoof. Adding to its uniqueness is the fact that the Dhuhr and Asr prayers on that day are shortened from the usual four rakaah each to two each. The two waqts are also combined in the time of Dhuhr, with one adhaan and two iqamahs, one for each of the respective waqts.

These procedures are followed as it was what our beloved Prophet (SAW) did when he performed his one and only Hajj. What better example can we use when we settle our debt to our Creator and perform our Hajj as called upon by Nabi Ibrahim (AS) to do, thousands of years ago?

Shaikh Muhammad ibn Uthaymeen said: 'It was narrated that on the day of Arafah, the Prophet (SAW) stayed in Nimrah (which is a place near Arafah) until the sun had passed its zenith (which is the beginning of the time for Dhuhr) then he rode; then he stopped at the bottom of Wadi Urana (which is a wadi or valley between Nimrah and Arafah), where he prayed Dhuhr and Asr, shortening them to two rakaah each and joining them together at the time of Dhuhr, with one adhaan and two iqamahs.

'Then he rode on until he came to the place of standing and stood there. He said, 'I am standing here but all of Arafah is the place of standing.' Then he remained

standing, facing the qiblah, raising his hands, remembering Allah and calling upon Him, until the sun had set completely then he went on to Muzdalifah.'

Some jurists consider Nimrah and Uranah to be the same place while others consider them to be distinct areas very close to each other.

Some are of the opinion that the original site was outside Arafah. Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said in Majmoo Al-Fataawa: 'A tent was erected for him [Prophet (SAW)] at Nimrah and that is where his rightly-guided caliphs would camp after his time.

'There are markets, rest areas, places to eat and so forth. When the sun passed its zenith, he and those with him mounted and rode to the prayer area at the base of Uranah, where the masjid was built, and that is neither a part of the Haram nor part of Arafah.'

The khutbah was delivered here while Nabi Muhammad (SAW) was seated on his camel. The combined prayers were also led from here. It is estimated that one hundred thousand pilgrims accompanied the Prophet (SAW).

In the second century of Islam, Masjid Nimrah was built at this spot. It was called Masjid Ibrahim. As Wadi Uranah, where the sermon was delivered, is outside the boundaries of Arafah, that section of the masjid is also outside the boundaries.

When the mosque was extended afterwards, it then became divided into two sections. The front section, which was the location of the original Masjid Ibrahim, was outside Arafah with the back section being within the boundaries.



The yellow sign on the left of the photograph, opposite Masjidul Nimrah (on the right), bears the words, 'Arafat ends here.' However, the masjid extends beyond the boundary of Arafah, which means that pilgrims who stay on that side of the masjid from the time of Wuqoof till Maghrib will invalidate their Hajj.

Photo SALIM PARKER

After renovations, signboards were erected inside the mosque to inform people about this matter. Hence, after performing their Dhuhr and Asr prayers in congregation, they could either move to the back of the masjid or outside to spend the rest of their time on Arafah.

Should a person spend all his time from midday to sunset in the front section of the masjid, he would not have been on Arafah and his Hajj will therefore be invalid as the presence on Arafah is an absolutely essential rite of Hajj.

The mosque has been expanded on numerous occasions.

The biggest expansion was made during the Saudi era and cost around 100 million US dollars.

The mosque has a capacity of around 350 000 people, has six minarets, three domes and ten main entrances that include 64 doors.

It also has a broadcast room from where the khutbah and prayers on the day of Arafah are beamed to the world, via satellites.

Less than a quarter of the pil-

grims are able to get into the mosque for the prayers.

It is not considered an essential part of Hajj to get into the mosque nor to ascend Jabal Rahmah.

It is worth remembering that the Farewell Khutbah of our beloved Prophet (SAW) was delivered at Masjid Nimrah and that soon thereafter, the following revelation was sent down by our Creator: 'Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you, and I have chosen Islam as your religion.' (Quran 5:3)



There are signs all around the boundary of Arafah, alerting the hujaj to the boundary to ensure that they are on Arafah from the time of Wuqoof to Maghrib. Since only a part of Masjidul Nimrah is on Arafah, there are also signs in the masjid to ensure that the hujaj in the mosque are in the right part of the mosque during that sacred period.

Photo SALIM PARKER



Masjidul Nimrah is only open on the day of Arafah and is large enough to accommodate 350 000 people, however, since only a part of it is on Arafah, the hujaj who are in the mosque have to ensure that they spend at least a part of the period from Wuqoof to Maghrib in that part of the mosque to fulfil that important part of the Hajj i.e. spending some time on Arafah.

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