



The Sacredness of the Ka'ba in the Light of the Qur'ān: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

In this paper, I intend to examine the Qur'ān's description of the Ka'ba as the most sacred shrine for Muslims. In other words, I aim to identify the characteristics that the Qur'ān attributes to the Ka'ba, which emphasize its sacredness. To this end, I first analyze the Qur'ānic names that refer directly to the Ka'ba, as well as those referring to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām—the mosque at whose center the Ka'ba is located—and to Mecca, the city in which al-Masjid al-Ḥarām stands. I then show how these names reflect the Ka'ba's sacredness. In the next step, I discuss the relevant Qur'ānic verses concerning the Ka'ba to show how their content affirms its sacredness and what specific attributes they ascribe to it. Based on these two lines of examination, I conclude that the Qur'ān introduces the Ka'ba not merely as a sacred place, but also as the most sacred one.

Keywords: the Ka'ba, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, Mecca, sacred place, Qur'ānic names, Qur'ānic content



Introduction

The Ka'ba is the most sacred shrine in Islam and serves as the *qiblah*, the direction toward which Muslims face during prayer. It is located at the heart of *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* in the holy city of Mecca (see Peters 1994, Ch.1).¹ Among Muslims, the Ka'ba is also called *Bayt Allāh* (the House of God), a name derived from some Qur'ānic verses in which God refers to it as 'My House.'² The Qur'ān also describes the Ka'ba as the first House [of worship] established for humankind.³ According to Islamic traditions (*ḥadīths*) and Qur'ānic verses, the Prophet Abraham raised the walls of the Ka'ba with the help of his son Ishmael in obedience to divine command and invited people to perform the Ḥajj pilgrimage.⁴ Some narrations also state that the Ka'ba was initially built by the Prophet Adam and later rebuilt by Abraham after its foundations had been lost over time (see King 2024, 3).⁵

The Ka'ba has a distinct sanctity and is therefore referred to as *al-Bayt al-Ḥarām* (the Holy House). This sanctity implies that non-Muslims are not permitted to enter *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*, where the Ka'ba is located, and some actions that might be permissible in other—even sacred—places are strictly forbidden (*ḥarām*) within its precincts (see al-Qurni et al. 2024, 276; Saleh 2018).

Another critical aspect of the Ka'ba's religious centrality is its role in the pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*), one of the five pillars of Islam (Edgar 2002). All Muslims who are physically and financially able are religiously obliged to perform *Ḥajj* at least once in their lifetime. A central rite of this pilgrimage is *ṭawāf*, the act of circling the Ka'ba seven times in a counterclockwise direction, performed annually by more than two million Muslims from across the world (see Peters 1994).

Despite the Ka'ba's undisputed significance in Islamic theology and religious practice, the specific characteristics that reflect its sacredness require further examination. In this paper, I intend to explore the Qur'ān's description of the Ka'ba as the most sacred place. In other words, I seek to identify what specific features the Qur'ān describes as the sacredness of the Ka'ba. To this end, first, in Sect. 2, I will discuss the names Allāh (the God as described in Islam) uses in the Qur'ān to refer to the Ka'ba and how they imply its sacredness. In Sect. 3, I examine the Qur'ānic verses concerning the Ka'ba and show how their content supports its sanctity. Based on these two sections, I conclude that the Qur'ān presents the Ka'ba not merely as a sacred place, but as the most sacred one.

The Sacredness of the Ka'ba Based on Its Qur'ānic Names

In this section, I will present the various names mentioned in the Qur'ān that refer to

the Ka'ba and explain how each one reflects its sacredness. The names are as follows:

Al-Ka'ba

The name *Ka'ba* appears twice in the Qur'ān.⁶ There are two reasons for using this word to refer to the House of God. First, in Arabic, *ka'ba* denotes any cube-shaped structure, and since the Ka'ba is cube-shaped, the term is appropriate. However, when Arabs say *al-Ka'ba* (with the definite article *al*), they refer specifically to the sacred House of God (see al-Rāghib 1992, 712; *Ka'ba* 2024). This particular usage highlights its sacredness and its unique significance for Muslims.

Second, the Ka'ba has height and stands tall above the ground (Jannati 1992; al-Qurni et al. 2024). Its name literally means 'high' or 'something high that has heels.' This name signifies its sacredness; as Mircea Eliade notes, "The sacred space is the highest place and the closest point to heaven" (1987, 38).⁷

Al-Bayt

This word means 'the house'⁸ and appears thirteen times in the Qur'ān—sometimes on its own, and at other times accompanied by pronouns or adjectives. Like *al-Ka'ba*, the definite article *al* signifies its sacredness by referring specifically to the House of God. However, when this word appears with sacred adjectives, its sacredness becomes even more prominent, as will be shown in the following examples.

Al-Bayt al-Ḥarām

In the Holy Qur'ān, the Ka'ba is called by this term three times.⁹ The word *Ḥarām* means 'holy' or 'forbidden.'¹ This adjective is used for the House of God for some reason. The main reason is that non-Muslims are not permitted to enter *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*, where the House of God is located (see Saleh 2018; Karimi Nia 2014). The following verse supports this idea:

O you who have believed, indeed the disbelievers¹ are unclean, so let them not approach al-Masjid al-Ḥarām after this, their [final] year ... (At-Tawbah 9:28).¹

Also, fighting in the Masjid al-Ḥarām or harming anyone who enters it is prohibited, so that if a person has committed a crime outside the Mosque, they are protected within its boundaries. Accordingly, legal punishments cannot be enforced against them while they remain inside (see Karimi Nia 2014). As the Qur'ān says:

... And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām unless they fight you there. (al-Baqarah 2:191)¹

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Furthermore, some actions that are permissible in other—even sacred—places are

forbidden (*ḥarām*) there, such as cutting trees, destroying plants, or hunting animals.¹

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O you who have believed, do not kill game while you are in the state of *iḥrām*. And whoever among you kills it intentionally—the penalty is an equivalent from sacrificial animals to what he killed, ... (al-Mā'idah 5:95).¹

This verse also states that if someone performs these prohibited actions, they must atone for them, indicating the sacredness of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām.

Al-Bayt al-‘Atīq

The word ‘al-Bayt’ is used twice in the Qur’ān with the adjective ‘al-‘Atīq’.¹ This adjective, at least, has two meanings that denote the sacredness of the Ka‘ba. The first is ‘ancient’ (al-Qurni et al. 2024, 377; Azadinejad 2013).¹ This meaning refers to the era of Prophet Adam. Verse 96 of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān may support this interpretation, as it describes the Ka‘ba as the first House of worship established for humankind:

Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakkah [i.e., Makkah] – blessed and a guidance for the worlds.

This interpretation of *al-Bayt al-‘Atīq* signifies the sacredness of the Ka‘ba.

The second meaning is ‘free’; no one ever owns it, but its true owner is only God (Azadinejad 2013).¹ In two verses of the Qur’ān, God refers to the Ka‘ba as ‘My House,’ affirming that it belongs to Him alone:

And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]" (al-Baqarah 2:125).

And also:

And [mention, O Muḥammad], when We designated for Abraham the site of the House, [saying], "Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who stand [in prayer] and those who bow and prostrate. (al-Ḥajj 22:26)

Moreover, it is essential to note that God's reference to the Ka‘ba as ‘My House’ reflects its sacred status; for God is sacred, and this sacredness has been transmitted to the Ka‘ba.

Al-Bayt al-Ma’mūr

This term appears only in Sūrat al-Ṭūr.¹ It means ‘the frequented House’.² According to most Qur’ānic interpreters², this name refers to the Ka‘ba,² which is continuously

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visited by many pilgrims (see Marefat 2014).²

The significant number of pilgrims visiting this house, particularly during Ḥajj, reflects its sacred and revered status for Muslims.

Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām

As mentioned earlier, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (the Holy Mosque) is the place that houses the holy Ka'ba, which holds unparalleled significance in Islam. The Qur'ān makes fifteen direct references to this sacred mosque.² Like *al-Bayt*, the definite article 'al' signifies its sacredness because it refers to the specific place—the mosque where the Ka'ba is located.

Another reason this name signifies the sacredness of the Ka'ba is that, as mentioned regarding al-Bayt al-Ḥarām, non-Muslims are not allowed to enter the Masjid al-Ḥarām. The sacredness of the Masjid al-Ḥarām is such that the prohibition of non-Muslims from entering it outweighs any economic concerns, as the Qur'ān says:

O you who have believed, indeed the disbelievers are unclean, so let them not approach al-Masjid al-Ḥarām after this, their [final] year. And if you fear privation, Allāh will enrich you from His bounty if He wills. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Wise (At-Tawbah 9:28).

Additionally, as previously mentioned, certain actions are prohibited there, including fighting, cutting down trees, destroying plants, and hunting or killing animals.

Qiblah

This name is used in the Qur'ān four times.² It means the direction of worship.² In Islam, the Ka'ba serves as the Qiblah toward which Muslims pray. Additionally, the Qiblah is involved in many actions and matters related to Muslims in various ways, such as the deceased's face being positioned toward the Qiblah and animals being slaughtered facing the Qiblah.² Therefore, it can be said that the Ka'ba, for Muslim, is the center of the world.² The following verse indicates this position of the Ka'ba:

And from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong ... (al-Baqarah 2:150).²

Also, God introduces the Qiblah (Ka'ba) as a criterion to distinguish believers from disbelievers:

And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels.

And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided (al-Baqarah 2:143).

The importance of this Qiblah is so great that if even the Prophet Muḥammad were to turn away from it and not worship toward it, he would be astray and incur divine wrath.

And if you brought to those who were given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah. Nor will you be a follower of their qiblah. Nor would they be followers of one another's qiblah. So if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, indeed, you would then be among the wrongdoers (al-Baqarah 2:145).

It is clear that this position of the Ka'ba indicates its sacredness as the center of worship in Islam.

Umm al-Qurā

This term appears twice in the Qur'ān.³ It consists of two words: *umm* (أُمّ) and *qurā* (قُرَى). In Arabic, the former literally means 'mother' while the latter means 'cities' or 'towns'; thus, Umm al-Qurā literally means 'the Mother of Cities' (Jannati 1992). The expression refers to Mecca, the city in which the Ka'ba is located. This designation reflects Mecca's centrality and pre-eminence among human settlements, a status closely connected with its role as the location of the qiblah of Muslims (see al-Ṭūsī n.d., 1: 131; 4: 201). This name reflects the sacredness of Mecca and, consequently, the sanctity of the Ka'ba.³

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Al-Balad al-Amīn

The term *al-Balad al-Amīn* is mentioned once in the Holy Qur'ān and is traditionally interpreted as a reference to Mecca.³ In Arabic, *balad* means "land" or "territory," and *amīn* signifies "secure" or "safe."³ Mecca is called by this name because Allāh has made its security obligatory, commanding that whoever enters it must be safe (see Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1995, 20: 539). As the following verse states: "In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters it [i.e., the Ḥarām] shall be safe ..." (Āl 'Imrān 3:97).

Moreover, the following verse supports this idea:

Certainly has Allāh showed to His Messenger the vision [i.e., dream] in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, if Allāh wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone] (al-Faḥ 48:27).

This feature for Mecca clearly signifies its sacredness as a divinely protected area.

The Sacredness of the Ka'ba Based on Qur'ānic Content

Examining the content of the Qur'ānic verses, one can find much evidence that implies the sacredness of the Ka'ba. In this section, I attempt to show some of them.

1. God introduces Himself as 'the Lord of the House (Ka'ba)'.³

The Qur'ān instructs the Quraysh: "Let them worship the Lord of this House" (Quraysh 106:3). By introducing Himself in this way, God declares the sanctity of the Ka'ba.

2. The Ka'ba as the Symbol of Tawḥīd (Monotheism)

The Ka'ba is not only the religious center of the Muslim world but also the primary symbol of tawḥīd—the first principle of Islam. Accordingly, the Qur'ān emphasizes that idolatry (*shirk*) has no place there. For instance, God commands believers to prevent disbelievers from entering the Masjid al-Ḥarām:

O you who have believed, indeed the disbelievers are unclean, so let them not approach Masjid al-Ḥarām after this, their [final] year ... (At-Tawbah 9:28).

In this case, God makes it clear that the guardians of His House are the righteous believers (*muttaqūn*), not the disbelievers: "Its [true] guardians are not but the righteous, but most of them do not know" (al-Anfāl 8:34).

Or, as noted, He calls the people of Quraysh to worship the 'Lord of this House' instead of idols. This *call* indicates that the Ka'ba was originally built for monotheism (*tawḥīd*), and worshiping near it holds a unique significance: "Let them worship the Lord of this House" (Quraysh 106:3).

Moreover, God has commanded that 'the public declaration of dissociation (*barā'at*) from the disbelievers' be announced on the Day of the Greater Ḥajj (*Ḥajj al-akbar*), by the Ka'ba, in the gathering of the pilgrims:

And [it is] an announcement from Allāh and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allāh is disassociated from the disbelievers, and [so is] His Messenger. So if you repent, that is best for you; but if you turn away, then know that you will not cause failure to Allāh. And give tidings to those who disbelieve of a painful punishment (At-Tawbah 9:3).

3. The Divine Command to Purify the Ka'ba

God commanded the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael to purify the House (al-Ka'ba), as expressed in the following verse:

... And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer] (al-Baqarah 2:125).

A similar command is repeated in Sūrat al-Ḥajj:

And [mention, O Muḥammad], when We designated for Abraham the site of the House, [saying], "Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf and those who stand [in prayer] and those who bow and prostrate (al-Ḥajj 22:26).

In both verses, the command to "purify My House",³ signifies both physical cleanliness and, more importantly, spiritual purification—particularly the removal of shirk (idolatry).³ This emphasis highlights the Ka'ba's sanctity as a place for exclusive worship of God.

4. *The Ka'ba as a Sacred Place of Worship*

The repetition of the phrase—"purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf, and those who stand [in prayer], and those who bow and prostrate"—in the two verses above indicates that the Ka'ba is a place of worship. Furthermore, in verse 2:125, Allāh commands the believers to "take the standing place of Abraham (maqām Ibrāhīm) as a place of prayer". This shows that the Masjid al-Ḥarām is a sacred place for worship.

5. *The Ka'ba as the First Place of Worship*

The Qur'ān affirms that the Ka'ba is not only a place of worship, but also the first place that was established for worship.

Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakkah [i.e., Makkah] - blessed and a guidance for the worlds (Āl 'Imrān 3:96).

This verse shows that, according to the Qur'ān, the Ka'ba is the most sacred place in the world, as it was the first site of worship established for mankind.³

6. *Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām as the "Way of Allāh"*

In the verse (al-Ḥajj 22:25), al-Masjid al-Ḥarām is referred to as "the way of Allāh" (sabīl Allāh), which emphasizes its sacredness.

Indeed, those who have disbelieved and avert [people] from the way of Allāh and [from] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, which We made for the people - equal are the resident therein and one from outside.

7. *The Ka'ba as a Source of Divine Guidance*

At the end of the same verse (3:96), the Ka'ba is described as *hudan li-l-'ālamīn*—"a guidance for the worlds."³ This phrase indicates that the Ka'ba is not merely a sacred place for a specific group or region, but a spiritual center intended to guide all people. It reflects the Qur'ān's view that the Ka'ba has always played a central role in God's guidance for humanity.

Thus, the Qur'ān describes those who take the Ka'ba as their qiblah as rightly

guided:

The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah which they used to face?" Say, "To Allāh belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path (al-Baqarah 2:142).

Additionally, in the following verse, Allāh says:

And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided (al-Baqarah 2:143).

8. *The Ka'ba as a Precondition for the Completion of Divine Blessing*

Also, Allāh has made the acceptance of the Ka'ba as the qiblah (direction of prayer) a prerequisite for the completion of His favor upon the believers. In commanding the Prophet and his followers to face al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in prayer, the verse states:

And from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong; so fear them not but fear Me. And [it is] so I may complete My favor upon you and that you may be guided (al-Baqarah 2:150).

9. *The Ka'ba as a Blessed Place*

Verse 3:96 also describes the Ka'ba as *mubārak*—"blessed." In Qur'ānic usage, *baraka* (blessing) implies divine grace. The Ka'ba's status as a blessed place confirms its sacredness.³

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10. *The Sanctification of Mecca by Allāh Himself*

The Qur'ān affirms that the city of Mecca has been made sacred by Allāh Himself:

Say, O Muḥammad, "I have only been commanded to worship the Lord of this city, who made it sacred and to whom [belongs] all things. And I am commanded to be of the Muslims [i.e., those who submit to Allāh] (An-Naml 27:91).

As mentioned earlier, it is clear that God's sanctification of the city of Mecca also implies the sanctification of the Ka'ba itself.

11. *Divine Oath by the Ka'ba*

Allāh swears by the Bayt (Ka'ba): "And [by] the frequented House" (al-Tūr 52:4); or by Mecca, where the Ka'ba is located: "I swear by this land" (al-Balad 90:1).

These oaths indicate the exceptional status of the Ka'ba in Allāh's sight, affirming its sacredness.

12. *Desecration of the Ka'ba as an Act of Disbelief*

The Qur'ān equates the desecration of the Ka'ba with disbelief and warns of divine

punishment for such actions:

And their prayer at the House [i.e., the Ka'ba] was not except whistling and handclapping. So taste the punishment for what you disbelieved [i.e., practiced of deviations] (al-Anfāl 8: 35).

13. *Preventing Access to the Masjid al-Ḥarām as an Act of Disbelief and a Cause for Divine Punishment*

The Qur'ān explicitly condemns those who obstruct Muslims from visiting the Masjid al-Ḥarām, equating such actions with disbelief (kufr) and warning of severe divine punishment. In Sūrat al-Ḥajj, God declares:

Indeed, those who have disbelieved and avert [people] from the way of Allāh and [from] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, which We made for the people - equal are the resident therein and one from outside - and [also] whoever intends [a deed] therein of deviation [in religion] by wrongdoing - We will make him taste of a painful punishment (al-Ḥajj 22:25).

Or Allāh says:

But why should Allāh not punish them while they obstruct [people] from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and they were not [fit to be] its guardians?... (al-Anfāl 8:34).⁴

14. *The Religious Obligation of Ritual Ḥajj*

Performing ḥajj is obligatory for all those who are physically and financially able. Denying this obligation is considered an act of disbelief. The Qur'ān states:

And [due] to Allāh from the people is a pilgrimage to the House - for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves [i.e., refuses] - then indeed, Allāh is free from need of the worlds (Āl 'Imrān 3:97).

Accordingly, God commanded the Prophet Abraham to make a public invitation to perform Ḥajj—the pilgrimage to the Sacred Ka'ba:

And proclaim to the people the ḥajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass (al-Ḥajj 22:27).

15. *The Foundations of the Bayt al-Ḥarām Were Raised by a Sacred Figure*

The sacredness of the Ka'ba is further emphasized by the fact that its foundations were raised by the Prophet Abraham—a holy and divinely selected figure in Islamic tradition—along with his son Ishmael:

And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing (al-Baqarah 2:127).

16. *The Prophet Abraham and His Family Resided Near the Bayt al-Ḥarām*

The sacred connection of the Prophet Abraham with the Ka'ba is further demonstrated by his settling some of his descendants in the vicinity of the sacred House. This is reflected in his prayer:

Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley by Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer (Ibrāhīm 14:37).

17. *The Qur'ān's mention of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām as the place of the Hudaibiyah Treaty between Muslims and disbelievers highlights its special significance*

How can there be for the disbelievers a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him] (At-Tawbah 9:7).⁴

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I began by discussing the names mentioned in the Qur'ān that directly or indirectly refer to the Ka'ba, including *al-Ka'ba*, *al-Bayt al-Ḥarām*, *al-Bayt al-'Atīq*, *al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr*, *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*, *qiblah*, *Umm al-Qurā*, and other names. Then, I attempted to explain how each one reflects the aspects of the Ka'ba's sacredness. In the next step, from the Qur'ānic verses, I drew some key characteristics that establish the Ka'ba's sacred status, such as Allāh's declaration as "the Lord of the House" (*Rabb al-Bayt*), His oath by Mecca, the divine command to maintain the purity of the *Bayt al-Ḥarām*, introducing the Ka'ba as the first place of worship, its role as a source of guidance for humankind, its significance as a place of *tawḥīd* (monotheism), the characterization of *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* as the way of God, the religious obligation of the ḥajj pilgrimage, the acceptance of the Ka'ba as a necessary condition for the completion of God's blessings, and so on. Given these sacred attributes, one can conclude that the Ka'ba is not merely sacred, but it is the most sacred place from the Qur'ān, because the Qur'ān has sanctified no other place as much as the Ka'ba—where refusing to accept it as the *Qiblah* amounts to disbelief in Allāh and leads to severe divine punishment.

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Notes

¹ Mecca, also known as *Makkah*, is located in western Saudi Arabia. It is the birthplace of the Prophet Muḥammad and the place where he received the revelations of the Qur'ān. Mecca is considered a central site of pilgrimage for Muslims, particularly during the Ḥajj (see Bagot & Sulaiman 2025; Makkah 2025).

² See Al-Baqarah 2:125; Al-Ḥajj 22:26.

³ Āl 'Imrān 3:96.

⁴ Al-Baqarah 2:127. Commenting on this verse, al-Ṭabarī (1987, 2: 69) reports that "after Ishmael and

Isaac were born, God commanded Abraham to build a House for Him in which He would be worshipped and His name mentioned.”

⁵ For more on this idea, see Qara'ati (2004, 1: 202), Makarem Shirazi et al. (2007, 1: 123).

⁶ Al-Mā'idah 5:95, 97.

⁷ Regarding the Ka'ba, he says: “According to Islamic tradition, the highest place on earth is the Kaaba, because the Pole Star bears witness that it faces the center of Heaven” (1987, 38).

⁸ See al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (1992, 150-1).

⁹ Al-Mā'idah 5:2, 97; Ibrāhīm 14:37.

¹ See al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (1992, 229).

¹ mushrikin

¹ The phrase “this year” refers to the ninth year after the Ḥijra, the year in which 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib took Sūrat al-Barā'a (Sūrat al-Tawba) to Mecca and publicly proclaimed its message to the disbelievers. He announced that they would no longer be permitted to perform ṭawāf while naked and that, after this year, no disbelievers would be allowed to perform the pilgrimage or visit the Masjid al-Ḥarām (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1995, 9: 303). For more on this verse, see Najafi (1996).

¹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1995, 2: 90), likewise interprets the verse³ as indicating the sacredness of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām: “In this statement, Muslims are prohibited from fighting within the Masjid al-Ḥarām in order to preserve its sanctity.”

¹ Also, regarding this characteristic of a place's sacredness, Helmy says, “A sacred space is any space that is set apart from the usual context of life” (2021, 29).

¹ For more on Ṭabāṭabā'ī's interpretation of this verse, see (1995, 6: 205-6).

¹ See Al-Ḥajj 22:29, 33.

¹ See also, Qara'ati (2004, 6: 38), Hassanzadeh (2018, 84).

¹ For more on this idea, see also Qara'ati (2004, 6: 38).

¹ “And [by] the frequented House.” (Al-Ṭūr 52:4)

² See Saheeh International (2004), Pickthall (1930), and *Islamic Encyclopedia*.

² mufasssīrīn

² In this regard, al-Ṭabrisī (1988, 9: 248) states: “It has been said that al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr is the Ka'ba, the Sacred House, which is made ‘prosperous’ through pilgrimage (ḥajj) and ‘umra.” However, according to some traditions, al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr refers to a house in the heavens, corresponding to the Ka'ba, which serves as a place visited by the angels (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1995, 19: 6).

² Some Qur'ānic commentaries mention that, in addition to the human pilgrims, angels also worship there continuously. (See Marefat 2014; Bayt al-Ma'mūr 2025; Qara'ati 2004, 9: 276).

² See Al-Baqarah 2:144, 149, 150, 191, 196, 217; Al-Mā'idah 5:2; Al-Anfāl 8: 34; At-Tawbah 9:7, 19, 28; Al-Isrā 17:1; Al-Ḥajj 22:25; Al-Fat'h 48:25, 27.

² Al-Baqarah 2:142, 143, 144, 145.

² The term *qiblah* (قِبْلَة) is derived from the Arabic trilateral root ق-ب-ل (*q-b-l*), which conveys the meanings of facing, direction, and orientation. The sacred House is designated as the *qiblah* because Muslims turn toward it during acts of worship, particularly ritual prayer (Qiblah 2020).

² For several months following the Prophet Muḥammad's Ḥijra (migration), Al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem served as the Qiblah for Muslims (Qiblah 2020). Later, through divine revelation, the Ka'ba was designated as the Qiblah (See Al-Baqarah 2:142, 144).

² For more on this religious-phenomenological perspective, see Eliade (1987, 36-39), See also, O'Meara

(2021, 19-27).

² See also, Al-Baqarah 2:144, 149. 9

³ See also, Al-An'ām 6:92; Al-Shūrā 42:7. 0

³ see Umm al-Qurā (2021). 1

³ Sūrat At-Tīn 95:3. See also, Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1995, 20: 538-9, 544), Qara'ati (2004, 10: 532), Jannati (1992).

³ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (1992, 142). 3

³ rabba hādhā al-bayt 4

³ ṭahhirā baytiya 5

³ Qara'ati (2004, 6: 33). 6

³ For more on this argument, see Hassanzadeh (2018). 7

³ See also, “And from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong; so fear them not but fear Me. And [it is] so I may complete My favor upon you and that you may **be guided**”. (Al-Baqarah 2:150).

³ See also Hassanzadeh (2018). 9

⁴ Also, see “They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice... If they had been apart [from them], We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment” (Al-Fat'h 48:25). And see Al-Baqarah 2:217.

⁴ Qara'ati (2004, 3: 382). 1