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Nasrollah Pourjavady

## Abū Qubays

**Abū Qubays** is the sacred mountain *(jabal)*, 460 metres high, overlooking the Great Mosque at Mecca, situated a few hundred metres to the east of the Mosque (Illustration 1). Its foothill is al-Ṣafā. The Mosque itself (including the Kaʿba) lies in the valley between Abū Qubays and the mountain Quʿayqiʿān, to the northwest of the Mosque. Abū Qubays is one of two mountains called al-Akhshabān ('the two rough ones'), the other one being variously named as Quʿayqiʿān, or al-Jabal al-Aḥmar, which overlooks Quʿayqiʿān on its northern side, or Jabal al-Khuṭṭ.

The origin of the mountain's name is explained in various ways. Some say that a man from the tribe of Iyād or Madhḥij named Abū Qubays was the first to embark upon building a domed shrine *(qubba)* on it, and hence the name. Another tradition links the name to a man of the Jurhum tribe who found refuge from his foes there. Another explanation plays on the root *q-b-s*, 'to borrow,' with the following story. It is related that Adam acquired *(iqtabasa)* fire from the mountain after two pieces of fire-

Illustration 1.

producing wood had fallen from heaven and rubbed against each other and generated fire on the mountain. Another explanation is found in a tradition about the Black Stone, located in the eastern corner of the Kaʿba facing this mountain. It relates that the name Abū Qubays was given to the mountain because the Black Stone had been extracted *(uqtubisa)* from it.

Other traditions elaborate on the relationship between the stone and the mountain. One of them relates that originally the Black Stone was one of two dazzling stones that seemed as if they had descended from the sky, and the Quraysh discovered them on Abū Qubays. One was lost and the other was moved to the Kaʿba when it was built (al-Fākihī, 1:86). Another tradition with the same gist relates that the mountain was known in pre-Islamic times as al-Amīn ('Trustworthy'), because the Black Stone had been put there for safekeeping during the Deluge and remained there until Abraham built the Kaʿba.

Abū Qubays is considered to be the first mountain created. A tradition says that Adam built the foundations of the Kaʿba of rocks taken from this mountain as well as from five others (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, (Būlāq 1310/1892), 6:290, on al-Bukhārī, 60:10). Adam and Eve as well as their son Seth are said to have been buried on Abū Qubays.

In the commentaries on Q 22:27 Abraham is said to have proclaimed the duty of pilgrimage to Mecca while standing on this mountain, and a mosque bearing Abraham's name was built there (al-Fākihī, 4:16).

Prayers uttered while standing there are answered, especially prayers for rain. Some say that the mountain surpasses all other mountains because it is the closest to the Kaʿba. Thanks to its strategic position, the Umayyad army of al-Ḥajjāj placed on it a ballista, as they also did on al-Jabal al-Aḥmar, to bombard the Kaʿba during the revolt of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr (al-Azraqī, 139).

Abū Qubays is said to have been the site of the wondrous splitting of the moon as related in the commentaries on Q 54:1. It also features in the dream of ʿĀtika bt. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib that foretold the defeat of Quraysh in Badr. She saw a rock being thrown from the mountain and breaking into pieces hitting every house in Mecca (al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, ed. Marsden Jones (Oxford 1966), 1:29).

The sources mention a fortress on Abū Qubays, and it is reported that in ʿAbbāsid times four minarets were erected on the fortress and elsewhere on the mountain (al-Fākihī, 3:87). The Sanūsī order built a *zāwiya* there, in about 1252–3/1837 (Knut S. Vikør, *Sufi and scholar on the desert edge. Muhammad b. ʿAli al-Sanusi and his brotherhood* (London 1995), index).

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Uri Rubin

## Abū Riyāsh

**Abū Riyāsh**, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Shaybānī al-Qaysī (d. 339/950–1), was a *rāwī* (transmitter of poetry), philologist, and poet. Born in al-Yamāma, he settled