# THE HOLY LAND ERUSALEM

## **ERKAN AYDIN**





THE HOLY LAND

# **JERUSALEM**

**ERKAN AYDIN** 





#### PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY THE PRESIDENCY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Edition No: 1853 Public Books: 469

Chief Editor: Assoc. Prof. Fatih KURT Editorial Coordinator: Yunus YÜKSEL

Editor: Haldun ŞEKER

The Holy Land Jerusalem: Erkan AYDIN Executive Editor: Ömer Faruk KASADAR

Proofreading: Ali Osman DEMİR

Layout & Cover: ERİHA
Photos: Mesut GENGEÇ
Print Check: Uğur ALTUNTOP

Printed by: Başak Mat. Tan. Hiz. İth. İhr. Tic. Ltd. Şti.

+90 312 397 16 17

1st Edition, Ankara 2020

ISBN: 978-625-7137-87-4 2020-06-Y-0003-1853 Certificate No: 12930

High Board of Religious Affairs Decision No: 20.08.2020/79

#### © Presidency of Religious Affairs

#### Contact

Dini Yayınlar Genel Müdürlüğü Yabancı Dil ve Lehçelerde Yayınlar Daire Başkanlığı General Directorate of Religious Publications Department of Publications in Foreign Languages and Dialects

Üniversiteler Mah. Dumlupınar Bulvarı No:147/A 06800 Çankaya/ANKARA

Tel: +90 312 295 72 81 Fax: +90 312 284 72 88

e-mail: yabancidiller@diyanet.gov.tr

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## **PREFACE**

Jerusalem: It is the holy land which is the dwelling place of *Miraj* (ascension to heavens), and the land of the prophets, which is cherishing Masjid al-Aqsa (*al-Aqsa Mosque*), our first qibla, second mosque and third *haram* (the third holiest city) in its bosom. So many passed through this blessed land: Adam, Abraham, David, Solomon, Zechariah, John the Baptist (Yahya), Mary, Jesus, Muhammad Mustafa (saw), Omar, Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, Selim I, and many others...

Jerusalem is the apple of the world's eye, the key to peace, and the land attributed holiness by the divine revelation with the statement, " $b\hat{a}rakn\hat{a}$  havleh $\hat{u}$  / whose surroundings we have blessed", and where Solomon submitted his supplication to Allah, "Oh Lord! Whoever comes to al-Aqsa Mosque to perform prayer and does so, let them be as pure as the day they were born, if they have an illness let them be healed, and if they are in affliction let them find the means".

In his book "Alice in Wonderland", Lewis Carrol tells a story; "Alice has been running away from a hound in the forest with a rabbit. While Alice and the rabbit are running, the path divides into two. Alice stops and asks the rabbit which path to take. The rabbit says, "That is your decision." Alice doesn't know which way to go. The rabbit pauses and says, "If you don't know where you want to go then it doesn't matter which path you take." Adding one sentence more to the story, I say, "For those who do not know where they have come from and where they are going, it does not matter where they are today, either." One gains meaning with his past, future and goals.

Although I am an academic and an award-winning hafiz in Turkey, a graduate of Istanbul University, the Faculty of Theology, specialized in the fields of Hadith and Islamic History, I was as if in a deep sleep like everyone else until my dear senior friend, Dr. Nevzat Demir, like the way Abraham had taken Ishmael to Mecca for the reconstruction of the Ka'bah, held my hand and took me to Jerusalem in 2001, and helped me think in a more analytical way with his valuable opinions... The meaning of strategy, the fact that history is not merely a story but a means of building the future, that those who know about their history of the past hundred years can build their future for the next fifty years, that it will be of no use to highlight a certain period in history, that it is essential to deal with the history as a whole from present to the past, that we cannot make sense of the present without knowing about the Independence War, that language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of our world of meaning and that we are capable of thinking to the extent of our words are all among the things I have learnt from his remarkable conversations.

Eleven years ago, we went to al-Khalil (Hebron), the city of Abraham. When we asked, "Who are we?" to the children of al-Khalil they said, "You are Jews." What a confusion, how sad... Why have they said that today, to the grandchildren of the Ottomans who served this land for 400 years? When we asked the elderly about this, they said, "The children do not see anyone else other than Jews, maybe that's why they told you so." When we heard this, we were devastated. When we came back to the land that we had to leave in 1917, should we have been welcomed like this! And I woke up that day, I felt as if some other windows opened up in my heart towards life... And I recalled the words of Falih Rıfkı Atay, describing the last days of the Ottomans in Jerusalem, and my heart ached even more, "We are walking along the streets like tourists. You know, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is divided among Christian nations; each part of the interior and each

service of the church belongs to a different community. The only thing these communities could not share among themselves is the key. The key is held by a Muslim family. What we have been doing in all these continents is like the duty of this family. Trade, culture, farms, industry, buildings, all belongs to Arabs or other states. Only the gendarmerie belongs to us, in fact not even the gendarmerie, but the attire of the gendarmerie. The Ottoman Empire is an unrequited caretaker of the fields and streets around here..."

My first journey to Jerusalem which I started with these feelings, turned into love over the years. A Miraj night... There were five thousand people in al-Aqsa including the groups from Turkey. Everyone was immersed in their own prayer. As mosques are the venues that bring us together, I thought we could make a common program. I approached the *imam* (the person who leads prayers in a mosque) after the night prayer and asked for permission to lead Salat al-Tasbeeh (Prayer of Forgiveness). They gave us the microphone, and saying that we would perform Salat al-Tasbeeh I invited those who are willing to join us. We all lined up in rows at al-Aqsa Mosque, for the first time a Turk led the prayer in front of the mihrab (prayer niche) of al-Aqsa Mosque 97 years after the Ottomans. A week later, the manager of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, who was in charge of al-Aqsa Mosque, requested to meet me. We accepted the invitation. The manager said, "This is the first time the Salat al-Tasbeeh has been performed since the Ottomans left, every Palestinian hearing your voice rushed to al-Aqsa Mosque, it was an extraordinary night. There will be thousands of Muslims here on the Night of al-Qadr; will you lead Salat al-Tasbeeh then too?" I felt incredibly happy! We are incapable beings; dignity and honor are only from Allah. From that year onwards, my Lord granted me the blessing of leading the prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque every Miraj night with the tasbeeh voices rising to the firmament.

Over the years, I have come to realize that we talk a lot about Jerusalem, but there are not enough sources dealing with Jerusalem extensively. The lack of reliable sources have paved the way for the spread of unsubstantial knowledge related to this land. Al-Hakim Nishapuri states in his work, "Ma'rifat Anwa' 'ilm Al-hadith', one of the first resources of Methodology of Hadith, "The rivers bring with them trash, too, the sage is he who sorts them out while watering people." Superstitions weaken the power of the truth. Therefore, in this study, we tried to sort out the superstitions and build a true understanding of Jerusalem as much as we could.

It is narrated that when Joseph, the fairest of all, is put up for sale in the slave market, an old and ugly woman gives an offer for Joseph. They ask her, "We understand everyone else but why do you give an offer for Joseph when you are so old and ghastly, don't you ever look at yourself in the mirror?" She says, "I too know that it is not my place to aspire to Joseph, but I just wanted my name to be mentioned, too, among those who have aspired to Joseph." As in the example of the woman in this narration, it is beyond our depth to try to tell about Jerusalem, but we just tried to express our feelings wishing that at least our names would be mentioned among the lovers of Jerusalem. We make efforts as much as we can but success comes only from Allah. Allah is far above any kind of defect or imperfection. The only book with no deficiencies or contradictions in itself is the Qur'an. If we have contributed to the true understanding of Jerusalem even in the least bit, happy are we. If we have had any slips of tongue, we ask for forgiveness.

Dr. Erkan AYDIN Kudüs, 2019







Live through the Mount Sinai So you know where Jerusalem lies I bear Ierusalem like a wristwatch. Unless in alignment with Jerusalem You will be wasting your time And get frozen And lose your eyesight.

The author, Nuri PAKDİL, tells about his love for Jerusalem in the lines, "Jerusalem is the mother. The boast of the heavens is Jerusalem. We first prayed toward Jerusalem. We were given the *Miraj* gift, *salaah* (daily prayers) there. That day, our Prophet (saw) reached the secrets there, which even Gabriel did not have access. Mother love comes before everything else. It shapes each experience. One finds life with her scent and presence. Jerusalem is the mother. She is the one that comes first."

The blessed wife of our master, the Messenger of Allah (saw), mother of the believers, Maymunah one day asks him, "Can you tell us about Jerusalem and the merit of Jerusalem?" Our master (saw) says, "Go and make sure that you perform prayer there." (At that time, Jerusalem was under the reign of the Roman Empire.) Maymunah, mother of the believers, asks again, "What shall we do if we can't find a way to perform prayer when we go to Jerusalem?"

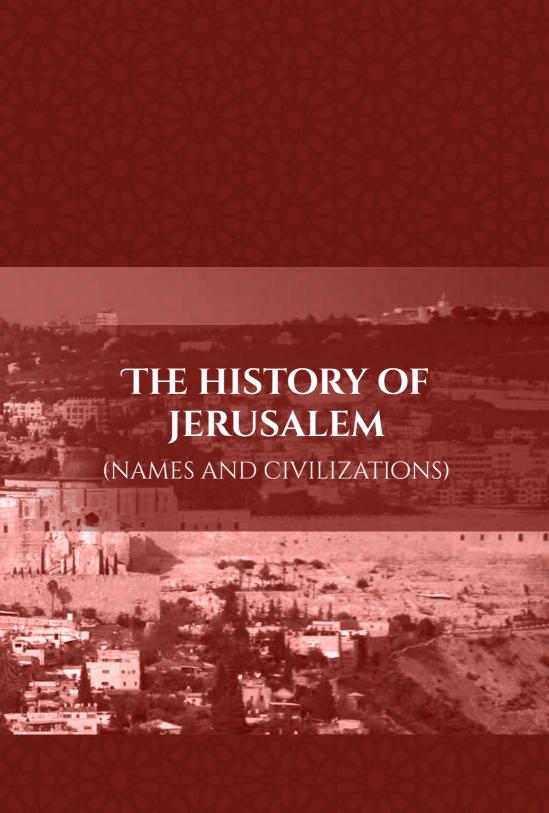
Our Master (saw) says, "At least, send some oil to be burnt for its candles." Therefore, we would do anything for Jerusalem, which is the symbol of the struggle of the *Ummah* (the Islamic community).

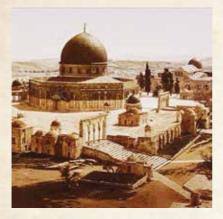
Today al-Aqsa Mosque illuminated with electricity. The point is not that its candles need any oil but the mosque needs people and communities. If only the stones could speak and tell about what our ancestors did there for 400 years... and then about its sadness today... If the stones could speak, perhaps they would cry out, "Don't leave us crestfallen." Al-Aqsa Mosque is waiting for us to be the oil for its candles... It is waiting for those of you who lighten their hearts with the candle of faith.

1 Ebu Davud, Salât, 14









Jerusalem, as old as human history, is a holy city. When Jerusalem is mentioned, religions, civilizations and cultures come to mind. In this regard, Jerusalem is the common legacy of humanity. Owing to the fact that it has hosted many civilizations throughout its historical events, the history of Jerusalem is a history of civilizations. Each of the civilizations that it hosted gave different names to Jerusalem.

It is al-Quds to Muslims, Yerushalayim to Jews, and Jerusalem to Christians. Just as it has many



An overview of al-Aqsa Mosque Compound/the Temple Mount

names, Jerusalem does not have a single history. Members of each religion tell about Jerusalem from their own perspectives.

# JERUSALEM IN THE LANGUAGE OF ITS INHABITANTS

## Salem/ Yerushalayim / Jerusalem

Jerusalem, established by the Canaanites, and at first called "Salem", took this name from Salem¹ that was considered one of the greatest gods of ancient times. In the Amarna letters belonging to the 14th century, the name of the city is spelled Ūršalīm, and Yərûsəlem in Aramaic texts of the Old Testament. The Greek name Hierosolyma (Hieros = holy) was adopted by Latin as Jerusalem.²

- 1 Saim Yılmaz, "İslam Tarihinde Kudüs", Yedi İklim, Issue 75/76, p. 35
- TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Ömer Faruk Harman, "Kudüs Md" Vol. 26, s. 323



Al-Qibli Mosque

## Moriah/Jebus/ Ir Ha-Kodesh<sup>3</sup>

The name of the city was also known as "Moriah"4 because the name of the place where Abraham wanted to sacrifice his son Isaac in Christian and Jewish traditions and of the hill on which Solomon built the temple was thought to be Mount Moriah. It was also known as Jebus before David captured Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> In the Old Testament, the name Jebus is mentioned while describing the area portioned to the sons of Judah, "Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem)."6 Iebus is the name of one of the tribes of Canaan that came from the Arabian Peninsula and settled in Palestine in the 3000s BCE. This name is a derivation of Yerushalem.7 So, the city took its name from them. After all, in the Old Testament it is stated that Jebus is Yerushalem, and Yerushalem is the city of Jebusites.8



Moreover, while this place is called the land of justice, the city of believers, the city of peace, the city of righteousness and the city of Allah, also the Aramaic name "Ir Ha-Kodesh" was used, which means holy city.

### Iliya

When the Roman **Emperor** Hadrian (Hadrianus, 135 CE) rebuilt Jerusalem as a pagan city, he called the city "Colonia Aelia Capitolina". It was called "Colonia" as it was a Roman colony and, "Aelia" as it was built in the honor of Hadrian referring to his first name "Aelius", and "Capitolina" as it was dedicated to Jupiter Capitolin. "Iliya" is the Arabic pronunciation of the name, Aelia. This name was used until Muslims conquered the city,9 and it was recorded as Iliya even in Omar's treaty of peace as follows, "In the name of Allah, the most merciful,

<sup>3</sup> Torah, 1-2-3-4-5. Kitaplar, Translation: Moşe Farsi, Gözlem Yayıncılık, 2010

<sup>4</sup> Moriah, II. Tarihler 3/1

<sup>5</sup> Judges,19:10, Saim Yılmaz, a.g.m., Yedi İklim, Issue 75/76, p. 35

<sup>6</sup> Joshua, 15:8; I.Chronicles, 11:4.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Ahmet Susa, Tarihte Araplar ve Yahudiler İki İbrahim, İki Musa, İki Tevrat, Translation: D.Ahsen BATUR, Selenge Yay.2005, pp. 44, 45

<sup>8</sup> Judges, 19:10

D. S. Margoliouth, Caira Jerusalem Damascus, p. 191; Jerusalem (Historical Document), p. 19





the most compassionate, this treaty is an assurance given to the people of Iliya by Omar, Commander of the believers and a servant of Allah." In Palastenian region, the coins were minted with the word 'Iliya' on them during the period of Muawiyah.<sup>10</sup>

## **Bayt al-Maqdis**

The name of Jerusalem is also mentioned as "Iliyâ medinat Bayt al-Maqdis" in Islamic sources. Bayt al Maqdis, which was originally "Beth makdesha" in Aramaic and "Beit HaMikdash" in Hebrew, first used to stand for the sanctuary but it came to be used for the whole city over time, and the site of the sancturary was called "al-haram" (sacred). 12 The name Bayt al-Maqdis was used by Imru'al-Qais, one of the famous pre-Islamic poets, and the same name was often preferred also by our

<sup>10</sup> Khalid el-Avaisi, "İsimler ve Sınırlar", Derin Tarih, Jerusalem Special Edition, p. 13

<sup>11</sup> Shelomo Dov Giotein, "Al-Kuds", EI, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1978, C. V., p. 322; Ebu Cafer Muhammed b. Cerir et-Taberi, Milletler ve Hükümdarlar Tarihi, C. I, (Trans. Zakir K. Ugan-A. Temir), Maarif Basimevi, Ankara -1954, p. 236.

<sup>12</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 26; p. 324

Prophet (saw) and his companions (sahabah). Tamim bin Aws ad-Dari, of the companions, was appointed as the governor of Bayt al Maqdis by Omar. Additionally, the waqf register ascribed to Omar, includes the statement, "The Village of Nuba was devoted to the (Holy) rock of Bayt al-Maqdis and to the rock of al-Aqsa Mosque by Omar, the commander of the believers" which was inscribed on a rock in the Village of Nuba situated on the northwest of the city of Khalil.

Jerusalem, the City Named After the Sanctuary

The word Quds comes from the same root as the name Bayt al-Maqdis. This name was not used by our Prophet (saw) and his

13 Khalid el-Avaisi, "İsimler ve Sınırlar" Derin Tarih, Jerusalem Special Edition, p. 11-17 companions but it came to be used during the period of Abbasids. Coins bearing the name Jerusalem were minted during the period of Khalife Memun (813-833). On the face of these coins it writes, "In the name of Allah, this coin was made in 217 AH in Jerusalem." In the period of Salah ad-Din Ayyub the adjective "sharif" (honorable) was added to the name of Quds and it became "Al-Quds Ash-Sharif".<sup>14</sup>

"Al-Quds" is a derivative of the word "Kudsha" in Aramaic, and "Karra Kudshaé" means "The City of the Holy Site". 15 This name refers to the sanctuary not to the city. Karai sages called the city of Jerusalem

<sup>15</sup> Şemseddin Sami, Kamusu'l Alam, C.V, p.3606; Goitein, "Al-Kuds", p. 323



<sup>14</sup> Khalid el-Avaisi, a.g.m, Derin Tarih, Jerusalem Special Edition, p. 16

David, who was a prophet of Allah, ruled the Israelites between the years 1010-970 BCE. While David is both a prophet and a king according to Islam, he is only a king to Jewish people.

Bayt al-Maqdis, and the site where the sanctuary is located, Al-Quds. 16

The word "Al-Quds" which is widely used by Muslims means abundant and blessed. According to Ibn Manzur, the word "Al-Quds" means *tehhare* (purity) and freedom from errors and imperfections. According to the Hijazites, it means the same as "es-settel", "el-kadese" which is a bowl used for cleaning. For this reason, "Bayt al-Muqaddas" was called a clean house as it was cleansed from sins. 17 Al-Quddus is also among the names and attributions of Allah.

In some of his verses, Hifzi stated that they named Damascus as Damascus because it is on the north of the Kabaa, and they named Yemen as Yemen as it is on the right of the Ka'bah, and they named Bayt al Maqdis as al-Quds for it must be the

place of resurrection and gathering on the Day of Judgment.<sup>18</sup>

When we consider the names given to the city of Jerusalem since its establishment up to the present day, no matter in which language it is stated, of the communities that dominated this place, two main characteristics attract the attention: Peace and Holiness. On the other hand, the former of these names was always sacrificed to the latter. Excluding the period of Islamic rule and especially the Ottoman administration, **Jerusalem** exposed to great destructions with tears, persecution and substantial invasions throughout the history. This situation of the city continues in our century, too.19

<sup>16</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, "Kudüs Müslüman Toprağıdır." Diyanet Aylık Dergi, January 2018, p. 325, p. 24

<sup>17</sup> Cemaleddin İbn Manzur, Lisanu'l-Arab, C. III, Beyrut, 1410/1990, pp. 168, 169

<sup>18</sup> Hıfzı, Tarih u Fezail-i Kuds-i Şerif, İstanbul Üniv. Kütüphanesi, Nr: 86419, p. 17

<sup>19</sup> Muammer GÜL, "Kudüs ve Tarih İçinde Aldığı İsimler", Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 2001, Vol. 11 Issue:2 p. 305-312

21

## JERUSALEM

## JERUSALEM FROM THE WORDS OF REVELATION

## "Al-Aqsa Mosque"

The name, Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Qur'an. However, this city is mentioned under different names in Islamic sources. The explicators pointed out that either Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem or generally the land of Palestine, which also includes the aforementioned city, is meant with the phrases such as "al-Masjid al-Aqsâ" "mubevvee sıdk" and "al-ardu'l-mukaddese" in the Qur'an. 23

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF JERUSALEM

### Land of Canaan (BCE 3000)

The history of Jerusalem, which was exposed to two great destructions, invaded 23 times and attacked 42 times throughout the history, dates back to 3000s BCE.

The name "Canaan" is cited as "Knakhni" in the Umran scripts that belong to the 15th century BCE. A Babylonian city called Kannan is mentioned in the old inscriptions. The inhabitants of this city were called "Kanunai" (Canaanites), which is the same as the name Canaan in Palestine. The word Canaan is mentioned 83 times in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament referring to Canaan b. Ham. b. Noah. 24

According to Islamic historians, the first founders of Jerusalem were the Amalekites. Jerusalem is mentioned as a Canaanite City State<sup>25</sup> in the Egyptian texts belonging to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Jerusalem is a royal city built by the Canaanites in the early Bronze Age. Its most renowned king is known to be "Kadum Salem".<sup>26</sup>

## City of David (1010-970 BCE)

Israelites who were led out of Egypt by Moses lived in exile in the desert for 40 years; they could not enter the holy land during the time of Moses. They entered the city with Joshua around 1200 BCE. As stated in the

<sup>20</sup> Al-Isra, 17:1

<sup>21</sup> Yunus, 10:93

<sup>22</sup> Al-Ma'idah, 5:21

<sup>23</sup> Fahrettin er-Razi, Mefatihu'l Gayb, XI, p. 196-197

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Ahmat Susa, ibid, p. 41, 42

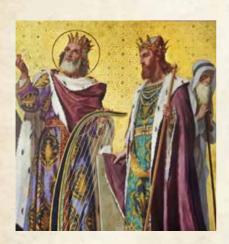
<sup>25</sup> H. J. Franken, "Jerusalem in the Bronze Age 3000-1000 BC, p. 17-20

<sup>26</sup> Von Svenhevin, Jerusalem, Leipzig, 1918, p. 68; Kudüs (Historical Document), p. 18.



David, killing Goliath

Qur'an, the Israelites under the rule of a commander called Saul (Talut) fought against Goliath (Jalut) and his army, who ruled the land of Palestine at the time.



Murals of King David and King Solomon in the Chisa di San Dalmazzo Cathedral according to Jewish belief <sup>27</sup>

An adolescent named David, who took part in this battle in his early youth, killed the chief commander of the enemy army, Goliath, with a

27 Derin Tarih, Kudüs Özel Sayısı, p. 20

slingshot. David,<sup>28</sup> who was a prophet of Allah, ruled the Israelites between the years 1010-970 BCE. While David is both a prophet and a king according to Islam, he is only a king to Jewish people.

David gathered the twelve Jewish tribes in Jerusalem and established the first united Jewish Kingdom and made Jerusalem the capital city of this kingdom.<sup>29</sup> He reconstructed the fortress called Zion by Jebusites, built a house for himself, and to turn the place into a religious center he had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem and he put it in a tent near his palace.<sup>30</sup>

# Jerusalem, City of the Sanctuary (970-931 BCE)

After David, his son Solomon built a magnificient sanctuary (al-Aqsa Mosque) in Jerusalem in seven years (970-931 BCE) and built a palace for himself (957). Taking the Ark of the Covenant from its former place, he put it in its special place in the sanctuary, and surrounded Jerusalem with city walls.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Al-Bagarah, 2:25

<sup>29</sup> Roger Garaudy, İlahi Mesajlar Toprağı Filistin, Translation: Cemal AYDIN, Timaş Yayınları, 5th Edition, p. 80

<sup>30</sup> II. Samuel, 7/12-13

<sup>31</sup> I. Kings, 3/1; 5-7; 8/1-6; 9/15



# Division of the Kingdom (931 BCE)

Upon Solomon's demise in 931 BCE the kingdom was divided in half, the south was named "Judah" and the north "Israel".<sup>32</sup> Jerusalem became the center of the Kingdom of Judah in the south. Shishak, king of Egypt declared war on Jerusalem during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and took away the treasures of the sanctuary and the king's house.<sup>33</sup>

## 1st Destruction – Babylonian Captivity and the Destruction of the Sanctuary (586 BCE)

During the time of King Jehoyakim, Nebuchadnezzar II (Bakhat Nasar), King of Babylon,



invaded the kingdom and took the king under his command, and he took away the valuable goods of the sanctuary along with many people.

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem for the second time upon the rebellion of the king three years later and took the new king Jehoyakim to Babylon along with the rest of assets of the sanctuary and he made Jeconiah king instead of him.34 Ten years later, during the reign of Jeconiah, Nebuchadnezzar marched to Jerusalem for the third time and besieged the city, upon this, a terrible famine broke out and the city finally fell. The sanctuary, the palace and Jerusalem in general were torched, the walls were demolished and some of the people were exiled.35 Upon this occasion, as referred also in the Qur'an (Al-Isra 17:4-5), some lewish communities were established in various

<sup>32</sup> Roger Garaudy, ibid. p. 91-92

<sup>33</sup> I. Kings, 14/25-27

<sup>34</sup> II. Kings, 24:1-16; II. Chronicles, 36:6-7

<sup>35</sup> II. Kings, 25





cities in Hejaz. After this, Jerusalem remained in ruins for fifty years.<sup>36</sup>

## Return from the Exile and the Reconstruction of the Sanctuary (537 BCE)

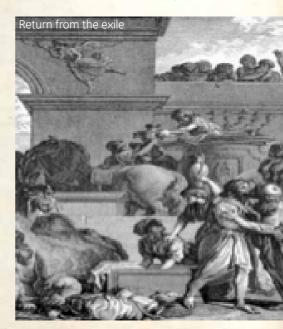
After Babylonian captivity, Jerusalem fell under the Persian rule. Some of the Israelites returned from the exile with the edict of the Persian King Cyrus in 538 BCE.

Within this period, Zerubbabel, one of the Jewish notables, laid the foundations of the sanctuary.<sup>37</sup> Ezra and Nehemiah, two helpers of the Persian King, undertook the responsibility for reorganizing life in Palestine.<sup>38</sup> Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls around 444. Ezra reestablished the authority of Moses Sheria and made Jerusalem the religious center of Judaism.<sup>39</sup>



## Hellenistic Period and the Maccabean Revolt (332-63 BCE)

Alexander After the Great domineered the Syrian lands including Palestine (332 BCE), the Hellenistic period of the Jewish history began. During this period, the Jewish were oppressed by the policy of Grecization. The intention of Kingdom of Macedonia to establish Hellenism in Palestine resulted in the prohibition of Torah and the placement of a statue of Zeus, the symbol of paganism in the holy sanctuary by the Greek governors, which ended up with a Jewish rebellion known as "Maccabean revolt". The Greek army managed to



<sup>36</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Vol.26, p. 325

<sup>37</sup> Ezra, 3:8

<sup>38</sup> Roger Garaudy, a.g.e, p. 105,111

<sup>39</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi Vol. 26; p. 325



capture Jerusalem by quelling the revolt led by the Maccabean family in 163 BCE, however in the face of the persistence of the Jews in their resistance they had to recognize their independence.<sup>40</sup>

## Herod the Great", the New Architect of the Sanctuary (37-4 BCE)

Following the Hellenistic period, when the Roman king Pompey annexed Jerusalem in 63 BCE, Herod the Great was appointed as the governor general to the region. Herod constructed all across Jerusalem by implementing a major urban policy and surrounded the city with walls. Restoring Bayt al-Maqdis, he started the 2nd period of the sanctuary. The first seven rows



Herod

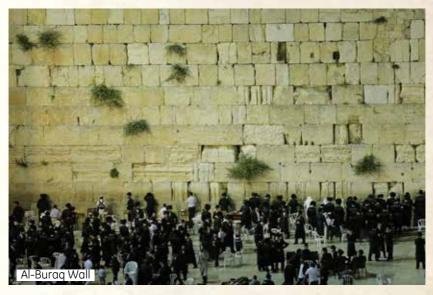
40 Sedat Kızıltoprak, "İsrail Devleti'nin Kuruluşuna Kadar Geçen Süreçte Yahudiler ve Siyonizm'in Gelişimi" Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, January 2012, Vol. 2 Issue 1, pp. 40, 41 The first seven rows of the wall known as the Wailing Wall today are the remnants of the sanctuary built in the time of Herod. Although Herod was not a religious person, he paid attention to the principals stated in the Old Testament and ordered the workers from the lineage of Kohen to work in holy divisions

of the wall known as the Wailing Wall today are the remnants of the sanctuary built in the time of Herod. Although Herod was not a religious person, he paid attention to the principals stated in the Old Testament and ordered the workers from the lineage of Kohen to work in holy divisions.

In addition to this, Herod built a new royal palace in Jerusalem. The administrators of the city resided in this palace until the Ottoman period. This palace, also known as "Tower of David", sometimes became the center of the administrations, other times, of revolts and some other times, of defence.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Prof. Dr. Nuh Arslantaş, "Pagan Roma'dan

### THE HOLY LAND **IERUSALEM**



Architectural interventions to the entire collection of buildings by Herod can still be seen today, the compound can be seen when viewed especially from the Wailing Wall. There are a number of historical additions remaining from this period around the northern and western doors of Aqsa.

> Titus and the 2nd **Destruction (70 CE)**

Roman emperor (69-79 CE), he sent his son Titus to capture Jerusalem in 70 CE. He besieged Jerusalem in the last days of Passover (Pesach), a he ordered Solomon's Temple to be demolished, and then the city was completely destroyed. Only one wall of the city was left standing so that it would be a warning to Jewish people, Jerusalem lay in ruins. Moreover, Jewish people were forbidden to step on this land. The trophy obtained

When Vespasianus became the Jewish holiday. Just after the siege, Hıristiyan Bizans'a Kudüs'ün Zulümle

imtihanı", Derin Tarih Kudüs Özel Sayısı, p. 20

after the occupation was taken to Rome. Later on, a triumphal arch, the Arch of Titus was built in Rome to represent the victory Titus gained over the Jews. The original name of this monument is "Arco di Tito" in Italian. On its reliefs, the image of "the Ark of the Covenant made for the storage of the stone tablets of ten commandments and Menorah" was embossed, which was seized during the occupation.

## Emperor Hadrian-Colonia Aelia Capitolina (135)

When the emperor Hadrian wanted to establish a pagan city in Jerusalem, the Jews revolted, after the uprising had been supressed the city was rebuilt. A temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolina, and a temple of Aphrodite on the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were built. The name of Jerusalem was changed to "Colonia Aelia Capitolina". The name Aelia was preserved for centuries long.

After the Jewish uprising, Rome increased its pressures on Jews by enforcing more strict policies. They were allowed to enter the city only once -on the ninth of Av (Tisha B'av)- to mourn somewhere near the area of sanctuary. This situation went on for more than five centuries

including the Byzantian period until the Muslims dominated the city.<sup>42</sup>

## Saint Helena on the Trail of the Holy Cross (326)

A temple dedicated Jupiter Capitolina was built on the site of the sanctuaries built by Solomon and after that by Zerubbabel and then by Herod, and following this, the temple of Aphrodite was constructed on the

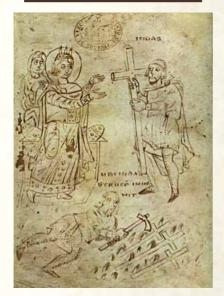


St Helen Statue – St Peter's Basilica - Vatican

site where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would be built. The Jewish people who attempted to enter the city were sentenced to death. The Emperor Constantine who officially recognized Christianity removed this prohibition. With the decision

<sup>42</sup> Prof. Dr. Nuh Arslantaş, ibid, p. 21,22

'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'



St Helen finds the True Cross – Italian script

taken in the Council of Nicaea 325, Constantine's mother Helena came to Jerusalem to look for the True Cross. In 326, she built Saint Sépulcre on the Mount of Olives, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site where Christ is thought to have been crucified, and the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem (Bayt Lahm).<sup>43</sup>

Christians did not construct the precincts of al-Aqsa Mosque due to





The coin minted with the name of Constantine's mother, Helena

the words of Christ in the Bible, "Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." However, when the Crusaders invaded Jerusalem in 1099, they turned the mosques in Haram (the al-Aqsa compound) into churches. This example alone displays the differences in belief between

<sup>43</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi Vol. 26; p. 325; Prof. Dr. Nuh Arslantaş, ibid, p. 22

<sup>44</sup> Matthew, 24:1-2



Jerusalem became the longing of our Prophet's (saw) and his companions' hearts with the occurence of Isra and Miraj and the verses of the Quran on this subject. The Messenger of Allah (saw) took the first step, and though he sent an army under the command of Usama ibn Zayd, Jerusalem was not conquered in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw)

the early and the contemporary Christians. This incident is a striking example in that it indicates that the Crusaders did not consider the Bible at all.

# Sasanians on the stage of Jerusalem (614)

The Sasanians dominated Ierusalem after the war with Byzantine in 614. The Sasanians, who took the holy cross with them, destroyed many Christian works including the Church of the Resurrection, which held the Holy Sepulchre. Approximately 10-15 years later, as stated in the verses 2-5 of Surah Ar-Rum, Byzantian emperor Heraclius recaptured Jerusalem in 629 defeating the Sasanians who were Zoroastrian. Abul Hasan an-Nadwi stated that the verses in Surah Rum were revealed in 616 and Heraclius' victory over the Sasanians was in 625.

## Omar's Conquest of Jerusalem/Peace and Justice on the Stage (638-1099)

Istanbul and Jerusalem are the two cities the conquests of which were heralded by the Messenger of Allah (saw). He set a goal for his companions by saying, "Go there and perform prayer" about al-Aqsa Mosque. Besides, al-Aqsa Mosque is the first qibla, the first of the second. It captivated his companions' hearts at that very moment. Arqam's heart was yearning to go there<sup>45</sup> so much so that he asked the Messenger of Allah (saw) for permission. It was not only Arqam, but also many others...

Jerusalem became the longing of our Prophet's (saw) and his companions' hearts with the occurence of Isra and Miraj and the verses of the Qur'an on this subject. 46 The Messenger of Allah (saw) took the first step, and though he sent an army under the command of Usama ibn Zayd, Jerusalem was

<sup>45</sup> Ahmed b. Hanbel, Müsned; El-Müstedrek (3/576 hadith no 6130)

<sup>46</sup> Al-Isra, 17:1, Ar-Rum, 30:2-5

not conquered in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Abu Bakr took over the flag. His commander, Amr ibn al-As annexed many cities to Islamic lands, Gazza and Nablus being in the first place,

from Christian Byzantium and reached the outskirts of Jerusalem. Neither could he conquer Ierusalem. Eventually, the time of Omar's caliphate, **Jerusalem** was

With the conquest of Jerusalem, the gates of the city were wide open to the members of all faiths, and all residents were given the freedom of belief. In this way, peace, serenity and safety that remained only in the name of Jerusalem, proved possible to experience.

taken from the Byzantians with great efforts of Islamic soldiers under the commandment of Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah in 638. They fulfilled the blessed aspiration of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his companions by annexing Jerusalim to Islamic lands. One of the two heralded conquests was granted to Omar, who was the embodiment of justice in the world.

With the conquest of Jerusalem, the gates of the city were wide open to the members of all faiths, and all residents were given the freedom of belief. In this way, peace, serenity and safety that remained only in the

name of Jerusalem, proved possible to experience. With the arrival of Omar, there was no interference with anyone's belief, conscience, freedom and sanctuary, so the period of justice, love and peace started,

enfolding everyone.

period of The peace and serenity continued during the administration of the Umayyads, Abbasids, the the Ikhshidids, the Tulunids, the Seljukians, the Fatimids and Ottomans the that dominated

Jerusalem respectively.

After the period of Omar, Umayyads took the city under their control and attached great importance to its reconstruction as will be discussed in detail in the following parts.

## Abbasid Period and the First Presence of Turks in **Jerusalem**

Abbasids dominated Jerusalem between the years 750-969 after the Umayyads. The Abbasids did not value Jerusalem as much as the Umayyads did because they had moved their headquarters from

Damascus to Baghdad and Jerusalem had lost its old charm due to the earthquakes. They even melted the gold and the silver used in the doors and domes of the Mosque of Al-Aqsa and minted coins with them. During this period, the entire precinct of al-Aqsa Mosque was declared to be haram and non-Muslims were forbidden to enter there. However, Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809) allowed the construction of some buildings in Jerusalem for European pilgrims owing to the contacts with Charlemagne (Charles the Great), King of the Franks and Jerusalem Christians, and he gave his assent to the proposal of using some parts of the city as a Christian quarter.

In the meanwhile, the first acquaintance of the Turks with Jerusalem was during the Abbasid period. Harun al-Rashid's wife Marida is one of the first known Turks in Jerusalem, Harun al-Rashid's son, al-Mu'tasim's wife, Cicek Hatun, restoring the dome of Oubbat As-Sakhrah, is the first Turk to get into the act in an architectural sense. The first Turkish ruler of Jerusalem was Khaydar ibn Kawus, commander-in-chief of the Abbasid army. The Turks undertook important duties in Jerusalem until the Crusader invasion. In 878, the first Turkish rule began with Tulunids in Jerusalem.

### Period of the Fatimids

The Fatimids who captured Ierusalem in 969 gave great importance to art, they founded Al-Azhar University in Cairo, they also built madrasahs (Muslim theological schools) belonging to Shia school around al-Aqsa Mosque. The fact that the Fatimids, who tried to be on good terms with the Christians in Jerusalem, adopted anti-Christian policies in the period of Caliph al-Hakim and destroyed Christian buildings in Jerusalem, causing to attract the arrows of Christian authorities (Pope) on themselves.

Christians propagated saying, "Muslims are destroying the Christian works in Jerusalem." and showed this attitude of the Fatimids as a justification. This incident was one of the factors that set ground for organizing the Crusades.

Upon the entire destruction of the city walls by the earthquake in Jerusalem and its surroundings in 1033, Caliph Tahir Ali shared the work of repair among the religious communities who were residing in the city. The Christians asked for help from the Byzantian Emperor Constantine Monomachos on this matter, and for this purpose, he



Another Turkish state, Ikhshidids ruled again in Jerusalem between the years 928-968.

allocated the revenue of Cyprus to the Christians of Jerusalem. Following these developments, the region, assigned as the Christian neighborhood by Charlemagne, was rendered an automonous status in the period of Harun al-Rashid.

As Tahir Ali, the Caliph of the Fatimids moved the southern walls of the city to the north, the district inhabited by Jews was left outside the wall, accordingly, a new place was assigned for them in the city and it was came to be known as a Jewish neighborhood from then on.

#### Palestine - Seljuk State

Emir Atsiz, who founded Turkmen Syrian-Palestine state in 1070, took over Jerusalem from the originally Turkish governor of the time without fighting for the Fatimids were weakened at the time, and he moved the capital to Jerusalem from Ramla. When Emir Atsiz failed in the campaign in Egypt, the Great Seljuk Sultan Malik-Shah assigned his brother Tacuddevle Tutus to reestablish the Palestine-Seljuk State.

After Tutus' death, the state was divided into two parts between his sons, Rıdvan and Dukak who were in conflict with each other. Fatimids, taking the advantage of this situation captured Jerusalem in 1098. In the meanwhile, the Crusaders who captured Urfa, Antakya and Aleppo on the same dates headed for

A cross was placed on the Dome of the Rock, al-Aqsa Mosque was turned into a palace for kings.

Jerusalem, besieged the city on July 13 1099, and they captured Jerusalem on July 15 1099.

#### Disruption of Justice and Peace/Crusade Invasion (1099-1187)

Jerusalem was occupied by the crusaders in 1099 when it was under the rule of Fatimids. This invasion lasted for 88 years. Once the crusaders captured Jerusalem, they killed all Muslims and even all the Jews on the account that they helped them. The historian Fulcherius, who entered the city together with the crusader army, on this point, related that "the knights disembowelled the Arabs to take the gold they swallowed out of their guts and left no one alive in the city."47 Another witness of this massacre, Raimundus related that "on his way to the area of sanctuaries he had to walk through corpses and knee-deep blood puddles." Although the total number of the victims of the crusades are not known for certain, it is known that the Muslims and the Jews residing in Jerusalem were all killed. Ibn al-Athir, on this subject, said that seventy thousand people were slaughtered only on the site of al-Aqsa Mosque.48 Not having been satisfied so far, the crusaders looted all the works of Muslims in Jerusalem. Valuable assets of al-Aqsa Mosque and Qubbat As-Sakhrah were destroyed or stolen away, and the mosques were converted into churches. The crusaders, who declared Jerusalem the capital of the Latin Kingdom, turned al-Aqsa Mosque into the palace of the Knights Templar, and used Marwani Mosque as stables.

A cross was placed on the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque was turned into a palace for kings. All the priests in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were excommunicated and the Catholics forced the Orthodox to convert into Catholicism. Whereas the Muslims protected the rights of Christians and respected their religion in Jerusalem, which remained under Islamic rule for 461 years.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Fulcher of Charters a History of the Expedition to Jerusalem: 1095-1127. Knoxville 1969, pp. 3-179

<sup>48</sup> İbnü'l-Esîr, İslam Târihi: el-Kâmil fi't-Târih Tercümesi, X, Trans. Abdülkerim Özaydın, İstanbul 1987, p. 236.

<sup>49</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Işın Demirkent,

#### The Second Conqueror of Jerusalem Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (1187)

After the Battle of Hattin with the Crusaders on 27 Rajab 583 (October 2, 1187), Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub conquered the city and put an end to the Crusaders' occupation that had ensanguined the city 88 years ago, and conquering Jerusalem for the second time he waved the Islamic flag in the sky over this holy city. He removed the sign of the cross which was on the Dome of the Rock and gave great importance to the restoration, reconstruction and renovation of the city. He placed

Kudüs Md. Vol.26, p. 330

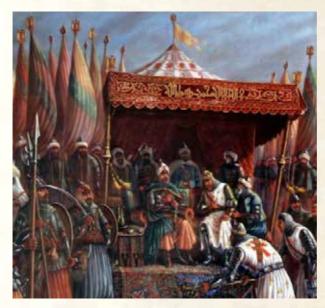


The statue of the conqueror of Jerusalem, Salah ad-Din Ayyub in Damascus

the pulpit prepared by Nur ad-Din Zangi in the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque as a present. The second conquest of Jerusalem demonstrated to the whole world that Islam would not be wiped out from this land until the Day of Judgment.

Although the conquest of Jerusalem was one of the most brilliant victories in history, the Islamic army did not go to extremes at all in the city during the celebrations. Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub did not turn over any requests in honor of the conquest of Jerusalem and treated the notables of the crusaders with tolerance. He released all the elderly, men and women, and gave presents to all the women who were orphans and widows from the treasury. While the crusaders were being removed from Jerusalem, the Christian dwellers of the city were allowed to stay, the Jews were allowed back to the city, and the holy locations of the Christians were put in charge of the Orthodox Church, For the attitude of Salah ad-Din, Crusader historians used this statement, "His compassion and kindness made a strange contrast to the evils of the Christian victors who took part in the Crusades."

After the death of Salah ad-Din Ayyub, the French recaptured Jerusalem in 1229, in the time of King Frederick. Having been under the



A painting depicting Salah ad-Din Ayyub while taking over Jerusalem from the Crusaders on Miraj night

Crusader rule for 11 years, Jerusalem was recaptured by al-Malik as-Salih Najm ad-Din Ayyub in 1244. The city was invaded by the Mongols between the years 1243-1244. However, in 1250, the Mamluks defeated the Mongols under the leadership of Saifuddin Qutuz and al-Zahir Baybars in the Batte of Ain Jalut, and Palestine, including Jerusalem, remained under Mamluk rule until 1517, who dominated Egypt and Damascus.

Salah ad-Din Ayyub is considered one of the most outstanding figures not only in the history of the Crusades but also in the history of the world. After our prophet, he is one of the figures who were written about the most throughout the history. On this subject, our national poet Namık Kemal reminding the Arabic proverb, "The true merit is that which is affirmed also by the enemy." added, "Salah ad-Din Ayyub is the unprecedented Islamic figure whose heroism and nobility were affirmed even by his greatest enemies. Salah ad-Din was a barrier built in front of the flood of evil called the Crusades. This flood was brought to a halt by the power of perseverance and then began to peter out."50 Despite unfortunately, the French all, commander Henri Gouraud who went to Damascus in July 1920 went to Salah ad-Din's tomb and kicked his cist, saying, "Now the Crusader Wars are over! Wake up Salah ad-Din, we're back! My presence here

<sup>50</sup> Namık Kemal, Selahaddini Eyyubi, Bedir Yayınevi, 1964, pp. 3, 56

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consecrates the victory of the cross over the crescent." <sup>51</sup>

Kaiser Wilhelm II who came to Damascus in 1898 visited Salah ad-Din ibn Ayyub's tomb,<sup>52</sup> and

- 51 Namık Kemal, Selahaddini Eyyubi, Bedir Yayınevi, 1964, pp. 3, 56
- 52 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Yıldız Esas ve Sadrazam Kâmil Paşa Evrakı 81/3 lef 6

presented a marble sarcophagus and a rug<sup>53</sup> ornamented with specially manufactured ribbons for the visiting and got them placed on the tomb with an ostentatious ceremony accompanied by a military band.<sup>54</sup>

- 53 BOA, Y. EE, 81/3 lef 7.
- 54 Ö. Kürşad Karacagil, "II. Wilhelm'in



Tomb of Salah ad-Din Ayyub – Salah ad-Din Ayyub died in Damascus in 1193. His tomb was built in the outer yard of the Umayyad Mosque in the same year.

### First Khutbah (Sermon) in al-Aqsa Mosque after Salah ad-Din Ayyub's Conquest of Jerusalem

Salah ad-Din Ayyub entered Jerusalem on a Friday, during the daytime of Miraj, on 27 Rajab 583 AH (2 October 1187), putting an end to Crusader invasion that had lasted for 88 years, and he had the qadi, Muḥyiddin ibn al-Zaki read the first Friday sermon (khutbah). Ibn Zaki commenced his historical sermon quoting the 45th verse in Surah An'am, "So the people that committed wrong were eliminated. And praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds." and called out to the community of al-Aqsa Mosque as follows:

Praise be to Allah the Almighty, He has exalted Islam by His favor. He has humiliated polytheism by His might. His has put everything in order and harmony by His word. He has bestowed everlasting blesssings upon the grateful. He brought the disbelievers closer to torture step by step by His divine plot. He has endowed those who have taqwa (piety, fear of God) with the most beautiful aftermath from His infinite grace. He has promised to house his pious servants in the shade of His Arsh (throne). He made His religion triumph over every other. Such great is His power that no one can object him. In His might He is far above His creatures. No one can attempt to compete Him. He commands as He wills, and no one can disobey Him. He rules as He wills, and no one can oppose Him.

Praise be to Him again, He cleansed of Masjid al-Aqsa from the impurities of polytheism and blasphemy. I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah. He has no associate in His power, and there is none like Him. He is one and the eternal refuge, He neither begets nor is begotten. There is none equivalent or similar to Him. This is such a testimony that it purifies the hearts from the impurities of polytheism and blasphemy. Allah the Almighty accepts this testimony. And I bear witness again that Muhammad (saw) is the servant and Messenger of Allah. Muhammad (saw) brought the tenet of tawhid, the belief in the unity of Allah Almighty. He dispelled all kinds of doubt that would harm this belief. He removed shirk which means associating partners with Allah. Allah the Almighty endowed our Prophet (saw) with the miracle of Isra. For this, he came to Masjid al-Aqsa from Masjid al-Haram. He passed beyond the heavens. He reached Sidratul Muntaha -"Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary" and this is where the greatest things happened.

May Allah the Almighty's blessings be upon him (Muhammad) and his successors; upon Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddiq, who had the honor of being the first to embrace the faith, and upon the commander of the faithful, 'Omar ibn al-Khaṭṭab, who was the first to remove the idols from this blessed and sacred place (Masjid al-Aqsa), and upon the commander of the faithful, Uthman ibn Affan, who was the possessor of the two lights and had the honor of being the collector of the Qur'an, and upon the commander of the faithful, Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib, who uprooted polytheism and demolished the idols, and upon the family of Muhammad, on his Companions, and on those who followed them. Amin.

Osmanlı İmparatorluğunu Ziyareti ve Mihmandarı Mehmed Şakir Paşa'nın Günlüğü (1898) Türkiyat Mecmuası, C. 24/Autumn, 2014, pp. 88, 89

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O Muslims! You have gained the consent of Allah the Almighty, your ultimate goal. Rejoice at good news! Because Allah the Almighty rendered it easy for your hands to take over this blessed land and Masjid al-Aqsa that had been a great loss for Muslims from the polytheists. You passed this blessed land that had been in the possession of misguided people for nearly a hundred years on to its real owners, Muslims. Allah the Almighty granted us, Muslims, to see the days Muslims recite the prayer calls on this holy land again and the removal of polytheists who persecuted Muslims for years thinking that they were the victorious. He prevailed the Tawheed belief, vanquishing the polytheism. Because the religion of Islam is established on the basis of the tawheed belief and certain commandments and prohibitions. This house, (Masjid al-Aqsa) is the homeland of our forefather Abraham, and the place where the Messenger of Allah (saw) came over in Miraj, and the qibla for our prayers in the early days of Islam, and the abode of the prophets, the stopping place for awliyas (the friends,lovers of God), the quarter of the prophets and the site where the divine revelations were given. This house was built on the basis of taqwa. This house is on the land mentioned by Allah the Almighty in His Book. This is such a mosque that the Messenger of Allah led the prayers of the angels –who are close to Allah- here. This is such a homeland that Allah the Almighty blessed Jesus, who is His servant and messenger, with the honor of prophethood in this place. But Allah the Almighty never put him beyond the rank of being a servant. Allah the Almighty revelaed in the Qur'an, "Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels near [to Him]. And whoever disdains His worship and is arrogant - He will gather them to Himself all together." (Surah An-Nisa: 172)

Yes, this sacred house (Bayt al-Maqdis) is the first qibla for Muslims, the second of the two mosques, (The first one is the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca.) and the third of the "harams". After the Masjid al-Haram and Masjid an-Nabawi, the next place allowed to visit is only the Masjid al-Aqsa. You are the distinguished servants of Allah the Almighty. Allah the Almighty has bestowed such virtue only upon you. Blessings be on you that this great conquest came true through your hands. Once more, you have renewed the brilliant victories of Islam on the days of Qadisiyya, Yarmuk and Khaybar and in the time of Seyfullah (sword of Allah) Khalid ibn al-Walid. May Allah the Almighty reward you. May Him accept your efforts against the enemy and your altruism on this path. May Him grant you with the paradise and His divine beauty. Paradise is home only to the righteous. Fulfill your responsibility in return for this grace of Alah the Almighty. You accomplished such a conquest that, owing to this, the gates of heavens were opened. The darkness disappeared with the light of this conquest. You pleased the closest angels to Allah, the "nabis" and the prophets. This grace you have attained is so great that this conquest enabled you to be an army that would be the banner of faith in the end times.

The Bayt al-Maqdis (the sacred house) is the site mentioned by Allah the Almighty in the first verse of Surah al-Isra in the Qur'an, "Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing." The Bayt al-Maqdis is the blessed house esteemed by the sultans, praised by the prophets, and in which the four holy

books are recited.

O Jamaah! (Islamic community) Even the angels thank to you. Because you made way for the the belief of tawhid on this blessed land again. You cleared off the roads of holy Jerusalem from the impurities of polytheism and blasphemy, and the remnants of the cross. Now all the angels in the heavens are asking for forgiveness and mercy on behalf of you and they are praying for you. Then preserve this grace and bounty bestowed on you well. Preserve this blessing by holding on the rope of taqwa. Whoever holds on to this rope firmly, will be saved and protected. Beware of obeying the desires of your "self" (nafs). Do not fear the enemy. Use the opportunities well. Fight in the way of Allah properly. O the servants of Allah! Trade your lives in the way of Allah. Because He rendered you of His most benevolent servants. O the servants of Allah! Beware of being degraded by the Devil and depravedness. If you do not avoid of these you will think that you gained this victory with the help of the sharpness of your swords and the agility of your horses. I swear to Allah that, it is not so! Victory and help come only from Allah the Almighty. Because Allah the Almighty is the All-Mighty and the All-Wise.

O Jamaah! Allah the Almighty endowed you with the blessing of this great conquest. From now on, obey the commandments of Allah and abstain from His prohibitions. Otherwise, you will be disarrayed like a sheaf, the tie of which is loosened. You will lose your strength and become like those who do not obey the rules of Allah the Almighty and follow the Devil, leaving the faith although they were revealed the verses of Allah the Almighty. If you do not abide by the rules of Almighty Allah, you will be of those who have gone astray. Hold on firm on "jihad" (a struggle against evil in yourself or in society). Because jihad is one of the most virtuous divine services and of the most honorable deeds. If you help (in the cause of) Allah the Almighty, He will help you. If you remember the aid and blessings of Allah the Almighty bestowed on you, He will never stop his aid for you. If you give thanks to Allah the Almighty for His blessings, He will increase His blessings for you.

Oh Jamaah! Help (in the cause of) Allah the Almighty. Take the opportunity to serve on this path. Know the worth of this opportunity with all your might. Know that acts gain value according to their outcomes. Gains are valuable depending on their quantities. Allah the Almighty made you victorious over this miserable enemy. Whereas they were as many as or even more than you in number. That is a profound secret. Because in the 65th verse of Surah al-Anfal in the Qur'an, Allah the Almighty says, "O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved because they are a people who do not understand." May Allah the Almighty help us and you in abiding by His commandments and prohibitions. "If Allah the Almighty helps you, who can overcome you? If He does not help you but forsakes you, then who else can help you?"55

<sup>55</sup> Abdülmuttalip Arpa, Rum Suresi Çerçevesinde Beytü'l-Makdis'in Fethinin Müjdelenmesi-Bingöl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (2014) p. 3, pp. 208-209.

### Period of Mamluks in Jerusalem (1250-1517)

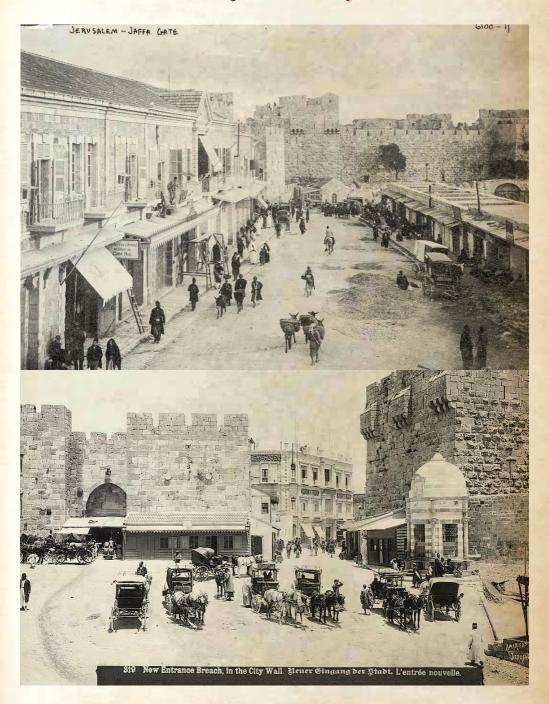
The Mamluks, established by enfranchised emirs of Turkish origin in the Ayyubid army, and named as a Turkish State by the historians of the era, reigned in Egypt, Syria and Hejaz. The Mamluks (warrior-slaves) appeared on the stage of history for two periods as Bahri Mamluks (*Bahriyye*, First Mamluks, 1250-1382) and Burji Mamluks (*Burciyye*, Second Mamluks, 1382-1517).

With the treaty of peace (April 1253) made between the Ayyubids Syria and the Mamluks, Jerusalem was left to the Mamluks. Nevertheless, in 1256, the Ayyubids recaptured Palestine and Jerusalem. In the meantime, the sovereignty of the Ayyubids ended with the victory in the Battle of Ain Jalut gained over the Mongols (1260) and the city attained a more stable administration. significance The of Jerusalem which, represents the symbol of the crescent-cross struggles, decreased politically with the removal of the Crusader threat.

The fact that Jerusalem turned into an Islamic city again following the Crusader invasion came true through extensive building operations by the Mamluks. Today, eighty out of approximately 150 historical works of great importance belong to the Mamluk period.

Barsbay I, one of Bahri Mamluk sultans, who visited Jerusalem several times, restored the ruined parts of the Qubbat as-Sakhrah. He also built a khan (a caravanserai to house merchants and their goods) outside the city walls to welcome the merchants that came to the city and to accomodate the poor. Barsbay I dedicated the income of some of the villages to the maintenance of the holy sites in the city. Jerusalem developed mainly during period of An-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun (1293-1294, 1299-1309, 1309-1341). Restoring al-Aqsa Mosque and the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, the Sultan also constructed the archways around the Qubbat as-Sakhrah and covered the rear part of al-Aqsa Mosque with marbles. During the period of Muhammad ibn Qalawun who reigned over forty years, a great number of madrassahs, markets, khans and ribats (hostel, base or retreat) were constructed, the Citadel of Jerusalem (also known as the Tower of David) was renovated and the water was brought to the city. The mosque on the west corner of the citadel was built in 1310.

Sultans' interest in Jerusalem also continued during Burji Mamluks. Al-Malik az-Zahir Jaqmaq repaired the dome of the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, which was burnt due to a lightning strike. Likewise, al-Malik al-Ashraf İnal who acceded to the throne in







1453, restored al-Aqsa Mosque and then he constructed the work known as Sabil Qaytbay. In fact, although Qaytbay only restored this sabil (public fountain), the name of Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf İnal was excluded from its inscription giving the impresssion that as if it was constructed for the first time. Although the same sabil was reconstructed during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, its name was not changed out of respect for the past. Even only this example is quite exceptionally striking in that it shows the sense of loyalty of the Ottoman towards the past.

### Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem (1517-1917)

The Ottoman rule began in Jerusalem at the end of the Battle of Marj Dabiq between the Mamluks and Selim I, and lasted for 400 years until the British occupation. The Turks ruled Jerusalem for 768 years, including the Ottoman rule for four centuries.<sup>56</sup>

#### Ottoman Traces in Jerusalem

Religious value attached to Jerusalem by the Ottoman State is clearly manifested through art and architectural works conducted here. Additionally, Suleiman the Magnificent built the Citadel of Jerusalem and the Kanuni Fountain, which is on the entry of the citadel, and the Lala Mustafa Pasha Mosque (St Nicholas Cathedral) which is inside the citadel. The minaret of the mosque has been called the Tower of David since 19th c.

With the Ottoman administration in Jerusalem, the city seemed to have turned into a building site, the work of construction and restoration gained speed.

#### Transition of Jerusalem to Ottoman Administration/ Selim I

Selim I is the ninth Ottoman sultan. He entered Jerusalem as the victor of the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1517. The scholars of the city welcomed him and presented him with the keys of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, and he gave away gifts to the notables of the city and let them maintain their former positions exemting them from heavy taxes.

### Period of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent

Jerusalem held deep religious significance for the Ottoman dynasty in this period. During the reign of Kanuni (Suleiman the Magnificent),

<sup>56</sup> Diyanet Aylık Dergi, Ömer Faruk Harman, "Kudüs Müslüman Toprağıdır." January 2018, Issue: 325, p. 49

some restoration activities were carried out in the holy city, the walls and the gates were rebuilt. Sultan Suleiman made the city more safeguarded by rebuilding the city walls which had been rundown for three hundred years. The city walls the reconstruction of which lasted for five years have survived until today. Additionally, Suleiman the Magnificent built the Citadel of Ierusalem and the Kanuni Fountain, which is on the entry of the citadel, and the Lala Mustafa Pasha Mosque (St Nicholas Cathedral) which is inside the citadel. The minaret of the mosque has been called the Tower of David since 19th c.

## Fountains of Suleiman the Magnificent / Kanuni Sabils

Suleiman the Magnificent was the Ottoman sultan who gave the utmost importance to Jerusalem among all the other statesmen. He was known with his taqwa (devotion), ihlas (sincerety), intelligence and his love of urbanism. "Water projects" were of his important works actualized in his time. Five of these projects were brought into action in Medina and one other was accomplished as the al-Aqsa Mosque project of public fountains under the administration of the architect Mehmet Celebi en-Nakkaş was between the years 1531-1542. The public fountains (sabils)



that have survived up today are as follows:

- 1. Sultan's Pool
- 2. Tariq al-Wad Sabil
- 3. Bab al-Silsila Sabil (Babu'l-Mahkeme Sabil): It is located in front of Bab al-Silsila, in the exterior part.
- 4. Sabil Al-Nazir Gate: It is located on the way of Aqabetu's- Sitte directly opposite the Rabat of Bairam Jawish.
- 5. An Ottoman sabil on the Way of the Cross/ Sabil Bab Al-Asbat (Sabil Bab Sitti Maryam: It is located on the highway a few meters away from the Bab Al-Asbat.



Sabil of Bab al-Asbatt



It is located just on the right when you enter the Lion's Gate from the side of the Mount of Olives. It refreshes us with the couplet engraved on it,

"Selamün ala ruhi nebiyy-il mutahhar,

Esabiuha ecrat miyaha ke kevser."

"Greetings to the Soul of the Purified Prophet, His Fingers did turn the water into Kevther (holy water from the Paradise)."

Kanuni was the second Solomon who had a huge impact on the

history of Jerusalem. This was sometimes refreshing cool water and sometimes the fountain of love and tolerance. Thus were the Ottomans who sheltered every religion, race and color, and left a trace on every stone on their way, moulding each of them to express themselves...

#### Sultan Mahmud II

During the period of Sultan Mahmud II, (1812) Genç Agha, the deputy lieutenant governor of Jerusalem, repaired the *sabil* 



channel that brought water from the Solomon's Pools to Jerusalem. In 1816, the governor Suleiman Pasha restored al-Aqsa Mosque and met the needs of the mosque with his own income. He also carried out some restoration works under the order of Sultan Mahmud in the Qubbat as-Sakhrah and al-Aqsa Mosque between the years 1817-1818.

#### Sultan Abdulaziz

The city of Jerusalem is distinguished from other Ottoman

cities due to its cultural developments and breakthroughs in a number of fields that took place during the reign of Abdulaziz. The first council of Jerusalem was established with the exclusive decree of Abdulaziz in this period. In 1877, the activities of this council increased even more with the introduction of the "Law of Municipalities" which set out the responsibilities and works of the municipal councils. The first one who undertook the presidency of Jerusalem's municipal council was Yusuf al-Khalidi, who was from Jerusalem.

Qubbat as-Sakhrah (the Dome of the Rock) was restored in 1874. It is pointed out that the restoration carried out in al-Aqsa Mosque in this period was the most considerable one after the period of Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan.

#### Sultan Abdulhamid II

A great number of construction and restoration activities were carried out in the holy city during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. In addition, the infrastructure of the city and the structures related to water installation were all overhauled, the sabil known as Qaybay Sabil was restored and a new sabil was built across the Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) in 1907. A clock tower was also set

**ERKAN AYDIN** 





The Sabil and the Tower Clock at the Bab al-Khalil

on top of the Jaffa Gate in the same year.

One of the projects accomplished during the period of Sultan Abdulhamid II was the construction of the 87-km-long railway between Jerusalem and Jaffa, which began in 1890 and completed in 1892.

Excluding the Crusader invasion (1099-1187), Jerusalem was under Muslim rule until 1917 since Omar's conquest in 638. When the Ottomon Empire was defeated in the Sinai and Palestine campaign in the First World War in 1917, Jerusalem fell under the British mandatory administration and remained under the British rule until 1948. It was under the reign of Jordan when Israel was established in 1948. After the Arab-Israeli War that lasted

6 days in 1967, Jordan withdrew from the West Bank and Jerusalem, which was in favor of Israel. The Jews declared Jerusalem to be the de facto capital with the decision of the Israeli parliament since 1983. Although Israel has moved its parliament and all its ministries to West Jerusalem, no state in the world has yet recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, except the US that moved its embassy to Jerusalem in 2018. According to international law, East Jerusalem is recognized as the capital of Palestine, which is under occupation.



### WALLS OF JERUSALEM

The history of the walls, surrounding the Old City in Jerusalem dates back to the times of the Jebusites and Canaanites. Jerusalem did not have city walls for more than three hundred years after the walls had been demolished by Isa Eyyubi for security concerns in 1219. The Ottoman Empire defeated the Mamluks in the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1517 and took over the administration of Jerusalem, Hijaz,

Mecca and Medina along with the sacred relics. These city walls around the 868-acre area, which is called the Old City, were rebuilt on the foundations of the Byzantine and Crusaders during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent in order to preserve the sacred sites, and to safeguard the city from the invaders and bedouins. The walls are 12 m high from the ground and approximately 4 km long.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Karaman, Müslüman, Lütfullah, "Filistin", DİA, İstanbul 1996, XIII, 92.

# GATES OF JERUSALEM

The gates, still in use in the walls surrounding the Old City are as the following: Bab al-Khalil, Bab an-Nabi Dawud (Gate of the Prophet David), Bab al-Maghariba, Bab al-Asbatt, Bab al-Sahira, Bab al-Amoud /Damascus Gate and Bab al-Jadid.

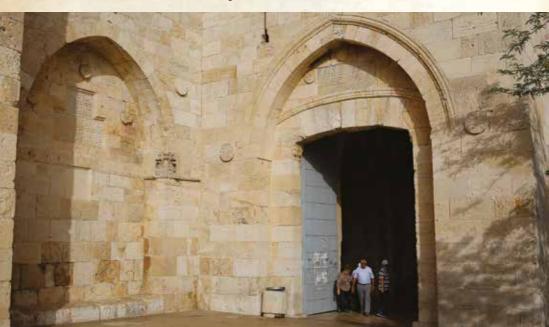
#### Bab al-Khalil /Al-Khalil Gate /Jaffa Gate

Bab al-Khalil is also called Jaffa Gate. At the entrance of the gate, the inscription reads, "La Ilahe Illallah Ibrahim Halillullah." that's to say, "There is no God but Allah and Abraham is the intimate friend of Allah." engraved by Suleiman the Magnificent. A prophet who was the common forefather of three religions



was driven forward, considering the Jewish and Christian people living here.

No one entering the city through this gate has ever been disturbed by this script, and this essence engraved on the walls has also reflected on social life. This script is an expression of reverence cherished for Abraham who is the iconic figure for Jerusalem. What is more, this was the place where Omar and Salah ad-Din Ayyub took over the key of Jerusalem.





#### Bab al-Amoud /Damascus Gate

Located in East Jerusalem and one of the seven open gates of the city, Damascus Gate is the most wellknown and the most frequently used one owing to the fact that it is on the way to al-Aqsa Mosque and the city is surrounded with walls. Damascus Gate was built by King Herod during the Roman period. However, the Roman emperor Titus demolished it. In 135 CE, King Hadrianus rebuilt the structure. In 16th century, when Suleiman the Magnificent sent the Great Architect Sinan to the area to prepare an extensive report about the works of Mamluks, he restored the Damascus Gate to its current appearance. The name of the Ottoman sultan, his moniker and the construction date of the gate are

engraved on the inscription over the gate.

#### Bab an-Nabi Dawud / Zion Gate

Bab an-Nabi Dawud, (Prophet David Gate) also called Bab Sahyun, was renovated in 1541. The gate



**Zion Gate** 

consists of a large entrance and a pointed stone arch.

There is an inscription between the entrance and the arch, on which the name of the sultan, his moniker and the construction date are engraved. There are some bullet marks on the gate remaining from the Arab-Israeli War which lasted for six days in 1967. Although the walls were repaired, the bullet marks here were deliberately left uncovered. The



Israeli army entered the city through this gate in 1967.

#### Bab al-Sahira / Herod's Gate

The French call this gate "Herod" or "Madellin" Gate. The gate consists of an entrance and an arch. On the inscription over the gate, the name of the sultan, his moniker and the construction date were engraved as in the other gates.

#### Bab al-Maghariba / Dung Gate / Silwan Gate

Bab al- al-Maghariba, known also as Silvan Gate was renovated in 1540. The French also call it Kamame Gate because the garbage of the Old City was disposed through this gate. It differentiates from the other gates of the city walls in terms of size, mass and architectural properties. There is an inscription between



the threshold and the arch, which expresses, as in the other gates, the name of the sultan, his moniker and the construction date.

#### Bab al-Asbatt /Lion Gate / Gate of the Tribes

The Lion Gate, also called Bab al-Asbatt (The Gate of the Tribes), is the only open gate in the city walls facing the East. The gate leads to the Way of Sorrows (Via Dolorosa) which is the pilgrimage route for Christians on one side, and to al-Aqsa Mosque on



the other side. It takes its name from the four figures of leopards placed on the right and left sides of the exterior. It was also known as Saint Stephen's Gate during the Crusader period, and Saint Stefanos, the first martyr of Christians, is believed to have been stoned to death just outside this gate.

According to a story narrated by the Jews, Suleiman the Magnificent once saw four furious lions in his dream. Jerusalem had no city walls during the period of Suleiman the Magnificent, because after Salah ad-Din Ayyub's conquest, the Ayyubids demolished the walls fearing that it could be occupied again.

Suleiman the Magnificent had his dream interpreted. The interpreters

of the dream said, "Oh, my Sultan, we have left Jerusalem unguarded as there are no walls around it. Lion -Ariel in Hebrew- is the symbol of Jerusalem. Therefore, your dream is

According to a story narrated by the Jews, Suleiman the Magnificent once saw four furious lions in his dream.
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a sign to build the walls of Jerusalem." Suleiman the Magnificent got these four figures of lions placed over the Lion's Gate as a sign of his dream. This story, pleasant though, has nothing to do with reality.

However, the truth is that while the city walls were being constructed during the period of Suleiman the Magnificent, Jerusalem confronted another Crusader attack. wanted to complete the construction of the walls as soon as possible as they did not have much time. For this reason, some embellishments were left undone, making alterations on the project. All the stones, used during the period of Mamluks before, were gathered and used for the construction of the walls. It is most likely that he stones with figures of lions -actually leopards-, which were over the door of a state building during the Mamluk period, were placed over the gate (Bab al-Asbatt) as a reference to them and to keep their memory alive.

#### Bab al-Jadid / New Gate

It is seen that new ones were added to these gates when the need arises later on. The people who resided in the houses on the West part of the city and outside the walls of Jerusalem had to use Bab al-Khalil to enter the city. As they had to walk a long way to get to this gate, Sultan

Abdulhamid decided to build a new one in 1889 and this new gate was named as Bab al-Jadid.

He begged God for a kingdom such as none after him would have, and Allah graned his wish.

God gave him wisdom, such as no other prince was ever blessed with

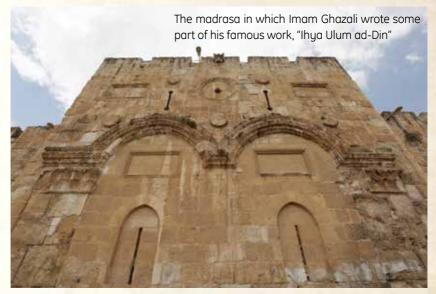
#### Bab at-Tawba and ar-Rahma (Gate of Repentance and Mercy) /Golden Gate

Of all the gates in the city walls, Bab at-Tawba and ar-Rahma is undoubtedly the one about which myths were invented the most. The





### THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM





name Bab at-Tawba and ar-Rahma comes from the belief that David repented of his sin on this spot and his plea was accepted. There is a Muslim cemetery just outside the gate, established in the early Islamic period.

The interior part of the gate was designed as a vast *madrassa* (educational institution) building. This madrassa was named after Imam Ghazali, who lived in Jerusalem for about two years when

the city was under the domination of the Artuqids and wrote some part of his famous work called "Ihya Ulum ad-Din".

Christians, Jews and Muslims have different accounts pertaining to this gate according to their own viewpoints. According to the Jews, the Messiah Elias or Elijah, who is believed to return as the savior, will come to Jerusalem, and when he comes he will pass through this gate and proclaim his kingdom where the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat as-Sakhrah) is located today. However, the expected messiah is a Kohen (the highest rank of priest in Judaism, coming from Aaron's line) and a kohen does not pass through a cemetery. According to the Jewish faith, Muslims closed this

gate deliberately and turned it into a cemetery so that the Messiah would not be able to enter Bayt al-Maqdis/al-Aqsa Mosque when he returns.

For those who know the truth, the situation is completely different. When Omar conquested Jerusalem in 638, there were walls around the city remaining from the Roman period. The Golden Gate opens right into al-Aqsa Mosque. It is thought that Omar closed this door due to safety concerns. There is also an account from the time of Salah ad-Din Ayyub about the closure of the gate; there were some economic problems in Jerusalem during the period of Salah ad-Din Ayyub. By closing the gate, Salah ad-Din Ayyub both ensured the security and enabled people to arrive at al-Aqsa Mosque passing through the market. When these walls were being reconstructed in the period of Suleiman the Magnificent, the gate was closed out of respect for the concerns of Omar and Salah ad-Din Ayyub.

#### Bab an-Nabi

There is a gate just below the black-domed part of al-Aqsa Mosque known as Masjid al-Aqsa, through which Allah's Messenger is thought to have entered when he came for the miraj, and that one is closed, too. The closure of these gates is because of either some security or economic reasons, or some structures that were built in front of them afterwards such as mosques







and *kulliyes* (complex of buildings adjacent to a mosque).

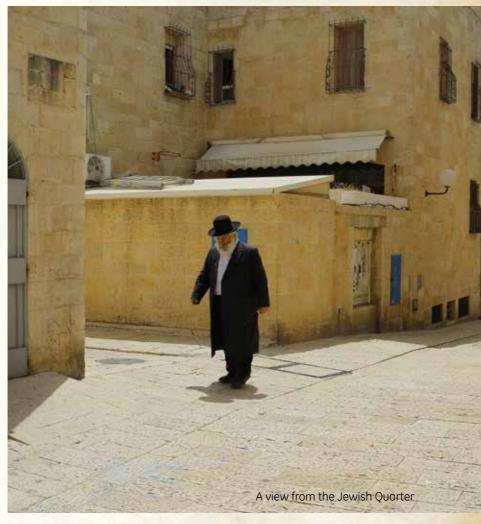
### JERUSALEM QUARTERS

East Jerusalem that we call the Old City is divided into four parts as Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Armenian quarters. When we look at the right side of the Dome of the Rock, we see the Muslim quarter. Muslims make up the majority of the population in the Old City.

Behind al-Aqsa Mosque or al-Qibli Mosque is the synagogue with its white dome, and downwards from this place is the Jewish Quarter. The gate in this area is called Bab al-Maghariba, namely the Moroccan Gate. As the garbage of the Old City were removed from here, it is also called Garbage Gate.

When Jerusalem was under the administration of Jordan in 1948, the Moors were living in this region. When Israel invaded Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, 1967, this region was turned into a Jewish neighborhood either by purchasing property or by forcing its residents to emigrate.

The area just behind the synagogue is the Armenian quarter. The most privileged class both during the Ottoman period and today, has been Armenians owing to both the status



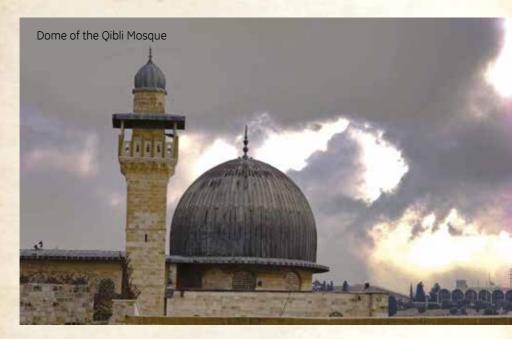
they gained in churches and their quarter in Jerusalem.

Armenians owe their privilege in Jerusalem to the Ottoman Empire. The region where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located is the Christian quarter.

East Jerusalem that we call the Old City is divided into four parts as Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Armenian quarters. When we look at the right side of the Dome of the Rock, we see the Muslim quarter. Muslims make up the majority of the population in the Old City.







# WHY IS JERUSALEM IMPORTANT FOR MUSIIMS?

The spiritual connection to al-Aqsa Mosque for being the first qibla was an important factor when Arqam ibn Abi'l-Arqam went up to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and told him that he would go to Bayt al-Maqdis. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked Arqam why, he said he yearned to go there to pray.<sup>58</sup> His companions (*sahaba*) must have heard so much of Jerusalem from our master the Messenger of Allah (saw) that Abu Bakr as-Siddiq came all the

way to the outskirts of Jerusalem, and likewise Omar rushed to Jerusalem in no time when he started the conquests in the Middle East.

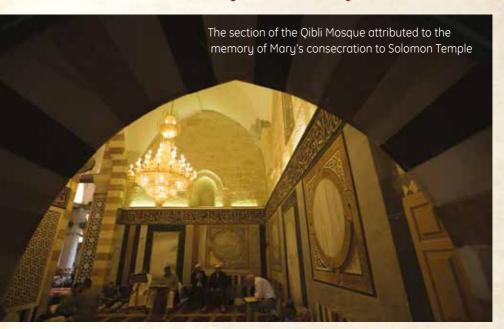
Since the days of sahaba (*our Prophet's companions*), there have been many reasons for the increasing importance of Jerusalem in the eyes of Muslims.<sup>59</sup>

The first of them; there are many verses about the merits of the land of Jerusalem in the Qur'an. <sup>60</sup>While five of these verses state that the land of Jerusalem is blessed, one of

<sup>58</sup> Ahmed b. Hanbel, Müsned; El-Müstedrek (3/576 hadith no 6130)

<sup>59</sup> Altun, İsmail, "Sahabe Gözünde Kudüs ve Mescid-i Aksâ", ILTED, Erzurum 2017, Issue: 47, pp. 157-162

<sup>60</sup> A'râf, 7/137; İsrâ, 17/1; Enbiyâ, 21/71, 81; Sebe', 34/18.



them describes this land as al-Ard al-Muqaddasa (the Holy Land).<sup>61</sup>

The second; it is the first qibla of Muslims. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was ordained prophecy in the Cave of Hira in Jabal an-Nour in Mecca, two times salaah was commanded. Whether it is two times salaah or five times salaah commanded on Miraj, the first qibla of Muslims was al-Aqsa Mosque. 16 months after the Messenger of Allah (saw) emigrated to Medina (the Hegira) in 622, on the 15th of Rajab, the first qibla of Muslims was changed from al-Aqsa Mosque to the Ka'bah. The verses about qibla<sup>62</sup>were

revealed during their salaah in Masjid al-Qiblatayn. Thus, Muslims performed some part of their daily salaah facing Jerusalem and some part facing Mecca.

The third; Jerusalem is the land of prophets. So many passed through this land: David, Solomon, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Jesus and Mary. The good tidings of Jesus and Yahya/John the Baptist<sup>63</sup> were given here as well. It was this place again that the father of John the Baptist, Zechariah came up to the *mihrab* and said, "Glorify Allah day and night".<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Al-Ma'idah, 5:21

<sup>62</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:144, 2:150

<sup>63</sup> Ali 'Imran, 3:39

<sup>64</sup> Ali 'Imran, 3:37-41

ERKAN AYDIN



### THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM



As Yusuf al-Qaradawi also stated, "The Quran had announced the importance and the blessing of al-Aqsa Mosque before Al-Masjid an-Nabawi was built and even a few years before the Hegira. This point, announced in the Quran, was reaffirmed in hadiths as well.

The fourth: Al-Aqsa Mosque is the second mosque built on Earth after Masjid al-Haram. On this subject, Abu Dhar al-Ghifari said, "One day I asked the Messenger of Allah (saw), 'O, Messenger of Allah! Which mosque was first built on earth?" The Messenger of Allah (saw) answered, "Masjid al-Haram". I asked "After that?" He answered, "Al-Aqsa Mosque". I said, "How many years are there between them?" Upon this, he replied, "Forty years" and added, "Wherever you reach salaah time, perform your salaah there, that place is the mosque." 65 As Yusuf al-Qaradawi also stated, "The Qur'an had announced the importance and the blessing of al-Aqsa Mosque before Al-Masjid an-Nabawi was

<sup>65</sup> Buhârî, Ehâdîsü'l-Enbiyâ', 40; Müslim, Ebü'l-Hüseyn b. Haccâc, Sahîhu Müslim, Riyad, 1998, Mesâcid, 1, 2. Tirmizi, Mesacid 1



Shaddad bin Aws' grave at the foot of the walls next to the Gate of Mercy and Repentance/Golden Gate

built and even a few years before the Hegira. This point, announced in the Qur'an, was reaffirmed in hadiths as well. 66 The blessed wife of Allah's Messenger, mother of the believers, Maymunah, one day asked him, "Can you tell us about Jerusalem and the merits of Jerusalem?" Our master said, "Go and make sure that perform prayer there." (At the time, Jerusalem was under the reign of the Roman Empire). Our mother Maymunah

asked, "If we go to Jerusalem and can not find a way to perform prayer there, what shall we do?" Our master replied, "At least send some oil to be burnt for its candles." 67

While the Messenger of Allah (saw) and his companions were performing prayer in Masjid al-Qiblatayn, the revelation of the verses indicating that qibla was changed from al-Aqsa Mosque to Masjid al-Haram (Mecca) was a sign to the conquest of Mecca and the

<sup>66</sup> Yusuf el-Karadavi, "Her Müslümanın Ortak Davası Kudüs", Nida Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>67</sup> Ebu Davud, Salât, 14



demolishment of the idols in Ka'bah. Likewise, the fact that he ordered, with his blessing words, "You must go and surely perform prayer there." even when the mosque did not yet exist in Jerusalem was a sign that Jerusalem would be conquered and a mosque would be built on the site of Masjid al-Aqsa.

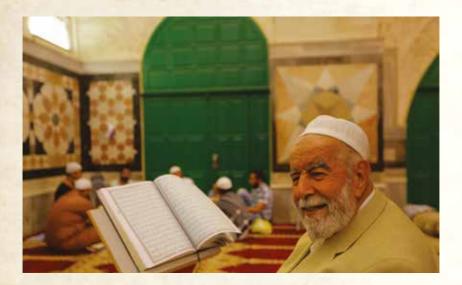
On this subject, our master, the Messenger of Allah (saw) wished the lands of Damascus/Palestine to be conquered as soon as possible and heralded the conquest of Bayt al-Maqdis to his companions. He even prepared an army under the command of Usama bin Zayd for this purpose. One day, seeing that Shaddad ibn Aus was sad, he comforted him by saying, "Behold! Jerusalem will soon be conquered,

God willing. Behold! Bayt al-Maqdis will also be conquered soon, God willing. You and then your son after you will be the *imams* there, God willing."<sup>68</sup> Shaddad passed away at the age of 75, in the 58th year of *Hegira* (migration) and was buried in Jerusalem. His grave is in the Babur-Rahma (the Gate of Mercy) cemetery<sup>69</sup> which is below the walls of al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Fifth is the fact that the miracles of Isra and Miraj occured here. As revealed in Surah al-Isra (Verse 1), "Exalted is He who took

<sup>68</sup> Makdisî, Fedâilu Beyti'l-Makdis, p. 69; For similar statements see: Heysemî, Mecmau'z-Zevâid, IX, 683 (IX, 411) (no:16150); Mucîruddîn el-Hanbelî, el-Ünsü'l-Celîl bi Târîhi'l-Kuds ve'l-Halîl, I, 233.

<sup>69</sup> Mucîruddîn el-Hanbelî, el-Ünsü'l-Celîl bi Târîhi'l-Kuds ve'l-Halîl, I, 233.



His Servant by night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing." our master, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was brought to al-Aqsa Mosque from Masjid al-Haram -this occassion is named as Isra in the Qur'an- and from there he ascended to heavenly realms. This occassion is called "Miraj". Being the dwelling place of Miraj, Jerusalem is peculiarly important to Muslims.

The Sixth is that there are hadiths pointing out that performing prayers (salah) in al-Aqsa Mosque outstrips the ones performed in other mosques except Masjid al-Haram and Masjid an-Nabawi. "Praying in Bayt al-Makdis/Masjid al-Aqsa is worth

five hundred prayers performed in other mosques except Masjid al-Haram and Masjid an-Nabawi."<sup>70</sup> In the same way, in his hadith, "Special journey-with the purpose of prayers-should be undertaken only to one of these three mosques: Masjid al-Haram, Masjid an-Nabawi or Masjid al-Aqsa."<sup>71</sup> Allah's Messenger (saw) specified that al-Aqsa Mosque is one of the three mosques to undertake a special journey to.

The Seventh is that the Messenger of Allah encouraged Muslims to go to al-Aqsa Mosque and pray there and gave them the good tidings that praying there would bring forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah

<sup>70</sup> Heysemî, Mecmau'z-Zevâid, III, 675, (IV, 7), (No: 5873).

<sup>71</sup> Ahmed b. Hanbel, Müsned, III, 7; Buhârî, Fadlu's-Śalât, 1, 6

(saw) said, "When Solomon, son of David built Bayt al-Maqdis, he made three wishes to Allah the Almighty. These were the power and ability to judge in accordance with the judgment of Allah, property and sovereignty that would be vouchsafed to no others after him, and the forgiveness of those who would come to al-Aqsa Mosque with the mere intention of praying. Following his hadith our prophet made this explanation, "Al-Haqq Almighty endowed Solomon with the first two of them. And I hope that his third wish was also granted."72

Recitations of the Qur'an, still rising from the al-Aqsa Mosque today, cry out to the whole world that the al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem are indispensable to Muslims as the first qibla, and the second mosque, which is the dwelling of Miraj, and the third *haram* (sacred site).



## WHY IS JERUSALEM IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS?

Jerusalem is the pupil of the world. If there are any troubles anywhere in the world you can understand this from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the capital of sanctitiy.

Jerusalem is of great importance to Christians, too, because Mary was given the good tidings of Jesus (Isa) in this city. Jesus spent the last three days of his prophethood in Jerusalem, and especially his last three days were portrayed in various churches in Jerusalem.

According to Christian belief, Jesus's capture by the Roman soldiers and his crucifixion and his resurrection and ascension to the presence of Allah (swt) took place in Jerusalem. Christians flow into Jerusalem to be pilgrims from all over the world because "Via

<sup>72</sup> Nesâî, Mesacid, 6 (no: 1408). For similar statements see: Ahmed b. Hanbel, Müsned, II, 176; İbn Mâce, İkametü's-Salâh, 196. The first two wishes are also mentioned in the verses of Qur'an. See: Sâd 38/35; Enbiya 21/78-79.



The images depicting the removal of Jesus Christ from the cross, his anointment and his shroud

Dolorosa" / the Way of Sorrows which has 14 stations is also here, beginning from the places where Christ was caught by the Roman soldiers, judged and condemned to death up to the Golgotha Hill where he was crucified.

The sanctity of the city for Jews is due to the Solomon Temple, the sanctity of the temple is due to the section called the Holy of Holies (*Quds al-aqdas*), and the reason for this section to gain sanctity is for the



Ark of the Covenant. In the Ark of the Covenant, (Coffin) there were some assets such as the materials on which Torah pages were scripted, Moses' and his brother Aaron's garments, a staff and a banner.<sup>73</sup>

Practicing sacrifice is one of the most essential rituals in Judaism. According to Jewish faith, when Abraham took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him on the Foundation Stone regarded as the place where the Messenger of Allah (saw) ascended to the heaven (Miraj), Gabriel presented to him a ram to sacrifice. Whereas, in Islamic faith, the one who was taken to be sacrificed was Ishmael and this occassion took place in the Mina district of Mecca. The sanctity of the temple has therefore grown in importance. Fulfilling the sacrificial ritual in the sanctuary is only possible

<sup>73</sup> DİB, Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri, Al-Baqarah, 2:248p. 39



with the conquest of Jerusalem and reconstruction of Solomon's Temple. There are some statements cited in the holy book of Judaism such as "The place of God's dwelling, the city of God's glory" referring to Solomon's Temple.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, in the 137th Psalm of the book, they say, "If I forget thee, o Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."<sup>75</sup>



Ark of the Covenant

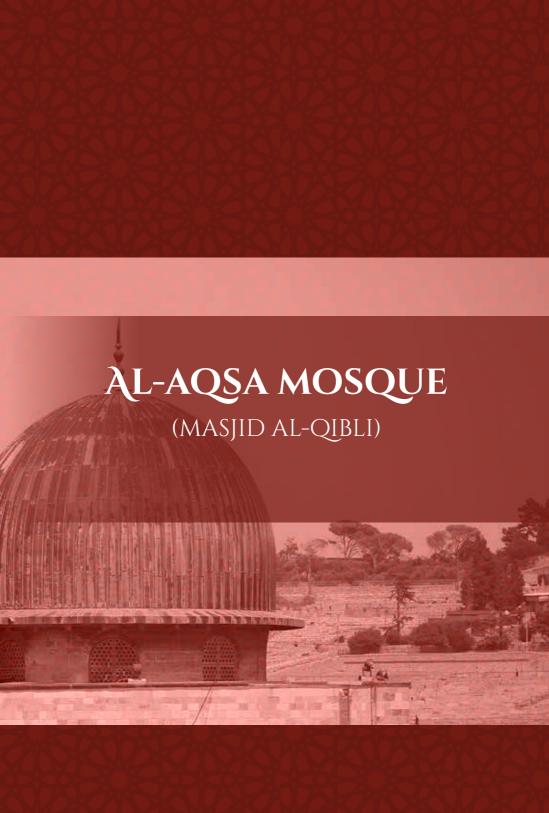


Solomon's Temple according to Jews

<sup>74</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, "Kudüs Müslüman Toprağıdır" Diyanet Dergisi, January 2018, Issue 325, p. 26

<sup>75</sup> Torah, Psalm 137











## MASJID AL-AQSA

## the First Qibla, the Second Masjid and the Third Haram of Islam

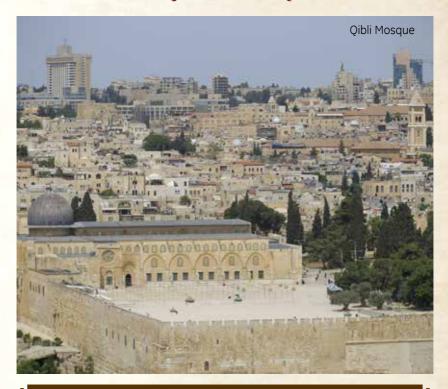
The word "al-Aqsa" means "the farthest" in Arabic. The reason it is called as "al-Aqsa Mosque" is that the furthest mosque from Mecca was meant when the Messenger of Allah (saw) was given the revelations mentioning about the mosque.

Our Lord says:

"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid Al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing."<sup>1</sup>

The name Masjid al-Aqsa/al-Aqsa Mosque refers both to al-Qibli Mosque/al-Aqsa Mosque with the black dome and to the entire area of 144,000 square meters, which also houses the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat as-Sakhrah) with the gold dome. This entire area, which is 144,000 square meters, is called Haram ash-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) / al-Aqsa compound / the Temple Mount.

This area of 144,000 square meters is a sanctuary/haram through a religious perspective, and an openair museum through a cultural point of view. Al-Aqsa compound is surrounded on all sides by walls. This



The name Masjid al-Aqsa/al-Aqsa Mosque refers both to al-Qibli Mosque/al-Aqsa Mosque with the black dome and to the entire area of 144,000 square meters, which also houses the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat as-Sakhrah) with the gold dome. This entire area, which is 144,000 square meters, is called Haram ash-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) / al-Aqsa compound / the Temple Mount.

holy site is like a mosaic that brings together more than one element of the Islamic civilization with its mosques, minarets, domes, public fountains, colonnades, and arches inside the walls apart from unifying the hearts and prayers of all the Muslims in the world.

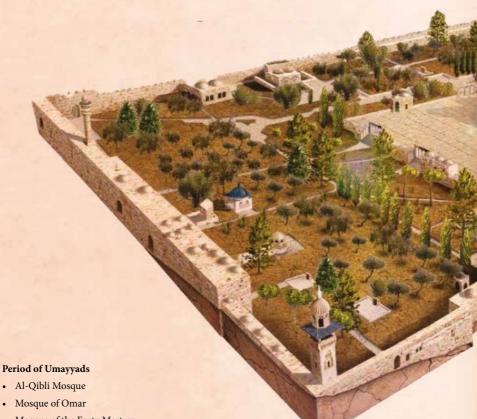




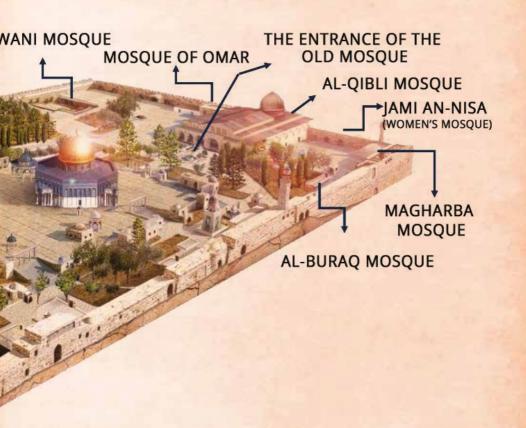


## **MOSQUES IN AL-AQSA** MOSQUE COMPOUND (HARAM ASH-SHARIF)

MAR



- · Mosque of Omar
- Mosque of the Forty Martyrs
- · Mihrab of Zechariah
- Qubbat as-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock)
- The Old al-Aqsa Mosque
- Marwani Mosque



### Period of Umayyads and Mamluks

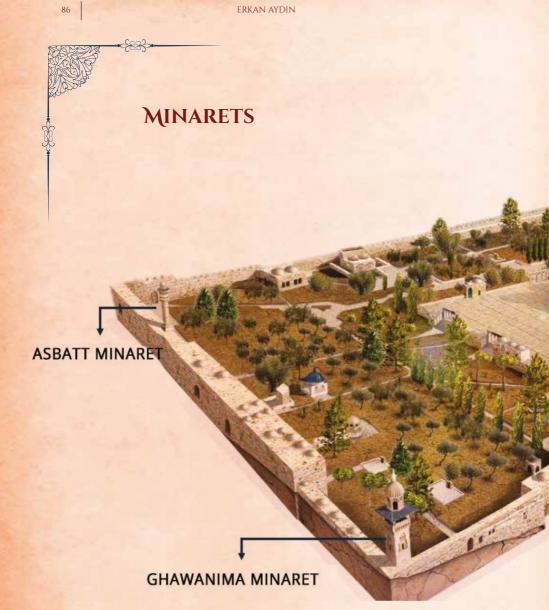
· Al-Buraq Mosque

### Period of Ayyubids

- Jami an-Nisa (Women's Mosque)
- · Magharba Mosque

### Ottoman Period

• Mosque of the Cradle of Jesus





### Period of Mamluks

- Minaret of the Gate of the Tribes / Minaret of Salahiya
- Minaret of the Moroccan Gate/ Fahriya Zawiya
- Minaret of the Chain Gate

### Period of Ayyubids

• Minaret of Gate of Ghawanima



QUBBAT AS-SILSILAH (DOME OF THE CHAIN)

QI (D

OF THE PROPHET

DOME OF SULAIMAN

### Period of Umayyads

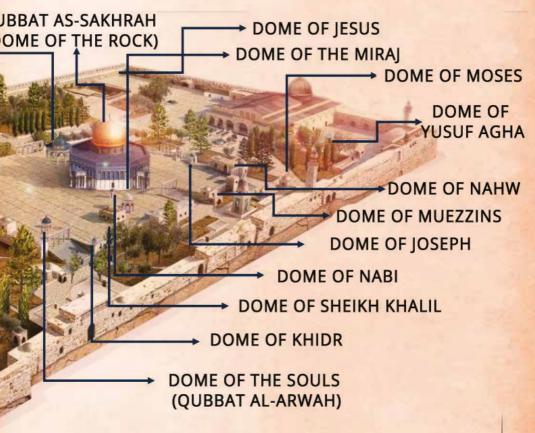
• Qubbat al-Silsilah – Dome of the Chain

### Period of Ayyubids

- Dome of the Miraj
- Dome of Moses
- Dome of Nahwiyya

### Period of Umayyads / Ayyubids

• Dome of Suleiman



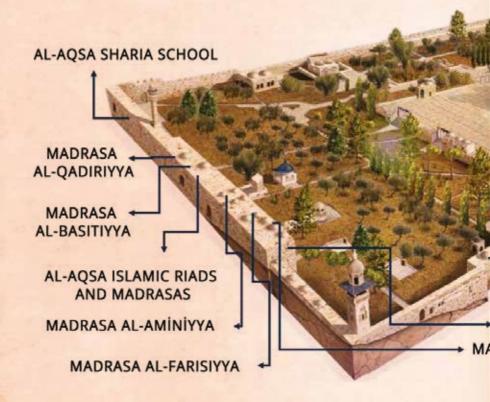
### Period of Ottomans / Ayyubids

· Dome of Joseph

### Ottoman Period

- · Mihrab and Dome of the Prophet
- · Dome of Khidr
- · Dome of Yusuf Agha
- · Dome of the Souls
- Muhammadiyya / Dome of al-Khalil Zawiya
- Dome of Sultan Mahmud II Dome of the Lovers of the Prophet

# MADRASAS (EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS)





### Period of Ayyubids

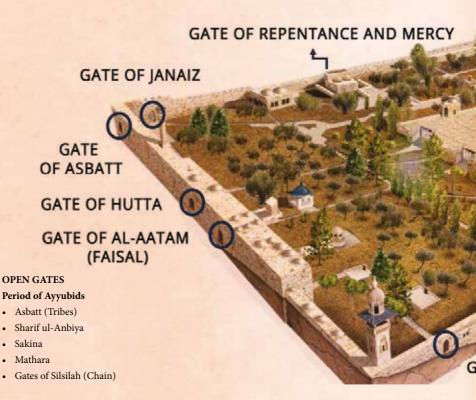
· Hitaniye

DRASA AL-MALAKIYA

### Period of Mamluks

 Fahriyya, Dividdar, Tankaziyya, Farisiyya, Ashrafiyya, Malikiyya, Javiliyya, Hatuniye, Asardiyya, Aragon, Aminiyya, Basitiyya, Manjikiya, Uthmaniyya



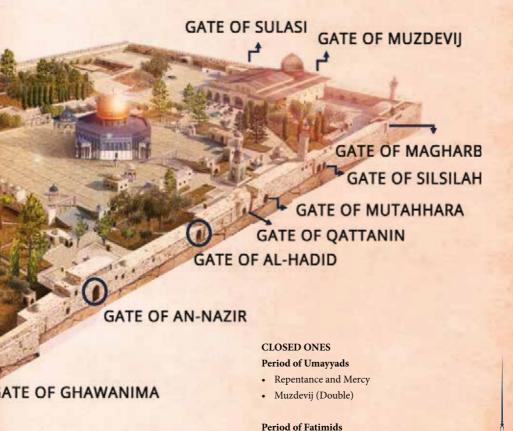


### Period of Umayyads / Ottomans

Hitta

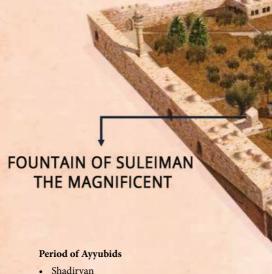
### Period of Mamluks

- Ghawanima
- Nazir
- Hadid
- Qattanin (Cotton Merchants)
- Maghariba



Muselles (Triple)
Munferid (Single)
Janaiz (Al-Buraq Gate)
The period of this gate is unknown.

## **FOUNTAINS**



### Period of Mamluks

- Qaytbay
- Narenciye

### Ottoman Period

- · Qasim Pasha
- · Sabils of Suleiman the Magnificent









There are over 200 historical works belonging to different Islamic periods within the compound.

### History of al-Aqsa Mosque

Though it is stated in modern history that the foundation of Solomon's Temple (al-Aqsa Mosque) was first laid in the time of David (1010-970 BCE) and completed in seven years during the time of Solomon (970-931 BCE), the hadiths related from the Messenger of Allah attribute the first construction of al-Aqsa Mosque to Adam.

Abu Dhar al-Ghifari, one day, asked the Messenger of Allah (saw), "O the Messenger of Allah, which is the first mosque built on earth?" He replied, "Ka'bah, the House of Allah"2 He asked again, "After that?" the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "al-Aqsa Mosque". As far as we can understand from this hadith, the mosque, which was once in place of al-Aqsa Mosque was built in the time of Adam. It was presumably destroyed with the flood of Noah. In 1900 BCE, while Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the Ka'bah, likewise, in 1000 BCE, David, by a commandment from Allah, decided to build a new sanctuary on

the site of the mosque, which was built in the time of Adam. He laid the foundations of the sanctuary, but he did not live long enough to complete it.

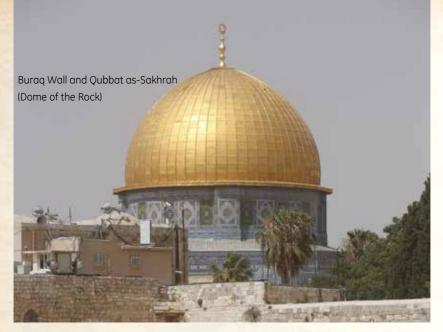
David's reign lasted for 40 years. David's son, Solomon continued the work initiated by his father and built



Solomon's Temple dating back to 960s BCE. It survived as Solomon's Temple for 373 years.

In 587 BCE, the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (Buht an-Nasr) urbicided Jerusalem along with

<sup>2</sup> Buhârî, Ehâdîsü'l-Enbiyâ, 40; Müslim, Ebü'l-Hüseyn b. Haccâc, Sahîhu Müslim, Riyad, 1998, Mesâcid, 1, 2; Tirmizi, Mesacid 1.



Solomon's Temple, and the sanctuary turned into rubbles. Persians allowed the Jews to return to the sanctuary in 517 BCE, and Zerubbabel built a new sanctuary on the site of Solomon's Temple. Between the years, 37 and 4 BCE, the Roman king Herod, who dominated the area, restored the second sanctuary to its former magnificence, namely, to its glorious state as in the period of Solomon's Temple. Nevertheless, the second sanctuary, which went down in history as Herod's Temple, did not last long, either. In 70 CE, once again, Jerusalem was destroyed in the Roman assault led by Titus.

When our master, the Messenger of God (saw) was brought to al-Aqsa Mosque from Masjid al-Haram for the miracle of Miraj, the sanctuary was in ruins. According to the

accounts, Allah's Messenger (saw) passed by the western wall called the Wailing Wall by Jews and Buraq Wall by us, Muslims, then from the front side where the Umayyad palaces were situated, he passed through the Bab an-Nabi (Gate of Prophet David), which is now below al-Aqsa Mosque, and following the stairs he came to the location of Qubbat As-Sakhrah (the Dome of the Rock)

Although the sanctuary was in ruins at the time, there were still



A view from the pillars of al-Qadim Mosque

some structures remaining from the period of Herod, beneath the sanctuary, on the spot called Masjid al-Qadim (the Old Mosque). The Messenger of Allah (saw) probably meant these places when he mentioned about about al-Aqsa Mosque / Solomon's Temple after he returned to Mecca.



Masjid al-Qadim

The sanctuary remained in Roman hands until 638. After accepting Christianity, the Eastern Roman Empire settled the inhabitants in the neighborhood here and prevented the Jews from settling in Jerusalem. When Omar conquered Jerusalem in 638, it was a region called Ilia, inhabited by Christians. It was the front name of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, he gave this name to the city himself after destroying the city so that there would be no traces left from the Jews around 136 CE.<sup>3</sup> Omar came here with Sophronius,

This structure named as al-Qibli or al-Aqsa Mosque remained as a mosque, excluding 88 years of the Crusader period, from the time of Omar up to the present. After the Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan built Qubbat As-Sakhrah between the years 691-695, he decided to build a large mosque on the site of Solomon's Temple, that is, Omar's mosque., He covered the remaining columns of the Herodian period on the side of al-Aqsa Mosque and built the structure known today as Ibn Marwan Mosque. As for the construction of the large mosque, the foundations were laid but could not be completed because of the turmoil in Hejaz region. Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan's son, al-Walid completed the unfinished business left from his father, building a magnificent mosque here. The mosque constructed by al-Walid was bigger

Patriarch of Jerusalem and asked him about the location of Solomon's Temple. Despite Sophronius' efforts to conceal it, Omar found the place of Solomon's Temple and built the first mosque there, known to us as al-Aqsa Mosque in history. A Christian traveler who visited this place recounted that Omar's mosque had a vast area where approximately three thousand people could perform prayers.

<sup>3</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, a.g.m. Diyanet Dergisi, January 2018, Issue 325, p. 24



The pulpit of Burhan ad-Din located within the boundaries of al-Aqsa Mosque compound

than its current state. Concurrently, the Umayyads also built palaces on the front side of al-Aqsa Mosque. In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, the palaces were also destroyed along with a large part of the mosque. These palaces could not be rebuilt as the Umayyad period ended a few years after that. Even though the Abbasids did not give much importance to the works of the Umayyads in the other places, they attached importance to Jerusalem. They dissolved the golden gates built by the Umayyads to finance the repairs and renovations of al-Aqsa Mosque. During the Fatimid era, a

more severe earthquake hit the region and the mosque was badly damaged. Fatimids had to build a smaller mosque than that of the Umayyads due to some shortcomings. The current state of the mosque, called al Qibli or al-Aqsa Mosque today, is as remained from the Fatimids.

When the Crusaders occupied this region in 1099, they waded in blood up to their ankles. by their own confessions. Before Salah ad-Din ibn Ayyub conquered Jerusalem in 1187, the mosque was a place where horses were tethered, and Qubbat As-Sakhrah, a church, and the

location of the Mihrab of Zechariah where Mary was presented as an offering was converted into a chapel. Salah ad-Din Ayyub converted these places into their original forms, that is, into mosques.

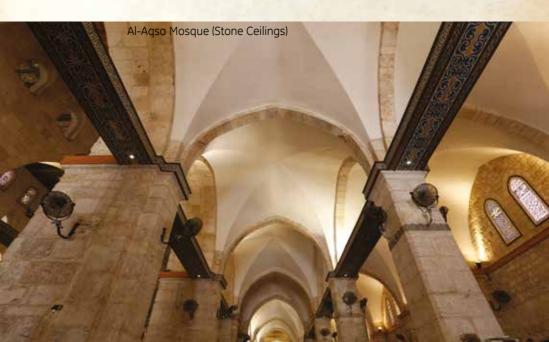
None of these structures ever ceased to be a mosque in any of the periods since the time of Salah ad-Din ibn Ayyub. In each era, the cries of "Allahu Akbar/Allah is greater" resonated from them, prayers were performed and prayer calls were recited. If only the stones could speak, and tell all...

After the Ayyubids, Mamluks served in this land for 250 years, then our ancestors for 400 years from 1517 to 1917. Selim I came here with his twelve thousand soldiers and he prayed in the mosque in which the

Messenger of Allah (saw) had led the prayer during the Miraj. There were so many more of those who supported this land...

When our ancestors were defeated in the Sina and Palestine campaign in the First World War in 1917, the British took control of the region. In that period, al-Aqsa Mosque was under the Jordanian rule, that is, a Muslim rule, until the State of Israel was founded in 1948. After East Jerusalem was also occupied in 1967, the interior boundaries of the al-Aqsa compound were transfered to a Jordan-based *waqf* /an Islamic trust.

Today, the al-Aqsa compound is still governed by the same waqf.



### Interior Architecture of al-Aqsa Mosque

Al-Aqsa Mosque was larger in the Umayyad period than its current state. When stepped inside, it is seen that the stone domes and porticoes on the very right side are the original structures from the Umayyad period.

Two ceilings in the middle along with the second and the third wooden porticoes remained from the Mamluk period. The marble columns, stone ceiling and porticoes situated on the very left side were restored during the period in which the British occupied Jerusalem. These columns were brought from Italy.

A large, crescent-shaped wall is seen on the ceiling built by the Mamluks. In the fire, started by a Jewish extremist on August 21 1969 inside al-Aqsa Mosque, which also damaged Nur ad-Din Zengi's unique *minbar*/pulpit seriously, this wall was covered with soot stains and the

plasters on it crumbled. When the plasters were scraped off the wall during the retrofit, a gorgeous mosaic was revealed, remaining from the



Al-Aqsa Mosque (Wooden Ceilings)



Al-Aqsa Mosque (The leftmost stone ceilings and marble pillars)





A section from the interior of al-Aqsa Mosque

Although the sanctuary was in ruins at the time, there were still some structures remaining from the period of Herod, beneath the sanctuary, on the spot called Masjid al-Qadim (the Old Mosque). The Messenger of Allah (saw) probably meant these places when he mentioned about about al-Aqsa Mosque / Solomon's Temple after he returned to Mecca.

period of Umayyads. Inside al-Aqsa Mosque, these mosaics in the shape of two roses on the crescent-shaped wall that is in the middle part, near the ceiling, are the remnants of the Umayyads. These mosaics represent the 17th verse of Rahman Surah, "Rabbul meṣrikayni ve rabbul magribeyn" meaning, "Lord of the two easts and of the two wests is He."

The dome of al-Aqsa Mosque was first built by the Umayyads. When the dome was damaged, Abbasids

<sup>4</sup> Ar-Rahman, 55:17



A view of the dome of al-Aqsa Mosque

and Fatimids repaired it respectively. And the last extensive restoration was conducted by Salah ad-Din ibn Ayyub. In 2017, during the restoration of the dome by the Jordan-based Islamic Waqf that is in charge of al-Aqsa Mosque, a script belonging Sultan Mahmud II was found under the dome.5 As it is understood from this script, too, Sultan Mahmud II was the last Ottoman emperor to restore the dome of al-Aqsa Mosque in addition to the Qubbat Al-Khadra he built in Medina. This sign of our ancestors on the dome is a clear indication of how much importance they attached to our Islamic values.

## Traces of the Seljuks in al-Aqsa Mosque

During the period of Nur ad-Din Zangi, Anatolian Seljuk Emperor, Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque was under the occupation of Christians. Nur ad-Din Zangi said, "If I conquer Jerusalem one day, I will put this pulpit in al-Aqsa Mosque." and he got two exquisite pulpits constructed in 1168, but he did not live long enough. When Salah ad-Din Ayyub, one of his commanders, conquered Jerusalem in 1187, he brought that exquisite pulpit built by Nur ad-Din Zangi out of twelve thousand pieces of cedar wood with the method of Kündekari. that is, tongue-and-groove joining with no nails, and placed it in al-Aqsa Mosque. Preserved for exactly

<sup>5</sup> İhab Selîm el-Cellâd, Meâlimu'l-Aksâ Tahte'l-Micher, Merkezü Beyti'l-Makdis li'l-Edeb, p. 383.



A view of the remainings from the original pulpit (minber) that was burnt down

782 years, the pulpit witnessed many incidents in al-Aqsa Mosque until it burnt down in the fire started by a Jewish extremist inside the mosque on August 21 1969.

Al-Aqsa Mosque did not have a pulpit for many years. The presidents of Islamic states started to vie for the construction of a new pulpit for al-Aqsa Mosque. So much so that, someone from the royal family in Saudi Arabia even had a wood craftsman from Konya to prepare a pulpit, but Jordan objected that. Thereupon, they agreed on another solution. They formed a team at a university in Jordan. Wood artisans from Turkey, Egypt and Malaysia came together and the pulpit was constructed again in 2007, so to speak, 38 years after the fire, in accordance with its original form,

examining both its example in al-Khalil Mosque and the pulpit pieces which were burnt.

The *mihrab*/niche of al-Aqsa Mosque also was a gift and reminiscence to the Ummah of Muhammed from Salah ad-Din Ayyub. When Salah ad-Din Ayyub conquered Jerusalem he converted this place from a church into a mosque, and he set up an inscription over the mihrab. In this inscription, he asks the Ummah of Muhammed to pray for him and protect al-Aqsa Mosque.

The pulpit and the *mihrab* of al-Aqsa Mosque calls out to us: "Do not leave al-Aqsa Mosque, that is, our first qibla, the second mosque and the third haram/holy site without protection. Do not allow anyone to encroach our haram."





#### A Gift from the Maqam of Habibullah to the Maqam of Khalilullah

#### **AL-KISWAH**

Jerusalem is a sensitive city. It is the city of the prophets; it has its own peculiar smell. In the same breath, Jerusalem has always been a city yearned for, but it never opens its gates easily and does not reveal itself so soon. It requires ears to sense and insight to see. Those historic stone gates of Jerusalem would open to you one by one, as you set your heart on it.

Jerusalem is not possesed; you can just be a servant of it. Our ancestors have always adopted this attitude as a principle. Therefore, we have been trying to tell why Jerusalem is significant and indispensable for years. What we experienced on the path we took for the last two months was much more special to us. Because our Lord granted us fulfilling a duty one end of which extending to Masjid al-Haram and the other end to al-Aqsa Mosque in this process. He bestowed on us the honor of becoming one of the foot soldiers of a very special bridge formed between the Ka'bah and al-Aqsa Mosque.

Together with Erkam Yıldırım and Büşra Bahar Yıldırım, Binali Yıldırım





son and daughter, we had the honor of taking al-Kiswah, the covering of Ka'bah al-Sharif, to al-Aqsa Mosque. How did this happen? Here is the story of this journey with snapshots.

Some verses of the Quran are embroidered on the covering of Ka'bah, and the fact that each of these verses is embroidered on all four sides of Ka'bah has a wisdom. The covering of Ka'bah is changed on the day of "arefe", that is, one day before the Feast of Sacrifice. The covering removed is divided into some pieces and each piece is given away to notables as a present. An exquisite part of the Kiswah, which covered the Ka'bah for a year, embroided with the 27th verse of Surah Haji, "and publicly proclaim Pilgrimage for all mankind so that they come to you on foot and mounted on lean camels from every distant point.", was presented to Binali Yıldırım, our TBMM (Grand National Assembly) President, and his family. It is a 268 cm long and 95 cm wide two-layered cloth consisting of a 10 cm wide silver adorned frame between the two 254 cm long golden stripes on both sides of the verse.

We presented our book, "Arz-1 Mukaddes Kudüs" (*Jerusalem, the Holy Land*), with Erkam Yıldırım to our esteemed President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan prior to his visit to the USA. During the meeting in the Hall of



Honor, we told our revered President that the attempt of traitorous coup d'etat of July 15 took place on the same day when the Crusaders turned Jerusalem into bloodshed





(July 15 1099) and that we included this striking fact in our book. We are thankful for his attention. Moreover, Erkam Yıldırım said that there was not a piece of the Ka'bah cover in al-Aqsa Mosque, and if he gave permission, we would take the Ka'bah cover to al-Aqsa Mosque as a present on behalf of him. In response to this, our esteemed President gave his approval saying, "May it bring blessings."

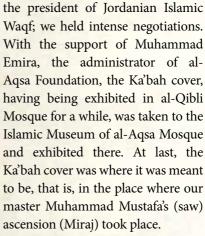
It was a challenging adventure to take Ka'bah cover from Istanbul to Jerusalem and from there to al-Aqsa Mosque. Nevertheless, owing to Erkam Yıldırım's diplomatic connections and my private relations to al-Aqsa Waqf, we delivered the trust to Jerusalem.

Erkam Yıldırım, Büşra Bahar Yıldırım and I were full of excitement to fulfil this duty. The arrival of Ka'bah cover in Israel and the way we showed up in front of al-Aqsa



Mosque with prayers... At the end of our negotiations with Israeli and Jordanian officials, Ka'bah covering was in al-Aqsa Mosque at last. It was a great moment.

A month later, we took the Ka'bah covering out of al-Aqsa Mosque and framed it. From then on, it was much more safeguarded and convenient for visiting. For this, we visited



As the descendants of Sultan Abdulhamid Khan, who sent candleholders to al-Ibrahimi Mosque in al-Khalil years ago, we were experiencing the peace of mind and joy of taking the Ka'bah cover to al-Aqsa Mosque. We know that the trust will be exhibited at al-Aqsa Mosque Museum for years as a sign



of this strong connection between Jerusalem and Mecca; al-Haram Mosque and al-Aqsa Mosque.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and thankfulness to our esteemed President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who led the process, owning the reponsibility for the case of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque in delievering the Ka'bah cover to al-Agsa Mosque; and to our esteemed Parliamentary Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey, Binali Yıldırım and to his esteemed spouse Semiha Yıldırım, to Erkam Yıldırım, to Büşra Bahar Yıldırım; and to the administrator and members of al-Agsa Mosque Foundation, and to Muhammad Amira for his great sympathy.

The blessed wife of Allah's Messenger (saw), mother of the believers, Maymunah, one day asked Messenger of Allah (saw), "Can you tell us about Jerusalem, and the merits of Jerusalem?" Our master answered, "Go and make sure that perform prayer there." (At the time, Jerusalem was under the reign of the Roman Empire). Our mother Maymunah asked, "If we go to Jerusalem and can not find a way to pray there, what shall we do?" Our Master replied, "At least send some oil to be burnt for its candles."

We would be happy if we could just become a droplet of oil for those candles in the sight of Allah!









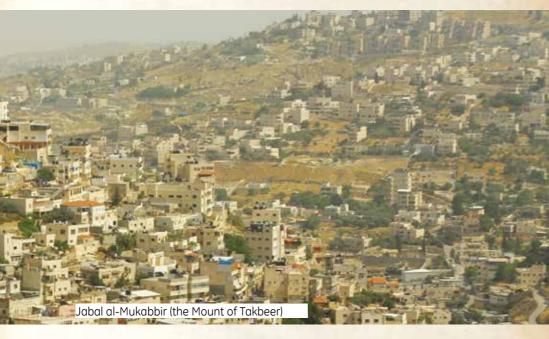
**ERKAN AYDIN** 



# OMAR AND THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

When Omar conquered Jerusalem in 638, the people of Christian Iliya were living in Jerusalem. Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, said that he would not deliver the key of Jerusalem to anyone else before Omar's arrival. Upon this, Omar set off from Medina with a group. He had an assistant with him. As they had only one camel, they rode the camel in turn to Jerusalem. When they approached the walls of Jerusalem, it was his assistant's turn to ride the camel. He said, "O the head of the believers, everyone is

waiting for your arrival at the foot of the walls of Jerusalem. Please! Let me give you my turn, you ride, and let's enter Jerusalem in that way." Would Omar, the symbol of justice, compromise his principles, even when he would enter Jerusalem? No, you mount the camel, we'll enter Jerusalem while I'm holding the camel's halter," he said. Among the curious glances, two people from Arabia one of whom mounted on the camel and the other on the pedestrian entered through the gate. The people searched for the caliph Omar, the head of the believers, with confused eyes. All glances were gathered in the person on the camel. Nobody conceived that the



person who was holding the camel's halter was the head of the believers. Shouldn't such a mighty commander be on a camel? While everyone was complimenting Omar's assistant who was on the camel, he said pointing to Omar, "I am not the Caliph, but the one who is holding the camel's halter is the head of the believers". Upon this, the Jerusalem Patriarch Sophronius moved aside and started to cry. Omar wanted to comfort him by thinking that it was hard for him to surrender Jerusalem, "Do you love Jerusalem so much? Is it too difficult to hand it over?" Sophronius said, "I thought it would be a passing fancy for you to take Jerusalem, you would come to Jerusalem and have fun for a

while and then leave. Now that I have seen this justice of yours and thought you will never leave Jerusalem, that's why I'm crying." Sophronius was right; the Muslims who entered here with Omar would never leave Jerusalem.

Omar was never this excited when he conquered any other places. When they reached a point where they could see Jerusalem, he removed his sword and cried, "Allahu Akbar" The name of the mountain on which Omar recited *takbeer* is still referred to as Jabal al-Mukabbir, that is, the Mount of Takbeer.

family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.' And when Saul went forth with the soldiers, he said, 'Indeed, Allah will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand.' But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them. Then when he had crossed it along with those who believed with him, they said, 'There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers.' But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said, 'How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah. And Allah is with the patient.' And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, 'Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.' So they defeated them by permission of Allah, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and prophethood and taught him from that which He willed. And if it were not for Allah checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is full of bounty to the worlds. These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you, [O Muhammad], in truth.

And indeed, you are from among the messengers." 5

When the children of Israel, led by the commander Talut (mentioned as Saul in the Old Testament), who was assigned to them by Allah, came to the river of Jordan while marching to fight with the Amalekites, led by Goliath, Allah commanded them, "Do not drink from this water." Most drank from the water, except few, against Allah's command. David was also within this army at the age of 14-15, who was born in the Bayt Lahm (Bethlehem) where Christ was born.

When the Israelites met the army of Goliath, they said, "How are we going to cope with this army, this is so unreasonable." most of them gave up and returned.

"With the permission of Allah, few communities have overcome many communities. We will be victorious in this war with the help of Allah as long as we are patient." said the ones who remained.

David put the stone he took from the ground in his sling in the fiercest moment of the battle. At a moment when no one expected, he threw the stone and killed Goliath hitting him in the forehead. Thus, Allah destroyed the greatest superpower of the region with a slingshot stone

<sup>5</sup> Al-Baqarah 2:246-252



from David's hand, who was about 15 years old.

Later on, David became Saul's son-in-law and he led the Israelites after his death, and for the first time in history he established the united Kingdom of Israel unifying the twelve tribes of the Israelites and made Jerusalem the capital of Israelites, he reigned for 40 years.

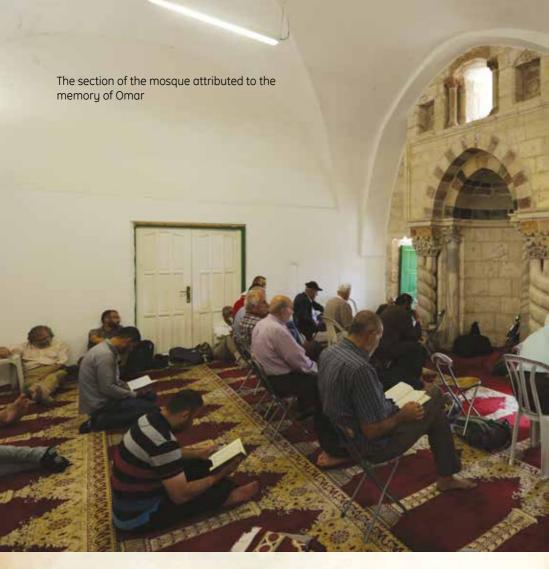
David (as), by the order of Allah, laid the foundations of the temple on the site of the first mosque built in the time of Adam and probably destroyed in the Great Flood.

Slopes disappear, we weather the storm Reaching the never-ending daylight A rocket to a slingshot stone is What distinguishes us from the other worlds However, he did not live long enough to complete the the construction of temple, his successor Solomon completed it in 7 years. According to the Jewish faith, since David who was a warrior king had blood on his hands, Jehovah bestowed the construction of the temple not on him but on his son, Solomon.

The fact that prayers are performed toward Jerusalem in Judaism proves the importance of the temple. This direction is called *mizrah* (east). After David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, Jehova revealed the site of the temple to David through his angels<sup>6</sup> and since his son Solomon built the temple on the Foundation Stone around 950s BCE, Jerusalem became the religious center of Judaism.<sup>7</sup> This convention that began in the time of Solomon

6 II. Samuel, 24:16-25

7 I. Kings, 8:28-49



### Omar, Searching for the Old Temple...

Omar ibn al-Khattab asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius to show the location of Solomon's Temple. Though the Patriarch of Jerusalem had said he would deliver the key of Jerusalem to the head of the believers, he must have understood Omar's intention to

build a mosque that he just would not show the place of the sanctuary. Somewhow Omar understood the intention of Sophronius.

At that time, there were those distinguished ones around Omar... Khalid bin Walid, Abdur Rahman bin Awf, Amr bin As, Bilal al-Habashi, the chief staff of the companions were all with him. There was also



Omar, Khalid bin Walid, Amr bin As and Bilal al-Habashi collected the garbage of the al-Aqsa Mosque themselves with their own hands, and built the mosque there.

and cherished such an attachment to Jerusalem that Omar, Khalid bin Walid, Amr bin As and Bilal al-Habashi collected the garbage of the al-Aqsa Mosque themselves with their own hands, and built the mosque there.

According to a Christian traveler, this mosque was large enough to accommodate about 3,000 people to perform prayer. After Omar, al-Aqsa Mosque remained as a mosque and today the Mosque of Omar still survives as a part of al-Aqsa Mosque.

the Jewish scholar, Qabb al-Ahbar who became a Muslim. With the guidance of Qabb al-Ahbar who had knowledge of the Bible and the news of the ancients, they could find the location of Solomon's Temple, but there was a heap of garbage in the place of the temple. They had heard about Jerusalem from the Messenger of Allah (saw) in such a way that



Mosque of Omar



A view of the interior of the Qibli Mosque

#### First Adhan in the Mosque

As in the Ka'bah and Masjid al-Nabawi the recitation of the first Adhan was granted to Bilal al-Habashi in al-Aqsa Mosque, the host of the Prophet's (saw) miraj, the place mentioned in the Quran as the land the surroundings of which were rendered sacred. Bilal al-Habashi went up to a high place, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar," he started to recite. Just as he was reciting Eshedu Enne Muhammad, the words brought a lump to his throat and could not complete the prayer call. "Why can't you recite the prayer call, O Bilal?" they asked. He replied, "I saw the Messenger of Allah in the

place where the Dome of the Rock is today, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) was looking at us in admiration, that's why I couldn't complete the prayer call." The Sahabah al-Kiram (the Companions) loved Jerusalem so much and attached that much importance to Jerusalem.

Bilal al-Habashi went up to a high place, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar," he started to recite.



### Mosque of Omar across the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

After taking over the keys of Bayt al-Maqdis from the Patriarch Sophronius, Omar came with those around him to the site where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was, the major pilgrimage center for Christians. The church was built in 326 by Saint Helena who was the mother of the Eastern Roman Emperor, Constantine I.



The minaret of the Mosque of Omar

The Patriarch invited Omar to see the Church of the Resurrection (the Church of the Holy Sepulcher). When it was time for the afternoon prayer Omar asked the Patriarch where he could pray, and he said, "You can pray in the church." Omar gently rejected this offer by saying,"If I perform prayer at the church, after me, Muslims will turn this place into a mosque saying that this is the place where the Caliph prayed." What Omar was trying to say was actually something else. He did not want to perform prayer in the church, because we, Muslims do not believe that Jesus was crucified. In the Qur'an, our Lord said, "They did not kill Jesus, and they did not crucify him."6 For this reason, Omar refused to pray in a place where Allah was associated with partners and Jesus was believed to be crucified by the Christians. Omar went out of the

church and he laid his robe on the street, which is between the church and the mosque today, and performed his prayer there. Afterwards, during the Umayyad period, the Mosque of Omar was built in the place where he performed his prayer.

The street between the Mosque of Omar and the Church of the Resurrection has become the symbol of the tolerance between Muslims and Christians, and of love and communication among the people



A view of the Mosque of Omar from the Church of Resurrection

in the city and witnessed the fair administration of the Ottoman Empire until the early 21th century. Christians freely conduct all their religious rituals in the church. The mosque was rebuilt in 1193 in the time of Salah ad-Din Ayyub. The current minarets were added to the mosque in 1465 during the Mamluk period.





The mosque was completely restored during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid. On the exterior of the mosque is the covenant of Omar. The construction committee of Omar ibn al-Khattab Mosque expanded the mosque, renovating it in 1996. Islamic High Council built the outer door of the mosque between the years 1927-1937.



Door of the Mosque of Omar



The text of assurance in the Mosque of Omar

### Assurance to People of Ilia by Omar

Every Muslim who comes to Ierusalem encounters with the manuscript of assurance at the entrance of the Mosque of Omar, given to the people of Iliya by Omar when he conquered Jerusalem. This text, which displays the source of the peaceful and comfortable atmosphere experienced in Jerusalem during the Muslim period, starts with the statement, "This is an assurance of peace and protection given by the servant of Allah". Although Omar is a caliph, the commander of the believers and the conqueror of Jerusalem, he refers to himself as the servant of Allah in this assurance. In the assurance given to people of Ilia, the property, lives, churches and crosses of the inhabitants of Ilia who were living on this land in that





Allenby on his way to Jerusalem...

A view of Omar Ibn al-Khattab Square from the gate opened for the German Kaiser Wilhelm II

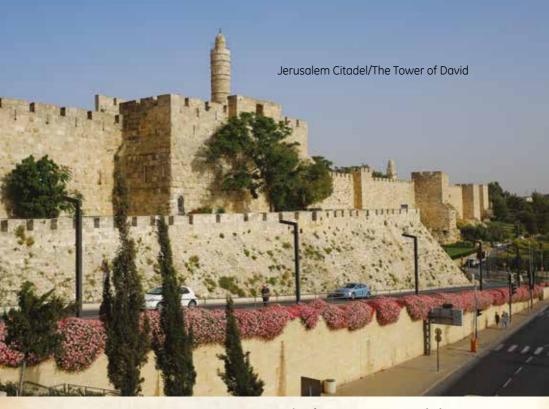
period were under the protection of Omar, Muslims and the Islamic State. Those who wanted to leave the city would do so in safety and those who wanted to stay would continue living on this land provided they paid their taxes. Khalid bin Walid, Amr bin As, Abdur Rahman bin Awf and Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan put their signatures as witnesses at the bottom of the assurance. This document, which Omar signed in front of the highest rankings of the the Sahabah al-Kiram (the Companions of our prophet) and in the witness of Allah, is a symbol of peace among the

different cultures and faiths living on this land since 638.

#### Omar Ibn al-Khattab Square

Omar entered through this gate in 638 to get the keys of Jerusalem from the Patriarch Sophronius. Accordingly, while entering through this gate, the square we come across is called Omar Ibn al-Khattab Square. When the British took the control of Jerusalem in 1917, the British General Edmund Allenby received the keys to Jerusalem here from the Mufti Kamil al-Husseini.





#### JERUSALEM CITADEL / TOWER OF DAVID

Jerusalem Citadel is a large complex with a series of traces from the period of Herod up to the present. The citadel is located in the west walls of the city, next to the Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil). This citadel was built during the Herodian period. A small mosque was added to the citadel during the Mamluk period. And, its present appearence is the legacy of the Ottoman period in which the city walls were built (1537-1541).

The fortress was restored during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent and a minaret was added to the mosque. In 1967, the fortress was first converted into a police station



Tower of David



and then into a museum. Today, it is called the Tower of David.

#### Al-Fatihahs Recited for Five Centuries

Soon after passing through the Jaffa Gate, visitors come across the graves of the Ottoman architects. It is said that one of these graves, which does not have an inscription on it, belongs to Nakkash Muhammed Çelebi, who undertook building the city walls, and the other to an engineer who was involved in the same project.

According to the narrations among the Muslim Arabs, these two engineers did not accept any fee for the construction of the walls lasting for 4 years but demanded to be

buried in the busiest gate of the city when they died.

This has brought them 500 years of uninterrupted recitations of Surah Fatihah. According to Jews, Suleiman the Magnificent beheaded the architects on the grounds that they left the Tomb of David outside the walls. This claim is consistent neither with the culture of punishment in the Ottomans nor with the way the punished ones were buried.

Soon after passing through the Jaffa Gate, visitors come across the graves of the Ottoman architects. The historical Quran manuscript from the 9th century in the museum in al-Aqsa Mosque compound

القسم الثاني من المصحف مكتوب بالخط الكوفي الشرقي غير المنقط من القرن التاسع الميلادي، وفي آخره نص يفيد أن هذا المصحف كتب بخط الحسن بن الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب وقد أوقف على قبة الصخرة المشرفه ويعتبر اقدم مصحف بالمتحف الإسلامي بالحرم الشريف.

Manus Kufic s traditi attrib

Husay

Fatin



### **Quran Manuscript**

(9th Century)

cript of the second half of the Quranic text in script, endowed to the Dome of the Rock. Pious on, as recorded in the colophon in 1547, utes the copying of this manuscript to Hasan ibn on, the grandson of `Ali ibn Abi Talib and tali.



Omar Ibn al-Khattab Square from the grave of Muhammad Çelebi al-Naggash

#### Clock Tower and Sabil for the Silver Anniversary of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's Accession to the Throne

erected The clock tower, Omar Ibn al-Khattab Square 1908 on the occasion of the silver anniversary of Sultan Abdul Hamid's accession (25th year), remained until 1919. Founded by the British administrator Ronald military Storss, the Association of Jerusalem Lovers demolished the clock tower in February 1919. The main purpose underlying the destruction of this tower was to erase the memory of Abdul Hamid Khan from the mind. The clock, referred to as Mahmudiye Clock, displaying two time zones at the same time, was taken to London in 1922. The tower is 13 meters wide

and its construction lasted for 7 years. In the tower, which had a four-façade clock on the top, the Ottoman flag symbolizing the domination of the Ottoman Empire, was once seen from all quarters.

A fountain and a cistern were built in Bab al-Khalil for the twenty-fifth year of Abdul Hamid II's ascension in



Mahmoudiya Clock Tower constructed for the silver anniversary of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's accession to the throne



The road opened for Wilhelm through the city walls

1900.<sup>7</sup> The sabil built in Bab al-Khalil was removed in 1912 and today there is no trace left of this sabil.

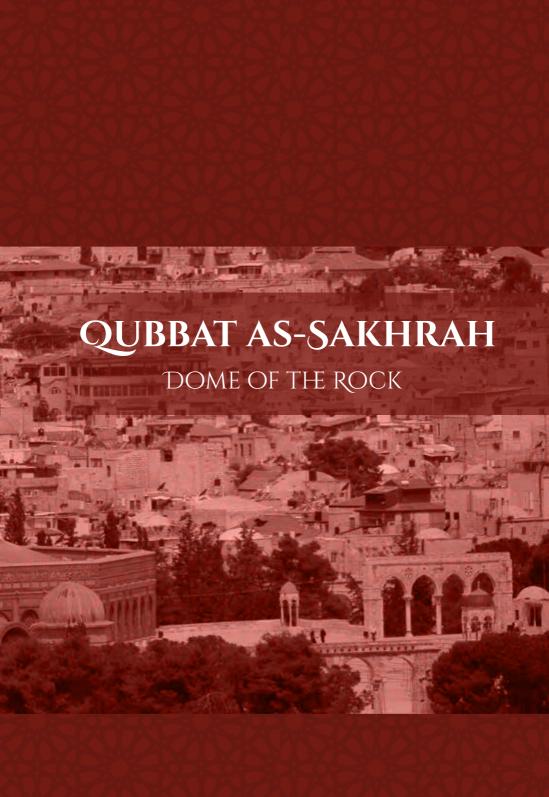
#### German Kaiser Wilhelm II's Visit to Jerusalem/ Strategy of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan

During the Ottoman period, German Kaiser Wilhelm II visited Istanbul; he told Sultan Abdul Hamid that he wanted to visit Jerusalem. However, there was a problem would cause a diplomatic affair. Wilhelm II wanted to enter Jerusalem on horseback. At that time, if a president entered a city on horseback, he would be considered the conqueror of that city. Wilhelm II wanted to enter through the Jaffa Gate in particular, so to speak, the gate that Omar used

when he conquered Jerusalem. If he had entered on horseback through the gate Omar entered, he would have been considered the conqueror of Jerusalem. This was exactly the moment when the brilliant strategy and intelligence of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan came into play. The streams of rainwater flowing right next to the Jaffa Gate were closed, a part of the fortress was destroyed and a new road was opened, and Wilhelm II entered Jerusalem from here.

An explanation was made to him, "We opened this way so that you and your soldiers could pass comfortably." and thus, Wilhelm II entered Jerusalem on horseback as an ordinary visitor, not as a conqueror.





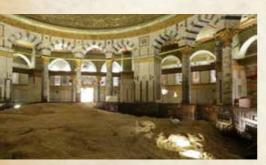






#### **HISTORY**

This dome, constructed at the order of the Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan between the years 691-692 CE, is considered one of the earliest and most beautiful examples of Islamic architecture.



Foundation Stone / Floating Rock

This globe-shaped dome was first coated with copper plates and then covered with gold. On the top is a crescent covered with gold. It is believed that the Foundation Stone (*Sakhrah*) which the dome shelters is the rock our Prophet (saw) stepped on as he ascended to heaven for Miraj.

This dome was built right at the center of the precincts of al-Aqsa Mosque 4 meters above the ground of the Mosque of Qibla. It is possible to reach the precinct of the dome by

<sup>1</sup> İhab Selîm el-Cellâd, Meâlimu'l-Aksâ Tahte'l-Micher, Merkezü Beyti'l-Makdis li'l-Edeb, p. 105.

### THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM



passing under the arches that were built in eight different points for aesthetic purposes.

The Abbasids attached great importance to Qubbat as-Sakhrah and made a series of repairments. The most prominent one of these



Qubbat as-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock) from the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque

repairments and restorations is the repair of the dome in the time of Caliph al-Ma'mun in 831.

The Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun removed Abdulmelik's name from the gilded Kufic mosaic inscription, which is on a 126 meter-long dark blue floor and put his name instead, however, left the date 72 AH as it was.<sup>2</sup> In 913, the Abbasid Caliph, al-Muktedir Billah's mother built large wooden doors for Qubbat As-Sakhrah.

<sup>2</sup> Aslanapa, Oktay, "Kubbet El-Sahra'da Osmanlı Devri Tamirleri", Sanat Tarihinde Doğudan Batıya, Ünsal Yüce Anısına Sempozyum Bildirileri, İstanbul Üniv. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yay., İstanbul 1989, p. 15



During the period of the Fatimid Caliph, az-Zahir Bi-Amrillah Abu'l-Hasan bin al-Haakim, in 1022, an extensive restoration was carried out in the Qubbat As-Sakhrah after a large earthquake in Jerusalem.

When the Crusaders occupied Jerusalem in 1099, they converted the mosque of Qubbat As-Sakhrah into a church and called it "Temple of the Lord" (Templum Domini). They added some decorations comprised of crosses and icons to the building.

Salah ad-Din Ayyub carried out a comprehensive renovation in Qubbat As-Sakhrah after taking Jerusalem from the Crusaders, and removed the crusader remains from the Qubbat As-Sakhrah and replaced them with Islamic motifs and furnished the interior with gold ornaments. The Ayyubids built a wooden wall for protection surrounding the Foundation Stone in order to prevent people from snatching pieces from it.

During the Mamluk period, many repairments were carried out in the Qubbat As-Sakhrah on a number of occasions. One of the most



The dome of Qubbat As-Sakhrah built in the period of Salah ad-Din Ayyub

comprehensive repairs was in 1294 during the period of Malik al-Adil al-Mansurri.

As in the Mamluk period, the Ottoman Sultans gave great importance to the Qubbat As-



The dome of Qubbat As-Sakhrah

Sakhrah. Between 1548 and 1561, Suleiman the Magnificent replaced the historical mosaics on the dome of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah with the tiles specially prepared in Istanbul.



In the same way, after making a general repair in the Qubbat As-Sakhrah, he pierced new windows and covered the doors with copper. Sultan Abdulmejid II made extensive repairs in the Qubbat As-Sakhrah. In 1874, Sultan Abd al-Aziz placed a large chandelier between the door on the Qibla side and the pulpit, and covered the dome with lead. In 1876, Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II inscribed the Surah Yaseen in thuluth khat (Ottoman script style) on the exterior surface of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah.

Today, TIKA carries out restoration works in a silent manner. In 2012, the *alem* (the crescent and the star on top of a minaret) in the height of approximately 5 meters on the dome was placed with the

cooperation of the construction committee of al-Aqsa Mosque and TIKA as a demonstration of love and affection of the Muslims in Turkey for this place.



Alem (finial) placed on top of the dome of Qubbat as-Sakhrah by TİKA





### Architecture Of Qubbat As-Sakhrah

The Qubbat As-Sakhrah is a composition full of symbols, in terms of both its interior and exterior architecture. Between the dome and the octagonal structure, there is a circular collar decorated with tiles, on which some verses from the surah al-Isra are inscribed. In this structure, owing to the fact that the columns that support the circle have a 2,5-3 degree of indentation, it is possible for a person to see the interior of the structure that the columns supported through a wide angle no matter from whichever one of these four doors he/she enters into the structure.



Ceiling decorations of the Qubbat as-Sakhrah

This magnificent structure presents us our master's (saw) Miraj, the good tidings revealed in Miraj, heaven, hell, and the significance that we should attach to the time and the environment, in short, a





summary of Islam. The Qubbat As-Sakhrah is not an ordinary structure but a place where verses, hadiths and love are represented with the stones.

When Abd al-Malik bin Marwan

built the Qubbat As-Sakhrah, he put four main columns around the Foundation Stone (Sakhrah). These four columns symbolized the four seasons, also the four fards (obligations) of the ablution. He laid twelve columns between these four columns, which constituted the first ring, and they symbolized the twelve months of the year and the twelve fards of the prayer. The second ring consists of twenty-four columns. The columns on which the fruits of heaven were depicted symbolize a day whilst the fifty-two windows around the dome symbolize the

"By Time, surely man is in loss. Save those who believe and do good deeds, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience."<sup>3</sup>

weeks of the year. Abd al-Malik bin Marwan reflected the Muslim perspective on architecture. When we look round the Qubbat As-Sakhrah with the eyes of our heart, we see, as it were, the exegesis of the surah al-Asr in its architecture:





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#### Tiles of Qubbat As-Sakhrah

When the Qubbat As-Sakhrah was built in the time of Abd al-Malik bin Marwan its exterior facades were covered with mosaics by Byzantine architects. The architects of Suleiman the Magnificent did not like this mosaic which was a Byzantine architectural hallmark. These mosaics were completely dismantled and the floors were covered with marble up to the door level and the rest was covered with the tiles brought from Iran. Excluding the restoration works carried out at different times after Suleiman the Magnificent, Ahmad III changed all the tiles and the stained glass windows in 1720. A similar restoration was carried out during the period of Mahmud II. Half a century later, Sultan Abdulmejid and Abd al-Aziz changed the cover of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah once more with the tiles brought from Istanbul. Jerusalem was turned into a municipality in the period of Sultan Abdulaziz (1863).4 Within the scope of the program of the repair and decoration of official and important buildings initiated in the three sacred sanctuaries of Islam, some worn-out tiles from the time of Suleiman the Magnificent on the facade of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah were renovated.

<sup>4</sup> Osmanlı Filistin'inde İdari Yapı, Kemal Gurulkan, Kültür Dergisi, Summer 2009, Issue 15, pp. 24-33.

Yaseen Sharif was inscribed on the tiles, on the upper parts of 8 facades of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah by M. Shafik Bey. In some resources, the year 1875 is given as the date of these improvements.

In the meantime, Yaseen Sharif was inscribed on the tiles, on the upper parts of 8 facades of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah by M. Shafik Bey. In some resources, the year 1875 is given as the date of these improvements.5 Although this situation is a source of great joy and pride for us, there has not yet been any profound research in the Ottoman archives in reference to the subjects such as the dates of Shafik Bey's presence in Jerusalem, where his estates could have been located and in which workshops the tiles were produced. This topic is mentioned only in the resources related to the life of M. Shafik Bey in one line stating that M. Shafik Bey inscribed Yaseen Sharif on eight facades of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah, and then he was abandoned just among the pages of the books. This issue awaits researchers to clarify.

This issue has been left among the pages of the books, just citing in one line that M. Shafik Bey inscribed Yaseen Sharif on eight facades of the Qubbat As-Sakhrah, from the resources related to M. Shafik Bey's life.

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### Wisdom behind the Inscription of Surah Taha on the Dome of Qubbat As-Sakhrah

The polytheists gathered in the Darun Nadwah, their advisory council, in Mecca and decided to kill our Prophet (saw). For this purpose, they chose Omar bin al-Khattab who was brave and bold with a harsh nature among them and sent him away. Omar set off with the intention of killing the Master of the worlds blindly. Hearing that his sister and brother-in-law became Muslims, Omar lost his temper terribly, and headed straight for his sister's house in rage.

At that time, his sister and brotherin-law, along with the Habbab were reading the Holy Quran. When they saw that Omar was coming towards them in anger, they hid Habbab in a room in their house. Omar's sister

o Prof. Dr. Ali Alparslan, Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi, İstanbul, p. 195



The dome of Qubbat as-Sakhrah on which the verses of Surah Taha are inscribed

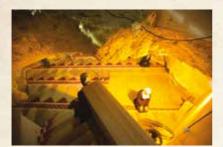
immediately hid away the pages of the Holy Quran. Entering the house, Omar, asked for what they had just read. His sister and brother-in-law said, "You must have heard it wrong, there is no such thing here!" Omar beat them. When he calmed down, and saw the blood on his sister's face, his heart ached. Regretting what he did, "Just bring what you were reading!" he said.

Omar's sister gave him the page they had been reading. Omar began to read the verses of Surah Taha, "Ta, Ha. (O Muhammad!) We have not sent down to you the Qur'an that you be distressed. But only as a reminder for those who fear Allah." Omar, reading these verses, as it were, was left speechless. The fluency and eloquence of the Quran mesmerized him immensely. These

words were full of truth and wisdom that no human could ever utter. For a moment, he was immersed in thought, and eventually he accepted Islam.

Perhaps, this verse was inscribed on the dome of Qubbat as-Sakhrah as a reverence to Omar, the conqueror of Jerusalem so that it would be a reminder of this incident.

""Ta, Ha. (O Muhammad!) We have not sent down to you the Qur'an that you be distressed. But only as a reminder for those who fear Allah." Omar, reading these verses, as it were, was left speechless. The fluency and eloquence of the Quran mesmerized him immensely. These words were full of truth and wisdom that no human could ever utter. For a moment, he was immersed in thought, and eventually he accepted Islam.



A view of the interior of the cave beneath the Floating Rock

# Foundation Stone / Floating Rock

The Foundation Stone (al-Sakhrah al-Musharrafah / "The Noble Rock") is a natural rock with an irregular shape. Beneath the rock, there is a small cave called the Mosque of the Prophets. Most Muslims believe that our prophet stepped on this rock while ascending to heaven on Miraj night. The virtue of this rock is because it is within the boundaries. of al-Aqsa compound (the Temple Mount). It is also a common belief among people that this rock is hanging in the air between earth and heaven. It is related that from the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Ajwaa Dates and the rock in Bayt al-Magdis are from heaven."7 It is believed that the small mihrab on the left side of the section beneath the Foundation Stone symbolizes the prayer Ishmael performed on Miraj night.







### Mihrab(niche) of Ishmael

The big niche on the right side of the cave beneath the Foundation Stone is known as Mihrab of Abraham. According to narratives, Abraham performed his prayer here on the night of Miraj.

Foundation Stone is sacred to Jews and Christians, too, as it is to Muslims. According to Jewish faith, Abraham brought his son, Isaac to this rock to sacrifice, and Gabriel presented the ram to him here. According to Islamic faith, Abraham took not his son Isaac but Ishmael to sacrifice to Jamarat in the Mina district of Mecca where pilgrims cast stones at the devil and Gabriel presented the ram to Abraham there.

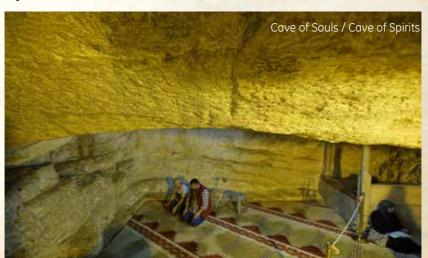
### Mihrab of Fatima az-Zahra

Since the period of Abd al-Malik bin Marwan in the 7th century, everyone up to day has imprinted a part from their heart and soul to

Qubbat as-Sakhrah as a token of their love. One night Abdul Hamid Khan had a dream where Fatima was performing prayer in tears in front of the mihrab in the Qubbat as-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock). He summoned the library manager, who was originally from Jerusalem, and asked, "Is there such a mihrab in the Oubbat as-Sakhrah?" When the library manager said that there was no such mihrab in the Oubbat as-Sakhrah, Abdul Hamid Khan said in tears, "So, we have received a sign in the dream, we have been assigned to build such a mihrab in the Qubbat as-Sakhrah," and he built the mihrab there and named it the Mihrab of Fatima az-Zahra.

# Qubbat al-Silsilah/Dome of the Chain

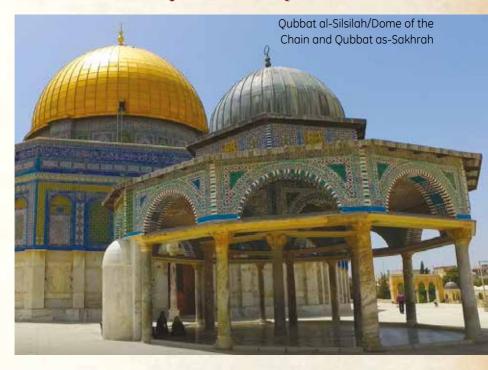
The Qubbat al-Silsilah is a hexagonal dome, smaller than the Qubbat as-Sakhrah in terms of size,



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located in the east of the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, which was built at the order of the Umayyad caliph, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in 691. It is also called the Court of David.<sup>8</sup> According to some historians, it is considered the first specimen of Qubbat as-Sakhrah. Decoration of the dome with the tiles took place in 1561 by the edict of Suleiman the Magnificent. When the Crusaders invaded Jerusalem, they turned this dome into a church and called it St. James Church. After Salah ad-Din Ayyub recaptured

Jerusalem in 1187, the dome was converted back to it previous state.

Qubbat al-Silsilah (Dome of the Chain) underwent an extensive restoration; it was renovated with the tiles identical to the original ones manufactured in Iznik and by Al-Aqsa Mosque Reconstruction Committee and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in 2012.

### **Courtesy of the Ancestors**

The inheritance from our ancestors includes not only the architecture, but also their beautiful traditions. Wherever they went, our ancestors

<sup>8</sup> İhab Selîm el-Cellâd, *Meâlimu'l-Aksâ Tahte'l-Micher*, Merkezü Beyti'l-Makdis li'l-Edeb, p. 109.



A painting depicting Selim I's entering Jerusalem

brought not only their architecture but also their traditions. Selim I came to Jerusalem with 12 thousand soldiers, on that account, 12 thousand torches were lit in the courtyard of Jerusalem, and so, the area between the Qubbat as-Sakhrah and al-Aqsa Mosque was called the 'courtyard with twelve thousand candleholders'. Sultan Selim I entered the Qubbat as-Sakhrah with his retinue and saw that everyone was walking from left to right. The Sultan's voice echoed throughout the Qubbat as-Sakhrah, "Stop!" Everyone turned to Sultan in amazement. He did not allow walking from left to right by saying, "We Muslims go from left to right only around the Ka'bah, let's not be disrespectful to the Ka'bah, even if this is not our intention, let's walk from right to left." Upon this

tradition of Sultan Selim I, anyone who enters the Qubbat as-Sakhrah walks from right to left lest they have a slip of heart and be disrespectful to the *tawaf* around Ka'bah.

# Beliefs Related to Foundation Stone

#### Well of Souls / Mihrab of Zechariah

Just on the front side of the mihrab, there is a well closed with a carpet, which is called the "Well of Souls" among people. However, this belief does not reflect the reality. The truth is that, the Jews used this place as an altar during the periods of both Solomon's Temple and Herodian Temple. They even built a channel so that the blood of the sacrificed victims would flow until the Kidron Valley from here.



There is a seat, which looks like a rostrum just at the back of the Foundation Stone. It is known as the Maqam of Zechariah. It is believed that the prophet John's (Yahya) father, Zechariah, who is a symbol of Jerusalem and undertook the responsibility of looking after Mary in al-Aqsa compound, performed prayer here at Miraj night.

According to a belief among the folks, while the Messenger of Allah was performing prayer here at Miraj night, he stood up from the bowing down position (*rukoo*) and the rock retracted itself for fear that his head might touch the rock. If his head did not touch the rock after standing up from the rukoo, then the same must have applied when he was standing, too. Such and similar beliefs among the people are nothing but myths and superstitions. Superstitions weaken the power of truth. What is real is the Miraj and the good tidings bestowed

on our master, the Messenger of Allah during the Miraj. If we were to believe in superstitions, they would weaken the power of true Miraj. As Hakim Nishapuri who wrote the first resource of methodology of hadith, says, "The rivers bring along with them trash too, the sage is he who sorts them out while watering people." Thus, in this study, we tried to sort out the superstitions as much as we could and made an effort to constitute a reliable perception of Jerusalem.

### The Miraculous Night Journey (Miraj)

It is a term that refers to the journey our Prophet made from the Masjid

"The rivers bring along with them trash too, the sage is he who sorts them out while watering people."



al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa (al-Aqsa compound) and from there to the spiritual realms. The incident of Miraj as generally handled in Islamic sources, occured in two phases. The journey of our Prophet (saw) from the Masjid al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa is called "Isra", and his ascension to the heavenly realms is called "Miraj". Allah had his servant (Prophet Muhammad) make a journey at night, from Masjid

al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa the surroundings of which were rendered sacred, to show the signs of His might.<sup>9</sup>

There are four gates of Qubbat as-Sakhrah sheltering the Foundation Stone. One of the gates is called the Gate of Heaven. Entering the Gate of Heaven, there are seven more gates. These symbolic seven gates represent the seven levels of heaven that



the Messenger of Allah ascended during the Miraj. Our Master, the Messenger of Allah met a prophet on each level of heaven, he met with Abraham in front of Bayt al-Mamur, which is a representation of Ka'bah in the heavenly realm, on the seventh level. Everyday 70 thousand angels circumambulate Bayt al-Mamur and they recite this tasbeeh during their "Sübhânallahi circumambulation. ve bihamdihî sübhânallahi'l-azîm" (Glory be to Allah and His is the praise, (and) Allah, the Greatest is free from imperfection).

The Messenger of Allah last met Abraham and came into the presence of Allah. He met Allah the Almighty and received revelations beyond time and space in such a way that no human mind can conceive or comprehend.



A view of the interior of the Qubbat as-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock)

The journey of our Prophet (saw) from the Masjid al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa is called "Isra", and his ascension to the heavenly realms is called "Miraj".



### THE MIRACULOUS NIGHT JOURNEY (MIRAJ)

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) came into the presence of Allah, he saluted this way, "Ettahiyyatü lillahi vessalevatü ve'ttayyibat." meaning, "Glory, praise and gratitude be all to You, O Lord!" A reply, good news came from the presence of Allah, "Es-selamü aleyke eyyühen-Nebiyyü ve rahmetullahi ve berakâtüh." meaning, "May the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you!"

In such a blessed environment, in the most extraordinary moment a human being can experience and in the most sublime maqam, the Messenger of Allah (saw), intervened by saying, "May this salutation not only on me, but also on my *ummah* (community) and on all the righteous

servants of Allah." "Es-selamü aleyna ve alâ ibadillahis-salihîn." meaning, "May the peace be upon all of us and all the righteous servants of Allah." In the presence of Allah, even in this most sublime state, he thought of us, his ummah, involving in the greeting. All the angels in whole the creation overflowed with love; he is such a merciful prophet that he does not forget his ummah even in the most sublime state. Altogether they said, "Eşhedü en la ilahe illallah ve eşhedü enne Muhammeden abduhû Rasûluhû." meaning, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

The prayer "Et-Tahiyyatü" that we recited in all prayers is the greeting between Allah and His messenger during the *Miraj*. The greatest gift the Messenger of Allah (saw) brought to us is five times daily prayers



(salaah). The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Salaah (prayer) is the Miraj (ascension) of the believers." The moment when a person is closest to Allah is the moment of sujood (prostration). 10 And, reciting the prayer at-Tahiyyat in each daily prayer by repeating the salutation between Allah and His Messenger during the Miraj, we hope to be involved in this salutation.

The second gift our master, the Messenger of Allah (saw) brought to us from Miraj is the last two verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, known as Aman al-Rasul<sup>11</sup> that we recite at the mosque after every night prayer. It was such good news for us, because before these verses, Allah the Almighty said, "Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account

for it."12 This was something beyond one's strength and endurance. Our Lord gave us good news with Amenerrasulu, "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people..."13

The third gift brought by our Prophet from Miraj is that anyone who dies without associating partners with Allah will eventually enter the heaven either after being punished or simply by attaining the endowment of Allah; no believer shall remain in hell eternally.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Müslim, Salât, 42; Ebû Davud, Salât, 152

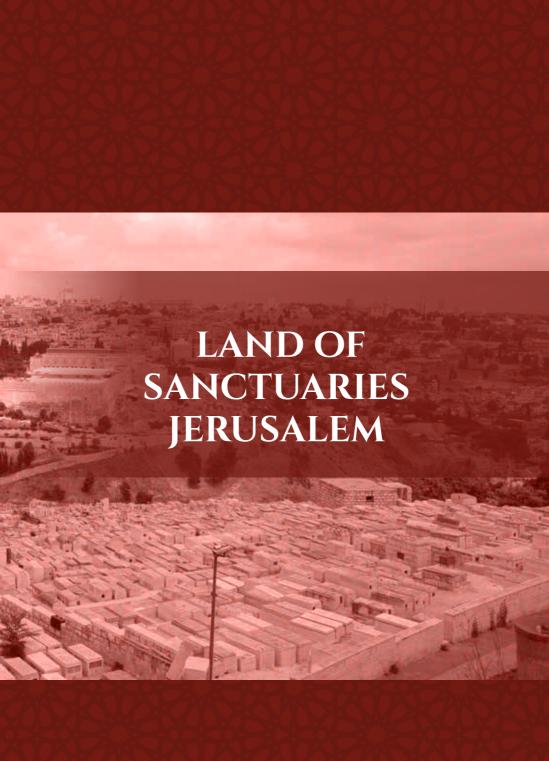
<sup>11</sup> Al-Bagarah, 2:284-286

<sup>12</sup> Al-Baqarah, 2:284

<sup>13</sup> Al-Bagarah, 2:286

<sup>14</sup> Müslim, İman, 279



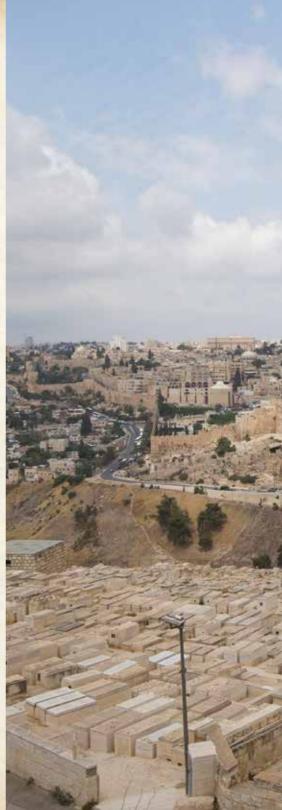


# **Mount of Olives Parable of Uzair**

Jerusalem, once David made the capital city, was in ruins. Right after the Kingdom of Babylon brought the city to ruin, Uzair watched Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, and as related to us in the Quran, events unfolded as follows, "Or as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, 'How will Allah bring this to life after its death?' So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, 'How long have you remained (dead)?' The man said, 'I have remained a day or part of a day.' He said, 'Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them



Remnants of the Umayyad Palaces in front of al-Aqsa Mosque







Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

with flesh.' And when it became clear to him, he said, 'I know that Allah is over all things competent." 1

Those who say Jerusalem crumbled should remember that Allah is the almighty. As in the example of Uzair; Allah caused him to die for 100 years. When Uzair slept, he was 40 years old. He had a 20-year-old son. Persians dominated Jerusalem (536 BCE) after the Kingdom of Bablyon had ravaged it. During this period, Jerusalem was reconstructed; a second sanctuary was built on the site of Solomon's Temple. Uzair entered the city, found the way to his house as far as he could remember: an old crippled woman with gray hair was sitting in front of the house. He

asked, "Do you know Uzair's house?" When the woman said, "No one has mentioned the name of Uzair for 100 years, what do you want from his house?" he said, "I am Uzair." The woman did not believe him. When she said, "I knew Uzair; he had a mole on his back," he showed her his mole. Uzair's son who was 20 when his father fell asleep, was then 120 years old. Allah took the Torah away from Jews for they did not act accordingly and distorted it. When the Babylonians ravaged Jerusalem they also burned all copies of the Torah.

Allah sent the angels, and the Torah, which had been revealed to Moses, was revealed again to the heart of Uzair. It was Uzair who



A view of the Mount of Olives from the walls of al-Aqsa Mosque compound

rewrote the Torah. After Uzair rewrote the Torah, a man among them brought the news that his father had hidden an original copy of the Torah in a field so they all went on and unburied it. When they compared the new Torah Uzair wrote with the old copy, they saw both were the same. Hence, the Jewish people went too far in their love for Uzair as mentioned in the Quran, "The Jews say, 'Ezra is the son of Allah" <sup>2</sup> No-

never! Allah begets no offspring. The Quran told the history of Jerusalem in a way with the parable of Uzair.

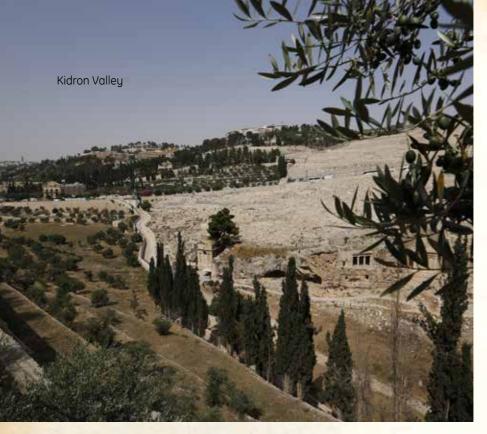
Surah At-Tin in the Quran makes references to the incidents that took place around the Mount of Olives. Those who want to have the best view of Jerusalem watch it from the Mount of Olives. From a high place up the mountain, it is possible to watch the uniqe sunset, the magnificent scenery of the Old City, and the gorgeous view of the Dead Sea and the Moab Mountains to the east.

2 At-Tin, 9:30

Surah At-Tin in the Quran makes references to the incidents that took place around the Mount of Olives. Those who want to have the best view of Jerusalem watch it from the Mount of Olives

### **Kidron Valley**

The Mount of Olives and the Old City are seperated by Kidron Valley. Jesus passed through this valley many times along with his disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, including Holy Thursday evening. The graves of



Mary, her mother, her father Imran, John's (Yahya) father Zechariah, and of St. Joseph who is thought to be betrothed to Mary are all located in the Kidron Valley, also known as the Jerusalem Cemetery.

**Jewish Cemetery** 

Jews believe that the resurrection and the last judgement will take

Jesus passed through this valley many times along with his disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, including Holy Thursday evening place on the Mount of Olives after death, and those who will be resurrected on this hill will directly go to heaven. On account of this belief, a burial place on Mount of Olives is worth a fortune. According



The tomb of Zechariah in the Kidron Valley

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to Jews, two sirat bridges will be set up from Mount of Olives to Bayt al-Maqdis (Beit HaMikdash); one is of iron, the other is of paper. Those who give importance to power and worship power will rush to cross the iron one, but they will fall into hell. Those who prefer the paper bridge, that is, science, understanding and wisdom will be able to cross to the other side. In Islamic tradition, when the body of a decedent is buried in the cemetery, they are laid on their right side, facing Qibla. Jews bury the bodies of their decedents turning their faces to Bayt al-Maqdis.

There are many stones on some graves while there are none on some

others in the Kidron Valley. These are called testimony stones. It is believed that those who come to visit the graveyard will testify both for themselves and for the decedent buried in that grave on the Day of Resurrection. And, the graves with no stones on them are the ones that have no visitors.

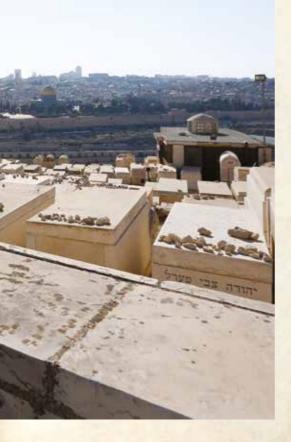


Testimony stones on the Jewish graves

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#### Tomb of Absalom (Avshalom)

Tomb of Absalom is at the foot of a pine tree a little way down the Jewish cemetery. Absalom was one of David's children. It was narrated that he was a rebellious son. The Jewish people always cast stones while passing by that tomb due to this. There is another narrative in relation to this subject. When Napoleon came to Jerusalem he heard of this story. Since Napoleon would not simply cast stones, he asked for his fire arms and fired six shots but he misfired each time. With the seventh shot, he cut the hand in the shape of a fist on top of the the tomb and the Tomb of Absalom was left without it. This story is an urban myth. There is no information on Napoleon's visit all the way to Jerusalem. Because Napoleon was halted by Ahmed al Jazzar Pasha in Acre.

### **Muslim cemetery**

The Muslim cemetery lies along the walls of Jerusalem from end to end on the other side of Kidron Valley. There are many companions (*Sahabah*) buried in this graveyard, whose names are unknown to us.







# Churches of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives

According to the accounts of the modern day Christianity and Bibles, Jesus Christ was buried after he was crucified on Friday, and he was resurrected on Sunday to live 40 days more. He met his disciples, and he ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives. All the churches on



In this graveyard, many a companions(sahabah) whose names are unknown to us are buried.

## THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM

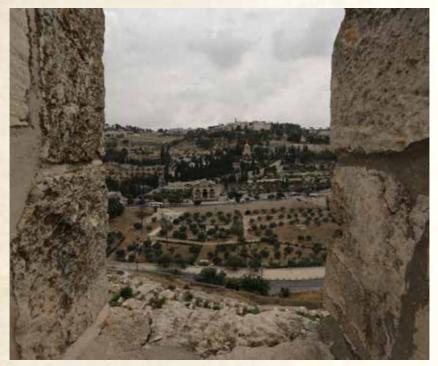


Tomb of Ubada ibn as-Samit, a companion of the Prophet

Tomb of Shaddad bin Aws, a companion of the Prophet



An inscription with a picture of the Turkish flag in the cemetery whose walls were repaired by TİKA



Ascension church on the Mount of Olives

this mountain are the churches of ascension symbolizing the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven. Almost every country and denomination has their own churches.

# Mosque of the Ascension and Church of the Ascension

It is understood from the remnants today that there was a church belonging to the Byzantine period around the hill of the rock on which Jesus Christ is believed to have stepped and ascended to heaven in Christian theology and that there

are sacrificial altars inside the church belonging to the Assyrians, the Armenians and the Copts.

### Mosque of the Ascension

Salah ad-Din Ayyub built a mihrab inside this chapel and a dome over it. Considering the architectural characteristics of the structure, it is thought that prayers were performed here for some time.

Esat Efendi, who was a *kadi* (Muslim judge) in Istanbul, built an Ascension Zawiya and a mosque next to the structure in 1570.

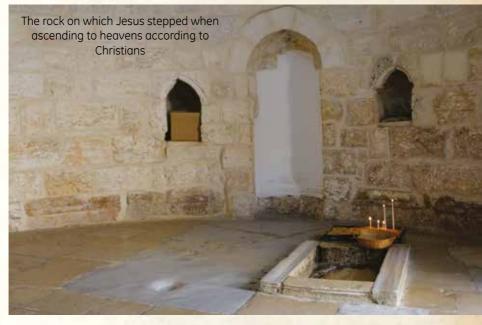


Minaret of the Ascension Mosque



Remnants of the churches from the Byzantine period

There was an open air chapel here when Salah ad-Din conquered Jerusalem in 1187.



### Zawiya al-As'adiyya

Esat Efendi entrusted this *zawiya* to Alemi family in 1628. Today, the Alemi family still administers the waqf of the mosque.

# The Church of Mary Magdalene

The Russian Orthodox Church with gilded domes on the right of Kidron Valley is called the Church of Mary Magdalene. Czar Alexander III wanted to build a church in Jerusalem but his actual motive was to turn Jerusalem into the capital of Orthodox Christianity. His sisterin-law, Elizabeth undertook the construction of the church. The



Zawiya al-As'adiyya



A grave belonging to the Alemi Family who ran the waqf of Ascension Zawiya and Mosque







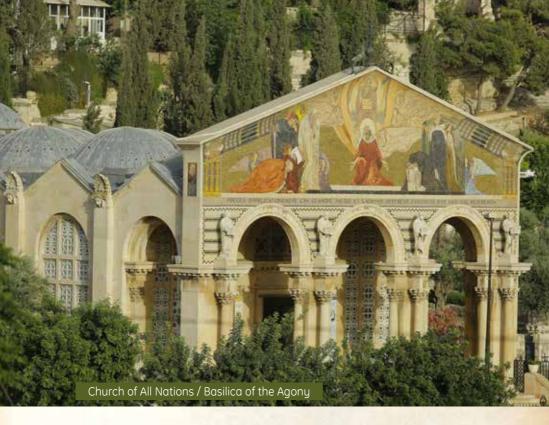
church was built in 1888, Elizabeth prayed at the opening ceremony of the church and said that she wanted to be buried there when she died. They laughed at Elizabeth that day. Bolshevik Revolution took place a few years later, and the Czar's family was imprisoned in a mine, bombed and all were killed. Elizabeth's body was sent to China, which had not yet adopted the communist regime. As the Christians in Jerusalem knew about her will, they brought her to Jerusalem and buried her there.

The Church of Mary Magdalene was built in memory of Mary

Magdalene, and also to remind of the Russian Czar Alexander's mother, Mary who had the same name.

## Church of All Nations and Garden of Gethsemane

This church located on the outskirts of the Mount of Olives is the olive garden where Jesus prayed on the night he was arrested by the Jewish soldiers. This place, also called the Garden of Gethsemane, is a hedged olive garden in the church courtyard. The church is considered one of the most beautiful churches of Jerusalem today. The church is



called the Church of All Nations because 16 states contributed to the construction of the church, which was built between the years 1919-1924. In the Garden of Gethsemane, there are the oldest olive trees in the world, about 2000 years old.

# The Church of Dominus Flevit ("The Lord has wept")

In Kidron Valley that lies on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, the Polish Church, built in the shape of a teardrop in its architecture, is located right next to the Jewish graveyard. The church was completed in 1955, symbolizing tears of Jesus while

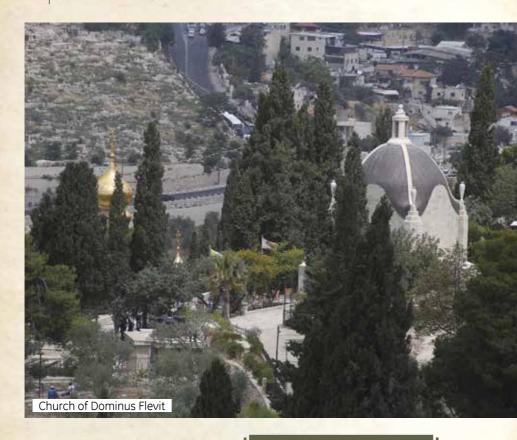
watching the city and Solomon's Temple before his arrest as narrated in the Book of Luke.



Garden of Gethsemane and 2000-year-old olive trees







### Augusta Victoria Monastery

It is a monatery built on the Mount of Olives by Wilhelm II, the German Kaiser in memory of his wife, Agusta Victoria. This building was used as the fourth headquarters of the Ottoman army during the First World War. When he was a military officer and the executive assistant of Jamal Pasha, Falih Rıfkı Atay wrote his book the "Mount of Olives" in the tower of Augusta Victoria. So many more passed through this

According to an account, the rock in front of the altar at the church is where Jesus prostrated for prayer and worship. Elsewhere in the same garden is the Church of Dominus Flevit the construction of which was completed in 1955 in memory of the incident mentioned in the Book of Luke that Jesus cried watching the city and Solomon's Temple before he was captured.



land, Jamal pasha, Enver Pasha... and last of all, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. When the region fell under the British rule after the defeat of the Ottomon Empire in the Sinai and Palestine campaign in 1917, this monastery became the headquarters for the British army. Today it serves as a German hospital.

### FALIH RIFKI ATAY'S VIEW OF JERUSALEM (1915)

Some observations of Falih Rıfkı Atay, which make us think deeply even today, in his book, the Mount of Olives, are as follows, "The Fourth Army Headquarters was in the

So many more passed through this land, Jamal pasha, Enver Pasha... and last of all, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.





German guesthouse on top of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. The most beautiful structure of Jerusalem belongs to the Germans and likewise, the second most beautiful structure belongs to them, too, the largest structure to the Russians and all the other buildings to the British or the French. In other words, they all belong to other nations.

In Jerusalem, hotels are half-churches, their butlers half priests and maids half nurses. Their robes, idols and white hoods, tuxedos, straps and aprons are all kept in the same closet. I used to think that the priests of the Church of Resurrection had a false beard. When they slightly bow, the ridges of their pistol grip is seen behind their robes.

The Zionists virtually constituted a secret government in Palestine. They had a flag and mail. They used their own stamps on their mails and got their own clerks to send them.

The word Jerusalem connotes Christianity. However, there is no such issue as Christianity neither in Jerusalem nor in Palestine. The Christianity of Jerusalem is the political issue of Orthodox Petersburg, Protestant Berlin, irreligious Paris, Catholic Rome and Anglican London. Jerusalem's local issue is the Jewish-Arab conflict: a handful of Jews and six hundred



Mount of Olives from the Muslim Cemetery

thousand Arabs! As for the Muslim Arabs, they serve these masters: Arab day-labourers make wine from grapes and the well-fed Jews drink the wine.

I wandered the Jewish Palestine several times from Jaffa to Jerusalem. The new towns and villages of Palestine are Jewish works. Rather than being new, this one is an entirely new Palestine. (The State of Israel was not established yet.) In order to see what a great power money has, you must see the shores and inlands of Palestine, and the Jews and Zionism's exploitation that has driven the majority of Arab population towards the desert. Tears of centruies would not be worth a gold bullion. A single speech of Balfour is more effective

than all the Psalms of David. As soon as they heard of a probable forced migration of Jews, the nations fighting amongst themselves united against us. The Jewish bankers causing all the Christians, Protestant, Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox fight with one another and blending Passover holiday with Christian blood between the years 1914-1918, succeeded in turning all churches against the mosque for the interests of the synagogue."

Falih Rıfkı goes on with these tragic statements: "One day when I went into the Commander's room, I saw that his eyes were weary from crying. Jerusalem was in the hands of the British. I read from the ciphered telegram on the table about



Jerusalem's local issue is the Jewish-Arab conflict: a handful of Jews and six hundred thousand Arabs! As for the Muslim Arabs, they serve these masters: Arab day-labourers make wine from grapes and the well-fed Jews drink the wine.

how the last Turks left there had fought heroically. We did not leave Jerusalem as the Israelites did; we left it like the Turks.

Inside the headquarters, the news, "Jerusalem fell!" was spread like wildfire. Even now, we should have already been ready to shed tears for Beirut, Damascus and Allepo. Now we were worried about only Anatolia and Istanbul, farewell to the empire and to all its dreams and hopes! The pit of the Dead Sea, which came into

sight through the pine trees of the Mount of Olives, which once looked as if it would never be shaded by the night and its sun would never set, now is growing bigger and deeper like a grave engulfing an entire empire.

As the train moves along, we are jettisoning Syria and Lebanon from both sides. Tomorrow, we will end up finding ourselves so miserable among the Anatolian villages without Allepo, Beirut, Lebanon,

Inside the headquarters, the news, "Jerusalem fell!" was spread like wildfire. Even now, we should have already been ready to shed tears for Beirut, Damascus and Allepo





Damascus, Jerusalem, drowned in anxiety of ourselves and homeland." <sup>3</sup>

### Al-Buraq Wall/Wailing Wall/ Western Wall

The front side of the western wall of al-Aqsa Mosque is known as the Wailing Wall where Jews perform their religious rituals. It is about 485 m long, 18 m above the ground, extending 6 m across the sanctuary site. Jews turned this site into an accommodation for prayers in the late 12th century. This wall is composed of 24 stones above the ground level and 19 under the ground. In Islamic belief and history, al-Buraq Wall has a relation to the miraculous Miraj. This is because the mount called Buraq that brought the Messenger of Allah (saw) from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa was tied to a spot here. Al Buraq Wall is an inseperable part of al-Aqsa Mosque and a waqf of Islam.

The first seven rows of the wall from the bottom belongs to the Roman Emperor Herod, the next four rows, to the Mamluks and the last layer on the top, to the Ottoman period. It was Salah ad-Din Ayyub, who first allowed the Jewish immigrants to settle down and look at the wall from a distance. Suleiman the Magnificent gave permission to Jews to stand in front of the wall unless they display a religious symbol and conduct religious ceremonies.

Suleiman the Magnificent sent the Architect Sinan to Egypt in order to report the last condition of the works remaining from the Mamluks. The Architect Sinan stopped by Jerusalem on his way to Egypt and built Bab al-Amud, also called Damascus Gate, near the square of East Jerusalem. Jews, seeing that the Architect Sinan was there, wrote a letter to Istanbul. They said that they were not safe on the Mount of Olives, and that the Bedouins (nomadic Arabs of the desert) were attacking them during their prayers and they

The front side of the western wall of al-Aqsa Mosque is known as the Wailing Wall where Jews perform their religious rituals. It is about 485 m long, 18 m above the ground, extending 6 m across the sanctuary site. Jews turned this site into an accommodation for prayers in the late 12th century.

<sup>3</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay, Zeytin Dağı, Pozitif Yayınları, pp. 45, 48, 70, 73, 74, 116





The excavation work carried out beneath al-Agsa Mosque

demanded a safe place to pray within the city walls.

Suleiman the Magnificent sent an edict to the Archtitect Sinan, who was in Jeruslaem, and asked him to assign a place for prayer for the Jews on a convenient site. They put up a wall on the front side of the western wall of al-Aqsa Mosque,

The fact that Suleiman the Magnificent assigned a site so close to a sanctuary which is of great importance to Muslims is the most beautiful example of how our ancestors treated different cultures, faiths and civilizations with respect and tolerance.

namely, on the front side of the place known as the Wailing Wall today, and by lowering the ground a bit they enabled the wall to look more imposing. The Jewish used to pray and shed tears between these two walls until 1967.

The fact that Suleiman the Magnificent assigned a site so close to a sanctuary which is of great importance to Muslims is the most beautiful example of how our ancestors treated different cultures, faiths and civilizations with respect and tolerance. Both in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and in front of the Wailing Wall, we see that Islam is the key to the peace for different civilizations.

The Jews attempted to start a new bidah (refers to any innovations in religious matters) by sitting on the chairs they brought to Buraq square in Jerusalem in 1911, during the late period of the Ottoman administration. Thereupon, trustee of the Waqf sent a letter of complaint to the *kadi* (Muslim judge) of Jerusalem. At that point, some Jews tried to prove their loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan and they wanted to affect the Ottoman administration. by making some offers to Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II. However, Abdul Hamid Khan II rejected all their offers and gave instructions to prevent any encroachment to Muslim rights in that pure location and to keep Buraq wall intact.

In 1967, the Israeli administration expanded the area of the wall built by Mimar Sinan, by demolishing al-Megharibe neighborhood, and turned it into a place where the Jews conducted their religious ceremonies every day.

In 1930, the inquiry carried out by the British Commission for the Investigation of Facts on the claims made by Jews and Muslims on the ownership of al Buraq Wall resulted in a decision officially registering that al Buraq Wall and the other buildings were the property of Islamic foundations.

### Why do Jews wail?

The Jewish people previously used to pray on the Mount of Olives and wail for Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Jerusalem went through two big destructions throughout its history during the periods of the Kingdom of Babylon and the Roman Empire. After the Roman



raid in 70 C.E., the Jewish people couldn't live in Jerusalem any longer; they were either killed or exiled. That is why the Jewish people wail; they could not look after Jerusalem, Bayt al-Maqdis, Solomon's Temple. They remember a verse in the Torah as they wail: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!" <sup>4</sup> They shed tears there with the feeling that they could

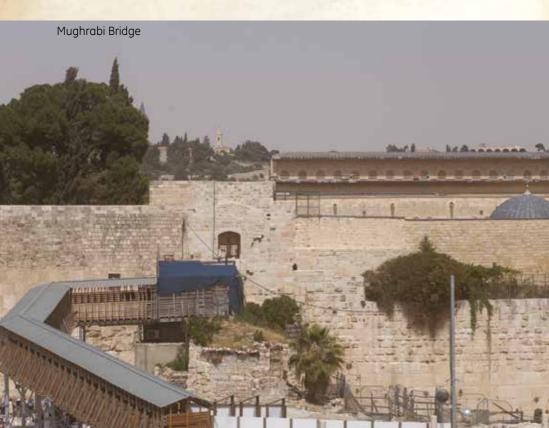
<sup>4</sup> Psalm 137:5-6

not protect Jerusalem, and instill consciousness of Jerusalem into their future generations. Military ceremonies, merry days and special occassions are all held in front of the Wailing Wall.

The hill where Qubbat As-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock) is located is also sacred to Jewish people. According to their belief, Abraham took his son, Isaac to the hill on which Qubbat As-Sakhrah is located for sacrifice and Allah gave him away a ram through Gabriel just as he was about to sacrifice him. We Muslims believe that Abraham took Ishmael,

not Isaac, to the Mina district of Mecca and Gabriel presented a ram to Abraham there just before the sacrifice.

Since the Jewish people cannot enter or claim the Temple Mount on which Qubbat As-Sakhrah is located, which they call the Holy of the Holies, they believe that when they pray at a place as close as possible to this area their prayers will be accepted, therefore, they wail from there and pray. According to Jewish faith, as if the prayers performed before this wall will pass through a time tunnel and reach Allah. The



Jewish who cannot visit this place send their prayers via e-mail or fax to be inserted into the crevices of the wall. They believe these letters of prayers placed into cracks of the wall reach Allah as well.

### The Mughrabi Bridge

The road, just a little way ahead of the Wailing Wall according to Jews or Buraq Wall to Muslims, leading to Masjid al-Aqsa, is called the Mughrabi Bridge. As Moroccans lived in the quarter behind the wall during the Ottoman period, it was called the Moroccan Quarter or

Mughrabi Quarter. This quarter was also the waqf property of the Ayyubid sultan Malik Al-Afdal ibn Salah ad-Din. The small gate opening to the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque from this quarter where Moroccan Muslims live, is named the Mughrabi Gate. Today, this gate is the entrance that allows Christians and Jews to the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque for visiting purposes. Every morning they come to this gate and visit the courtyard between 8 am and 11 am but they are not allowed to go into the mosques.

Minaret and the bell tower on Zion Hill



#### **DAVID**

David's reign was between the years 1010-970 BCE. When the Israelites left Egypt led by Moses they could not reach Jerusalem, the holy land. After Moses' death, it was granted to Joshua to enter the region of Ard al Mi'ad (Palestine and Damascus). Joshua is Moses' nephew, and the son of Nun, who was a descent of Joseph. His mother is the sister of Moses. He was born in Egypt. After Moses, he took the children of Israel out of the desert et-Tih and took them to the land of Canaan, the old homeland of their ancestors. After long-term combats and struggles with the Amalekites and native tribes, Joshua captured the lands of Palestine, Jordan and Damascus. He settled the Israelites in the towns. He ruled the Israelites for some time.

He died in Palestine when he was one hundred and twenty-seven years

The Amalekites had a fight with the Israelites, defeated them and took the Ark of the Covenant with them. In order to fight the Amalekites to get back the Ark of the Covenant, the children of Israel asked their prophet Samuel to pray to Allah to send a commander for them.

old. It is narrated that his tomb is in Nablus or in the town of Marea near Aleppo. The tomb of Joshua in Beykoz district of Istanbul is just a maqam and scientifically Joshua never went to Istanbul in his lifetime.

# Sovereignty Obtained with a Slingshot

When the Jewish people came near the holy land during the reign of Joshua, the Amalekites had dominated the region under the command of Goliath. The Amalekites had a fight with the Israelites, defeated them and took the Ark of the Covenant with them. In order to fight the Amalekites to get back the Ark of the Covenant, the children of Israel asked their prophet Samuel to pray to Allah to send a commander for them. This account is narrated to us in the Quran, in Surah Al-Baqara as follows: "Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs, 'Send to us a king, and we will fight in the way of Allah?' He said, 'Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if fighting was prescribed for you?' They said, 'And why should we not fight in the cause of Allah when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?' But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned



away, except for a few of them. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers. And their prophet said to them, 'Indeed, Allah has sent to you Saul as a king.' They said, 'How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?' He said, 'Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and

has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allah gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing. And their prophet said to them, 'Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the



is also encountered in the Book of Daniel. It is cited that he opened the windows of his room towards Jerusalem as he had done before even during the Babylonian exile, prayed and thanked to God, kneeling down three times a day.<sup>8</sup> Jerusalem maintained its position as a religious center they faced while praying at

<sup>8</sup> Daniel, 6:10

all times after the destruction of the temple by the Romans who occupied Jerusalem and the conquest of Jerusalem by other nations and even after the Jewish diaspora when they were exiled to different parts of the world.

#### **Tomb of David**

Christians and Jews call this region Mount Zion and Muslims call it Nebi Dawud Hill. Zionism is to believe in the great Israeli ideal to be established in the promised land the capital of which is Jerusalem.

The hill on which the temple was located was called Mount Zion in the first temple period. The name Zion used to stand for the whole Jerusalem. When David was promised that his sovereignty would be everlasting, this was also a sign to the eternity of Jerusalem, which is the city of sanctuaries and kingdoms. The Jewish have the ideal of rebuilding this temple and rule the world from this point. That is why they called their ideal 'Zionism', referring to this hill.

On Mount Zion, we see a structure similar to a mosque with a kulliye and a minaret in appearance, which has the Tomb of David on the first floor and the room of the Last Supper of Jesus on the second floor. The title deed of this structure belongs to

al-Aqsa Mosque Foundation. The usage rights of the area where the Tomb of David is located have been assigned to Jews, and the usage right of the room of the Last Supper, to Christians.

The place where Jesus had his last supper with His disciples was established in the period of Crusaders in the 12th century. A tomb surrounded with gold and a palace was found under the demolished wall during the construction,. According to some accounts, no one can enter this place and those who attempt to enter pass out. When the Crusaders informed the Patriarch of Jerusalem about the situation, the tomb was covered and a building was constructed there. It was determined that downstairs of the building was the Tomb of David and the upstairs, the room of the Last Supper. 9

<sup>9</sup> The place where Jesus Christ had his last supper in Christian faith.









### The Woman Mentioned in the Quran: Mary

Islam is a religion that started with Adam, and carried over with the other prophets and reached perfection with Muhammad (saw). Belief in prophets is one of the pillars of faith. Jesus / Isa (as) is one of our prophets, too. Before telling about the birth of Jesus, let us also mention Mary as stated in the Quran.

Incidents such as the consecration of Mary and the good tidings of Jesus that Gabriel brought mentioned in the Quran, took place in the Masjid al-Aqsa (al-Aqsa compound).

In the Quran, our Lord tells us about these incidents in Surah Maryam as follows:

Incidents such as the consecration of Mary and the good tidings of Jesus that Gabriel brought mentioned in the Quran, took place in the Masjid al-Aqsa

"And mention, [O Muhammad], in the Book [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east. And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man." 1

The east part mentioned in the verse is a section in al-Aqsa Mosque.



Mary's parents were infertile for many years. Her father's name was Imran, whose name was given to Surah Al-i 'Imran, and her mother's name was Hannah. When Hannah was over a hundred years old, she saw a bird feeding its nestling with food from its mouth. Neverminding her old age and the improbability of conception in a medical sense, she said, "O my Lord, grant me with a child." Allah accepted this prayer made without bargaining and Hannah was impregnated. The child in her womb was Mary. Hannah, rejoicing that Allah accepted her prayer, said, "My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb,

consecrated [for Your service], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing."2 Consecrating a child in those days meant giving the child to the service of Solomon's Temple. Until that day, not a single daughter had been consecrated to the masjid/sanctuary. Her husband Imran passed away out of grief and worry for fear that the child would be a girl and they would not be able to fulfill their promise of consecration. Her family consecrated Mary, born an orphan, to the temple. Allah reared her like a rose in the care of Zechariah. Zechariah was amazed when he went up to her and saw the fruits and vegetables out of

### THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM



season, and asked, "O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you?" Mary said, "My Lord provided it." <sup>3</sup> Al-Aqsa Mosque is the blessed place where Allah sent down provisions and meals from heaven to Mary countlessly. Mary was given the glad tidings of Jesus on this site.

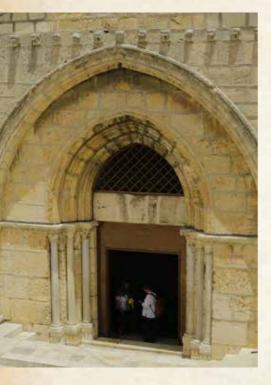
### Mary in Christianity

Mary, who is viewed as the person who "gave birth to God" in Christian belief, is considered the most significant figure after Jesus in Christianity.

Christian resources mention about the birth of Mary in Jerusalem, her consecration by the cohens at the age of one, her virginity pledge in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem at the age of three, her engagement with prayers day and night, dedicating herself to God, moreover, it is even recounted that an angel came to her every day and brought food. Her devotion to prayer by pledging to remain a virgin has inspired the notion of nunhood in Christianity. According to Christian belief, Mary, who lived in Nazareth with her fiance Joseph took Jesus to the temple with Joseph 40 days after his birth and returned to Nazareth after offering their sacrifice.4 Joseph and Mary, who went to Jerusalem every Pesach, took Jesus to Jerusalem when he turned twelve and reached puberty. 5

<sup>4</sup> Luke, 2:39

<sup>5</sup> Luke, 2:41-51





Tomb of Mary, which is descended with 60 steps

Mary, who was in Jerusalem when the Roman soldiers captured Jesus, attended his son's crucifixion and burial.6 The last narrative related to Mary is that she prayed with the disciples and the other women after Jesus' ascension to heaven.7 There is no information about the rest of her life, her demise and the whereabouts of her grave in the New Testament.8 It is a controversial issue how long Mary lived, where and how she died and where she was buried. There are various accounts on this matter: she was forty-nine or fifty when the incident of crucifixion took place, she lived for ten or thirteen years more after that and died at the age of sixty-three or seventy, and so on.

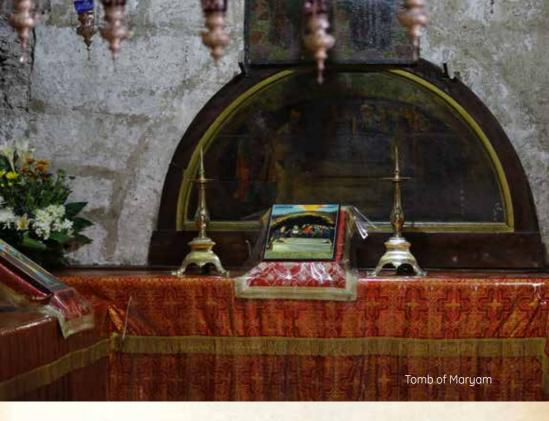
According to some sources, praying in sorrow in Golgotha where the crucifixion incident took place, she passed away in Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> It is recounted that after the funeral she was buried in the Kidron Valley (the Valley of Josaphat) between al-Aqsa Mosque and the Mount of Olives by the disciples. According to Orthodox Christians, the tomb of Mary who gave birth to Jesus, and is the symbol

<sup>6</sup> John, 19:26-27

<sup>7</sup> Acts, 1:14

<sup>8</sup> TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Ömer Faruk Harman, Meryem Md. Vol. 29; pp. 237

<sup>9</sup> New Catholic Encyclopedia, IV, 1017



of intercession and compassion for Christians is in the Church of the Assumption in the Kidron Valley. This is one of the most sought-after and frequently visited locations in Jerusalem by Christians.

# The Birth of Christ in the Quran

The Quran recounts the annunciation of Jesus to Mary in Surah Maryam as follows:

"Mention Mary, too!" Separated from her family, she retreated to a place on the eastern side of the Masjid, and drew a curtain, screening herself from people whereupon. We sent her

Gabriel and he appeared to her as a human. Mary said, "I seek refuge in Rahman (the Merciful) from you. Stay away from me if you refrain from Allah." Gabriel said, "I am only a messenger of your Lord. I was sent to you for the anunciation of a pure boy." Mary said, "How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?" Gabriel said, "Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed." What kind of a proof can the virgin birth of Jesus be for people? After the last judgment, all humans will be resurrected from

the earth, which acts as the womb, without the need for male cells just like the virgin birth of Jesus. The virgin birth of Jesus is a proof of Allah's existence and oneness shown to people for resurrection.

"So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten." This is the point when one says, "O Lord, I am done." It is said that unless one is in despair, Mawla does not comfort. As in the case of Cave of Sawr, Mary, too, was addressed here: Thereupon he (Gabriel) called her from below the tree, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So, eat, drink, and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, "Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man." Allah gives revelations to the prophets and sometimes he talks to other people, too, through happenings. Through the language of nature, Allah made Mary feel that she was not alone and that He would take care of her. The fasting known as Mary's fast is the fasting of silence. Sometimes there comes a time when you cannot







express yourself to anyone. Silence is sometimes the greatest defense, the loudest cry. Sometimes silence also is an attitude where everyone speaks and no one has patience to listen to another.

Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste." So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?" [Jesus] said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I

remain alive. And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive." As depicted to us in the Quran, "That is Jesus, the son of Mary." I This is the truth of Jesus, the son of Mary. Allah begets no offspring and far is He above this.

After hearing of this miracle, like those who believed in Jesus, there were also those who did not believe and wanted to kill them. Mary and Jesus went to Egypt first, fearing that Herod would kill them. Two years later, they returned to Nazareth in the region of Galilee, when Herod

<sup>10</sup> Maryam 19:27-33

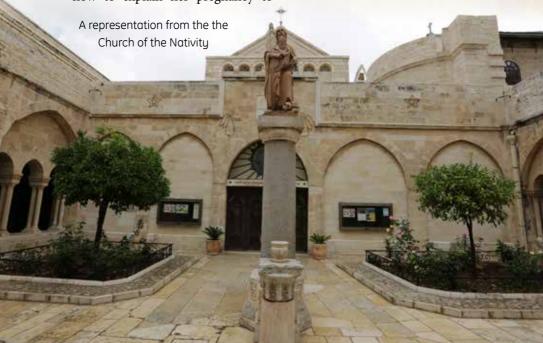
<sup>11</sup> Maryam 19:27-33

died. Jesus lived in Nazareth until he received revelations from Allah at the age of thirty, and therefore, he is referred to as Jesus of Nazareth. There is no information in both the Holy Quran and the Bible about this period of Jesus' life, who worked as a carpenter for a living.

# The Birth of Jesus Christ According to the Bible

Mary, in the fourth month of her pregnancy, returned her home in Nazareth from her relative, Elizabeth's house, living in the highlands of Judea. Mary was betrothed to a carpenter named Joseph. Soon everyone would find out her pregnancy. Although Mary was not unchaste, she did not know how to explain her pregnancy to

Joseph, moreover, she kept thinking about what would happen after she told about this. When they met she told Joseph about what had happened. She did all she could to be able to explain that she got pregnant through the Holy Spirit of God. Yet, it was very difficult for Joseph to understand and believe all that. Joseph knew Mary was a decent, respected woman but no matter what she claimed, it appeared to him that she got pregnant by someone else. Joseph did not want her to be stoned to death or publicly disgraced. Because of that, he thought of divorcing her secretly. At the time, those who were betrothed were considered married and to break the betrothal, it was necessary to get a divorce. Joseph fell asleep



as these thoughts ran through his mind. An angel of Jehovah appeared to him in his dream and said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke up, he gave thanks to God that now the issue was cleared up! He did what

the angel told him immediately. He brought Mary home. This apparent act was in fact a marriage ceremony and an announcement that Joseph and Mary were a married couple. It was around this time that Caesar

Augustus edicted

a census throughout the Roman world. This was the first census that took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to their hometown to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem (Bayt Lahm) the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went

there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

When they were in Bayt Lahm, Mary gave birth to her son, Jesus Christ. Wrapping him in swaddling clothes, she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. In the same area, there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel of

the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town

of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them

Jesus lived for 33 years and spent his last three days in Jerusalem. Hence, all of the works belonging to Christians in Jerusalem are related to the last three days of Jesus' life.

and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger..<sup>13</sup>

The Book of Luke tells about the birth of Jesus Christ as follows: God sent the angel Gabriel to a town called Nazareth in Galilee, to a virgin promised to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you..." "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are

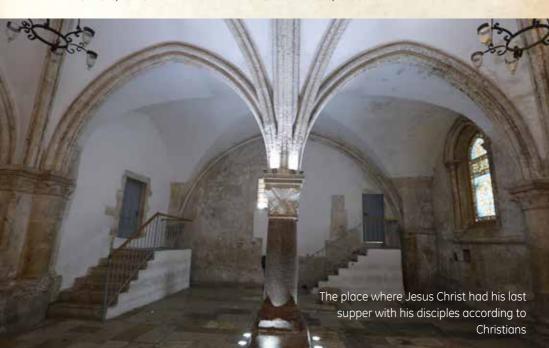
to call him Jesus." Then said Mary to the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. For no word from God will ever fail." 14

### Last Days of Jesus

Jesus is a relative and contemporary of Zechariah and John the Baptist (Yahya) who came before Muhammad (saw). Jesus was born of no father in Bethlehem as a miracle from Allah, and lived in Nazareth with his mother and worked as a carpenter until he was 30.

13 Luke, 2:7-16

14 Luke, 1:26-37







Jesus lived in a community where Judaism was predominant. As far as we learn from the Ouran, there were three fundamental duties of his prophethood. The first was to confirm the Torah, which had been revealed before him. The second was to act upon the Bible revealed to him by Allah. And the third one was to give the good tidings of a prophet who would come after him named Ahmad. Allah the Almighty revealed, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad."15

Jesus lived for 33 years and spent his last three days in Jerusalem. Hence, all of the works belonging to Christians in Jerusalem are related to the last three days of Jesus' life.

# Last Days of Jesus Christ in Christian Sources

When Jesus Christ arrived in Jerusalem, he agreed to have a Passover meal on Mount Zion (Nabi Daud) together with his twelve disciples. This was the last supper of Jesus Christ according to Christians. He offered wine and bread to his twelve disciples. After the supper, he decided to meet with his disciples

in the Garden of Gethsemane, now known as the Church of All Nations, on the outskirts of the Mount of Olives.

Judas, one of the disciples, agreed with some of the Jewish priests at the temple to tell them the whereabouts of Jesus Christ in exchange for 30 pieces of silver. Going up to the Roman governor together, they took soldiers with them and came to the place on the outskirts of the Mount of Olives where Jesus Christ and the disciples agreed to meet. Judas hugged and kissed Jesus, the Roman soldiers captured Jesus Christ and took him to the presence of the Roman governor Pilate. The Jews asked for the death decree of Jesus from the Roman governor Pilate by alleging that Jesus deceived people, prevented them from paying taxes to Caesar, and claimed he was Christ the King.16 The governor found no basis for a charge against him and wanted to release him;17 however, upon the insistence of the Jews on their demand that Jesus be crucified. he looked for a way to save himself from this responsibility so he sent Jesus to Herod when he learned he was from Galilee.18 interrogated Jesus and returned him to Pilate. He was rearrested with the

<sup>16</sup> Luke, 23:2

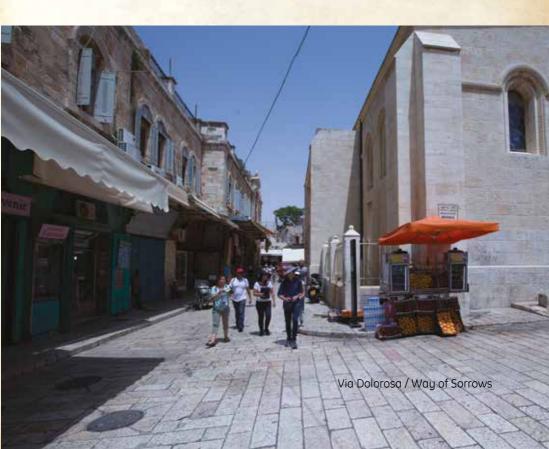
<sup>17</sup> John, 18:33-38

<sup>18</sup> Luke, 23:7-11

pressure of the Jews. Finally, when Jesus clearly stated that he was the Messiah in response to the question whether he was the Mesiah asked by the oracle, they decided that he should be put to death. Pilate, inclined to forgive Jesus, affirmed his crucification in the face of the Jewish pressure. Crucification was a form of execution at the time. Crucifix means four nails. That day, two others who were also condemned to death with Jesus Christ.

## Via Dolorosa/Way of Sorrows/Way of the Cross

According to Christian belief, the distance from the governor's building in which Pilate signed off on the death decree, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus Christ was crucified, is named Via Dolorosa/Way of Sorrows. Roman soldiers and Jews put the cross on Jesus Christ's back. Stumbling 14 times he made it to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. A notice was posted on the cross. It read; "Jesus of Nazareth, the King





of the Jews"<sup>19</sup> Jesus was crucified at nine in the morning on Friday<sup>20</sup> and he yielded up his spirit at three in the afternoon.<sup>21</sup> He was taken down

19 John, 19:19

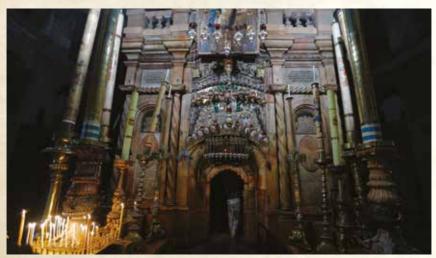
20 Mark, 15:25

21 Matthew, 27:50; Mark, 15:37; Luke, 23:46;

from the cross. They annointed him on the stone of the anointing inside the church and buried him there.

In the commemoration of this route, they walk along the 14

John 19:30



Holy Sepulchre where Jesus Christ was buried and resurrected according to Christians

stations. Two of these stations are at the Antonia Fortress, seven of them in the streets of the Old City and five others in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Christian pilgrim tradition of walking the route goes back to the period of Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. The tradition consisting of 14 stations started with eight staions determined by the Franciscan priests in the 14th century. The path today was determined in the 18th century. It developed into its final form with the addition of some new staions in the 19th century. Today, the first station of Via Dolorosa, covering 500 meters, is in front of the Umariya Elementary School, which belongs to Muslims, at the Lion Gate. The last station is inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. All of the stations along Via Dolorosa are symbolic, that is, none of them are based on historical facts. Nevertheless, to walk this path reciting related verses from the Bible by stopping at each station for a while and trying to feel the suffering of Jesus Christ is a very important ritual of pilgrimage for Christians.

According to Christians, Jesus Christ was resurrected on Sunday. This is why Christians conduct religious ceremonies on Sundays. These ceremonies conducted on Sundays are rites of resurrection.

# According to Christians Jesus Christ was Resurrected

Jesus was laid in the tomb and remained there for three days; Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Those who came to visit on Sunday found the tomb empty. Jesus, resurrected, appeared before them.<sup>22</sup>

According to Christians, Jesus Christ was resurrected on Sunday. This is why Christians conduct religious ceremonies on Sundays. These ceremonies conducted on Sundays are rites of resurrection. Jesus Christ lived another forty days. He appeared to his disciples, and forty days later ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives.

In Christian belief, Jesus Christ will one day return to earth and build the holy empire of Christianity. Before his arrival, conflicts among nations, famine, earthquakes and great calamities will take place, many will claim to be the messiah and the sun will go dark, the moon will not

shine, the stars will fall down and only after all of this will Jesus come.<sup>23</sup>

### Jesus in Islamic Sources

According to the Quran, Jesus (Isa) is one of the prophets called "ulu'l-azm" (the greatest prophets). His name or one of his attributes is mentioned in fifteen surahs, ninety-three verses and much of the information is given in the surahs Ali 'Imran, Al-Ma'idah and Maryam, in relation to the announcation of his birth, his service of notification, miracles, the end of his earthly life and his ascension to heaven.

Jesus was not crucified according to the Quran; "And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain."<sup>24</sup>

The birth, death and resurrection of Jesus is reported in the Quran.<sup>25</sup>

The expression "sübbihe lehüm", which was included in the verse of the Ouran stating that Jesus was not killed and not crucified, is interpreted in various ways. According to the Islamic tradition shaped by this expression, there was a cross and a person who was crucified, but it was not Jesus. In Islamic accounts, the person who was crucified was Judas Iscariot, who showed Jesus' place to the Jews and the Roman authorities. The traitor Judas was disguised as Jesus just as he was about to mouth on Jesus, and he was crucified himself instead of Jesus. According to another account, the one who was crucified was Simon of Cyrene who was assigned to carry the cross. It is also said that this person was someone else who was identical to Jesus. There is a similar interpretation also in Christianity. The crucifixion and suffering of Jesus was just in

Nevertheless, according to common Islamic notion, his resurrection is not after the crucifixion as in Christianity but after the last judgement. In fact, Jesus was not crucified according to the Quran. The Jews did not like the message Jesus brought and plotted to kill him.<sup>26</sup> It is clear that the crucifixion of Jesus as an atonement for human sin, an important belief in Christianity, is not accepted in Islam.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew, 24:4-44; Mark, 13:24-31; Luke, 17:23-24, 21:25-31

<sup>24</sup> Nisa 4:157

<sup>25</sup> Maryam 19:33

<sup>26</sup> Ali 'Imran 3:54



appearance, in fact, someone similiar to him, perhaps, Simon of Cyrene was crucified. There are different accounts regarding the details of the incident in Islamic sources.

Allah the Almighty states that Jesus will be judged on the day of judgement, and a conversation between Allah and Jesus is reported to us in Surah Al-Ma'idah as follows: And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah ?" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself, Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah,

my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. If You should punish them - indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them - indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."27 In almost every work explaining the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah, it is said that Jesus will descend to earth before the day of Judgement, fight and slay the Antichrist and he will make the true moral values of religion prevail on earth.

### **Last Supper**

Upstairs of the David's Tomb, the Room of the Last Supper (also called the Cenacle) is of great importance to Christians. It is called *Al Asha'a Al Akhir* in Arabic, the *Cenacle* (cēnāculum) in Latin, *Son Akṣam Yemeği* in Turkish. This room is associated with two incidents of great symbolic value to Christians.

First of all, it is the place where Jesus shared the last supper with his disciples. According to Biblical accounts, the day before Jesus Chrisht was captured by the Roman soldiers, he gathered his twelve disciples here on Thursday evening, on Passover/Pesach (a Jewish festival celebrating the exodus of the

Israelites from Egypt). And, he asked them to prepare the meal Seder,28 which was prepared in the festival of Pesah and was actually supposed to be eaten on Friday evening. Jesus prophesized that one of them would give him away the next day and while sharing bread during the meal, he said to them, "Eat this, it is my flesh, I will come to life in you with this." and while sharing wine he said, "Drink this, it is my blood, I will come to life in you with this." This is why Christians offer wine and bread on Sunday services. Based on this incident, Christians have celebrated Sunday as the holiest day of the week

YA Matta, 26-27; Markos, 12-15; Luka, 22-23; John, 19/14-18.



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and Passover as the holiest week of the year since the earlier times.<sup>29</sup>

The second important incident for Christians is the miracle that the disciples spoke to people from different nations in their native languages, who came to listen to them after the ascension of Jesus to heavens. This room, as being associated with these two incidents, was consecrated in Byzantine times and turned into part of the Holy Church of Zion. The Holy Church of Zion was burned down during the Persian invasion, and the Crusaders built a new church on that site.

### The Da Vinci Code

The painting depicting the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples, "The Last Supper", was a subject of great interest to Renaissance artists. The most well known of these works is the painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo da Vinci portrayed the consternation of the disciples when Jesus said, "One of you will betray me." in his painting. In the painting, "The Last Supper", we see Judas looking at Jesus in astonishment when he said, "One of you will betray me." The painting was painted on the wall of the dining hall of Santa Maria delle Grazie near Milan, and today it is rather worn-out.

<sup>29</sup> Matta, 28/1-7; Luka, 24/1-7.



According to Dan Brown's record-breaking book, The Da Vinci Code, the woman on Jesus' left in Leonardo da Vinci's painting is Mary Magdalene. Regarding the seating positions at the table, a large "V" which is the pagan symbol for women, is formed between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. In addition, their clothings are symmetrical to each other. In the light of this information, the Holy Grail symbolizes not a cup of water or wine but a woman. According to Dan Brown, Jesus Christ married Mary Magdalene and had a daughter. The Christian world kept it secret. According to the book again, a large-scale, upside down "V", namely, the pagan symbol for man is formed when Mary Magdalene is seated on the right of Jesus. That is why the painting, preserving its mystery, on which numerous studies have been carried out has become more and more mysterious.

# Architecture on the Ceiling of the Mosque

It was built as a church during the Crusader period. Christians came here all along and perform rituals, ceremonies and prayers. The architecture on the ceiling of the church resembles that of the al-Khalil Mosque. In Christian theology, there is the doctrine of original sin.





# Church of the Nativity



According to this belief, every child is born with the sin of Adam and his wife. For this reason, they bathe all their newborn babies with the holy water and purify them from their sin. This is called the rite of baptism. Jesus Christ saved humanity from the original sin by sacrificing himself. There is a ram icon on the ceiling of the church where the chandelier hangs as a symbol of this. The ram symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in churches.

On the marble pillar across the entrance door, there is an icon of a mother pelican feeding her two hungry nestlings on her breast. The mother pelican represents Jesus Christ and the two nestlings

feeding on her breast, all humanity. According to Christians, Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for all humanity. The olive tree on this site was sent as a symbol of peace by the Pope.

### **Ottoman Tolerance**

When Salah ad-Din Ayyub conquered Jeruslem in 1187, he



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In 1524, when Suleiman the Magnificent heard about the imtemperate behavior of Franciscans in the place where Jesus Christ had the last supper with his disciples, he converted it to a mosque and allowed the members of other religions to visit.



devoted the buildings on Mount Zion to Sheikh Ahmed Decani family. This building was used as a mosque under the administration of Decani family until 1948, and from then on, it was converted into a museum.

In 1524, when Suleiman the Magnificent heard about the imtemperate behavior of Franciscans in the place where Jesus Christ had the last supper with his disciples, he converted it to a mosque and allowed

the members of other religions to visit. On the original inscription, still on the wall of the room today, it reads, "Suleimen, a descendant of Osman ordered this site to be reconstructed as a mosque and purified from blasphemy."

### **Church of the Dormition**

German Kaiser Wilhelm II constructed this church in memory of the fact that Mary had slept here for three days before her demise,

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The date of the inscription is January 8, 1524. There is a pulpit and a niche inside the mosque.









with the permission from Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the early 1900s.

The decision to give churches to the Germans on Mount Zion was a strategy implemented by Abdul Hamid II. Because the Russians wanted to make Jerusalem an Orthodox capital. Abdul Hamid II was not strong enough to cope with the Russians at the time. Abdul Hamid II, who knew that it would be a diplomatic problem if a single Christian denomination had the full authority in Jerusalem, in order to set back this ambition of Russians, gave three sites to German Kaiser Wilhelm II to build churches and prevented a single Christian denomination from seizing control in Jerusalem.

The dome of the church resembles Wilhelm II' hat. While Jesus was sharing his last supper with the disciples, he turned to Peter, one of the twelve disciples, and said, "Tomorrow morning, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." Jesus Christ was captured by the Roman soldiers near the Church of All Nations on the outskirts of the Mount of Olives. At that moment, Peter was following Jesus Christ. One of the Roman soldiers who knew him asked, "Are you not one of his disciples?" Peter answered, "No, I do not know Jesus." On Friday morning, when he said he did not know Jesus Christ for the third time, the roosters started to



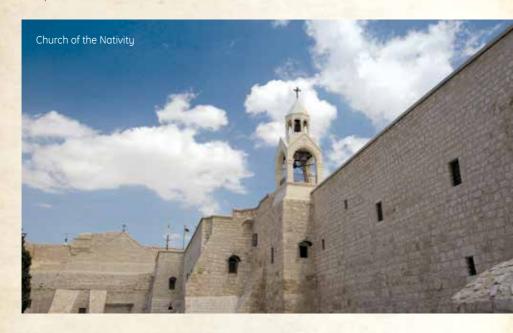
crow and so Jesus' prophecy came true. There is a rooster icon on top of the church in reference to this incident.

### Bayt Lahm (Bethlehem)

"Lahm" means bread in Hebrew. Its Arabic equivalent is "hubz". It is confused with the Arabic word "lahm" that means meat. It is also called "Bayt al-Khubz", meaning "House of Bread" due to the bakeries in this place. As it is also the place

The decision to give churches to the Germans on Mount Zion was a strategy implemented by Abdul Hamid II. Because the Russians wanted to make Jerusalem an Orthodox capital.

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where David was born, its Hebrew pronunciation has become more famous. Bayt Lahm (Bethlehem), which is Jesus' birthplace is a holy city for both Christians and Muslims. Christianity, developed out of the religious tradition of Judaism, put Jesus in the center of its faith and culture. In Christian faith, Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God and the very embodiment of God. Whereas, to Muslims, Jesus is a prophet who was given a book (the Bible). Bethlehem was a town of the Roman province of Judea at the time Jesus was born.

# Church of the Nativity (Kanisat al-Mahd)

The church of the Nativity or Basilica of the Nativity is considered one of the earliest churches, still used today in the Holy Land since earlier times. The first church was built under the auspices of Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, who came to Palestine during her pilgrimage to discover the places related to Jesus' life in 325 CE. In order to build a large church, Saint Helena chose the Nativity Grotto, the site traditionally venerated as the birthplace of Jesus, and the construction of the church was completed in 339 CE.

Inside the church, on either side of the chancel are two staircases, leading

down to the cave (Grotto) where Jesus was born, and a silver star set into the white marble floor with the inscription, "Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary" in Latin.

In 2012, the Church of the Nativity and its stairways were put on the list of World Heritage Site. Now, there are only some little pieces of remnants, and mosaics from the church built by Saint Helena. Today, there is a 14-pointed star on the spot where Jesus is believed to have been born. After Jesus was born, a brilliant star appeared in the sky in the planetary alignment of this star, and kings from nearby countries, who were expecting the birth of Jesus, visited Mary and Jesus with many gifts. There are articles symbolizing these gifts and the cradle in which Jesus was laid after his birth in the Church of Nativity.

According to Christian theology, there were 14 generations and 3 periods in all from Abraham to the birth of Jesus. The 14-pointed star in the cave symbolizes this. The first period is from Abraham to David, the second one is the period that lasted until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II, and the third one is the period until the birth of Jesus.

### Milk Grotto

According to Christian traditions, the Milk Grotto is the place where Mary nursed Jesus when she was hiding from Herod's soldiers, before she left for Egypt. The cave was randomly carved inside a soft white rock. It is believed that drops of Mary's breastmilk touched the rocks, turning it white. Christians attach great significance to this place. It is believed that these milk-colored rocks have a healing effect and increase the breastmilk.



Milk Grotto

# Bayt Lahm Mosque of Omar

When Omar conquered Jerusalem, he visited the Church of the Nativity and prayed nearby when it was time for salaah. Later Muslims started to perform prayer at the same spot where Omar did. After a while, both Christians and Muslims grew restless because of the cramped space here.



Muslims and Christians came together, built a mosque on the site about five hundred meters away from the church, and called it the Mosque of Omar commemorating his visit to the city.

# Church of the Resurrection Kanisatu al-Qiyamah Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The Church of the Resurrection (Kanisatu al-Qiyamah) is a place regarded as the heart of Jerusalem for Christians. Following the adoption of Christianity by the Eastern Roman Empire, in accordance with



the decision of the Council of Nicaea in 325, Saint Helena, the mother of Constantine I, was sent to Jerusalem to find the True Cross (the wood of the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified). To that end, Saint Helena came to Jerusalem, and after finding the wood on which Iesus Christ was crucified in Golgotha<sup>30</sup> (which means "The Place of the Skull") / the Rock of Calvary, mentioned as the place where Jesus Christ was crucified in the Bible, she asked her son, Emperor Constantine to build a church here. The church, the construction of which started in 325, was completed in 336. According to Christian theology, this is the place where Jesus is believed to have been buried and resurrected after he was crucified. The church took its current

shape in the 12th century during the Crusader period. The church, which contains the last five stages of the Way of Sorrows (the pilgrimage route), also includes the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus Christ was crucified, the Holy Sepulchre where he was buried, and the Chapel of Mary where he appeared after his resurrection.

On entering the church, we see the Stone of the Anointing or "Stone of Unction" (on which Jesus' body was anointed) which is 2 meters long and 80 cm wide, surrounded with candelabra representing different Christian denominations (Orthodox, Catholic, Armenian, Assyrian, Copt, Abyssinian).

According to the Book of John, this rock is the 13th station of Christian



The stone of annointing on which Jesus Christ was annointed

pilgrimage. Christians who come here for pilgrimage bless this rock rubbing their hands, faces and belongings on it. On the wall across the doorway, there are mosaics depicting the removal of Jesus from the cross, his anointment and burial.

The relics of other religions were preserved during the Islamic conquest and thereafter, their places of worship were not touched and the members of that religion were allowed to visit these places. The Holy Sepulchre, adorned with the large candelabra is located in the middle of the church.

Today, the church is shared by six different sects: Orthodox, Catholics, Copts, Armenians, Assyrians and Abyssinian Christians. There have been many conflicts among the denominations in the Church of the Resurrection throughout history.

### According to Christians Tomb of Jesus Christ

According to the Christian faith, Jesus Christ was buried in this tomb, which is the 14th station of the Way of Sorrows. The tomb consists of two chambers. The first chamber is a hall where the dead is prepared. It is called the Chapel of the Angel. The small doorway covered with marbles is believed to be the door of the tomb sealed with stones after Jesus Christ died. The Christian denominations cannot share this place. There is a seperate entrance for each denomination in order to prevent a probable conflict among them.

## Religion Holding the Key to Different Cultures and Civilizations: Islam

Islam cries out to the whole world that it is a religion of peace, holding



the key to the lock of different civilizations and cultures in the Church of Resurrection, which is considered the heart of Christians in Jerusalem. The Church of the Resurrection is a major Christian pilgrimage destination. All the other churches, except Protestants, see this site as the key to Christianity. The key to this church has been held by Muslims since 1187.

# The Key to the Church of Resurrection

When Salah ad-Din Ayyub conquered Jerusalem by putting an end to the 88-year-old Crusader occupation in 1187, all members of the church wanted to have the key. Disputes and fights on this matter between Christian denominations were unavoidable. In order to prevent this, Salah ad-Din Ayyub gave the key to the church to a Muslim family in Jerusalem. It was risky to give the key of the church to a single family because they could have dominated the Christians here. The duty of holding the key was given to the Nuseibeh family, and the duty of opening the church, to the Joudeh family. Today, the key to this church is still kept by a Muslim family, and another Muslim family comes every morning, knocks on the church door and after opening the door with his key he hands over the church to the Christians there. In contrast to those who claim Islam to be a religion of terror, today it is still possible to see at the door of the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem that Islam is a religion of peace and



Wajeeh Y. Nuseibeh from the Nuseibeh family who has held the key to the Church of Resurrection from the time of Salah ad-Din Ayyub to the present

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civilization and actually a key to all different cultures, beliefs and peace.

# Ladder on the Wall of the Church of the Resurrection / Church of the Holy Sepulchre

According to historical documents, the Ottoman administration divided the control of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is at a close distance to al-Aqsa Mosque, among the four Christian communities. One of the achievements of the Ottoman Empire in the region was the implementation of "Status Quo" in the holy places of Christianity where there were frequent arguments related to ownership rights.

The best example of this is the implementation in the Church of

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the Holy Sepulchre, which is shared by Orthodox, Catholic, Armenian and Assyrian churches. Alongside the prayers, tending to the cleaning of the church, conducting religious ceremonies, and dealing with the maintenance and repair when necessary meant to have somewhat control over the church. Even the simplest acts such as the removal and renewal of any decoration, even the removal of a lamp from a column, would take place in accordance with the law of Status Quo. Since all denominations wanted to undertake the care of as many parts of the church as possible on themsleves, new restoration projects led to conflicts and sometimes even bloody fights among the denominations.

Ottoman Empire issued an edict (firman) declaring a "status quo" in the sacred places in 1757, which corresponded to Sultan Mustafa III's reign, in order to prevent these conflicts. With this decree, the cleaning and maintenance of the church was divided equally among the four Christian denominations. In the edict issued in 1757, when the places were distributed among the denominations, the right to clean the courtyard was given to the Orthodox and the right to clean the stairs, to the Catholics.

The merit of cleaning the churchyard and the stairs connecting it to the road in front of the church caused a conflict in 1852 between the Greek Orthodox and the Latin Catholic Church. The step at the bottom was clearly a step from one perspective while it looked like a part of the churchyard from another perspective.

In 1852, when Sultan Abdulmejid was on the throne, one day, during the cleaning the members of denominations saying, "You're seizing our good deeds," to each other, fought tooth and nail and dozens of people died in clash.

The *firman* (edict) issued in 1852 stopped the bloody clashes. When Istanbul was informed of the situation, Sultan Abdulmejid issued a new edict declaring a new "status quo" in the holy sites in Jerusalem:

The edict, stating, "I will come to the holy sites myself, I will determine every single inch of the sites as to who will clean where. From now on, whoever moves just one stone from its place will have his head removed. Beware..." and so on, was read in the square in front of the church as soon as it reached Jerusalem. Just at that moment, an Armenian priest was busy cleaning one of the windows by stepping on a wooden ladder he leaned against the façade of the church. The priest was immediately brought down due to the edict, even when he wanted to remove the ladder, they intervened saying no.

Since then, this ladder has still been kept in the same place as an expression of the continuity of the "Status Quo" proclaimed by the Ottoman Empire. The partition among the denominations determined by the Ottoman Empire still applies today. Actually, with the experts sent by the Ottomans, the spaces were partitioned milimetrically, meanwhile the last step that caused the fight was decided to be the right of the Catholics.

# The Ottoman Decree/Firman Still Applies

The roof collapsed in a fire in 1948 needed rebuilding, but could not be built until 1967, because the denominations were not able to come to an agreement on how to share the restoration considering the reward of this good deed. When the region came under the rule of Israel in 1967, the denominations came together again by means of Israel, forming an international commission, they added a new article to the Ottoman edict, and the roof was finally repaired. The edict maintains its validity in the same way also today.

Today, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is commonly used by the Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Coptic Church of Alexandria and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.





# MAQAMS IN JERUSALEM







### SALMAN AL-FARSI/ SALMAN THE PERSIAN

#### Search for Tawheed

The maqam of Salman al-Farsi is located in Jerusalem, who is one of the iconic figures of Jerusalem, one of the companions and a member of *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Family of the House) of our master, the Messenger of Allah (saw). As the name suggests, Salman al-Farsi was of Persian origin, and he is the symbol of a lifelong devotion to *tawhid* (oneness of Allah), to the love of the Messenger of Allah and faith.

"Where there is faith nothing is impossible."

Salman al-Farsi was born about 2 years before the Messenger of Allah (saw). His father was a proprietor who was the custodian of the Zoroastrian fire that had been burning for thousands of years so that it would not die down. Salman al-Farsi used to go to the fire worshipped by the Zoroastrians from time to time in his early youth, but this ritual would not satisfy his need for faith. One day, on his way back home from the field, he heard the prayer voices coming from a

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nearby church and he thought the worship of the church was more reasonable than worshiping the fire. At times, Salman went to the church and prayed there. When his father saw that Salman no longer worshipped the fire of Zoroastrians he imprisoned him in the house and put a chain on his feet. Salman al-Farsi somehow found a way to go to the church again. The priest in the church said to Salman al-Farsi, "The center of our religion is Damascus, go there, you will probably find someone there who can give you what you want." Salman al-Farsi made a difficult journey from Iran to Damascus under the difficult conditions of that time. The priest he met in the church in Damascus could not meet his his needs for faith. After this priest's death, the one who replaced him said to Salman al-Farsi, "We do not have what you are looking for, go to Mosul, there is a priest who has a good knowledge of tawhid there." Salman's search for the truth and tawhid went on. He headed for Mosul from Damascus. He stayed in the church in Mosul for some time and prayed there. When the death of the priest in Mosul approached, "Salman," he said, "we do not have what you are looking for." and sent him from Mosul to Nusaybin. He stayed in Nusaybin for a while, but nothing satisfied him. Then, they sent him from Nusaybin to one of







the rare monotheistic priests left in the world, who were close to the time of the prophethood of Allah's Messenger (saw). He went to a church in the region of Amorium. Salman al-Farsi dropped by Anatolia. He stayed in Sivrihisar for some time and learnt from a priest. He acquired himself a small flock of sheep and earned his living. In his last days, "O Salman," the priest said, "We don't have what you've been looking for all these years. We, too, are waiting for the prophet who will come with the pure creed; he will appear from a place with gardens of date palms between the two hills, from the Arabian Peninsula, Salman al-Farsi said, "But how can I understand that he is the Last Prophet when I find him?" The priest said, "We learned about the signs of the Last Prophet from the Holy Bible as such; He does not accept charity but accepts gifts and he has a seal of prophethood between his shoulder blades."

Salman al-Farsi set out in search of tawhid with a caravan (group of people) from Sivrihisar to the Arabian Peninsula. However, some cruel people in the caravan sold Salman into slavery. His new master sold him as a slave to a Jew. By the irony of fate, he somehow reached the place where he wanted to go all along. The man who bought him was of the Banu Qurayza Jews. In the 70s CE, some of the Jews who were expelled from Jerusalem in the Roman raid, settled near Medina. Banu Nadir, Banu Qaynuqa and Banu Qurayza were among them and lived in the in the neighborhood of Medina.

Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived in Quba after a journey of 7 nights and 8 days, those were the days of Hegira. In the Banu Qurayza's garden, the Jews were talking among themselves: "The person who is called the end-time prophet has reached Quba." Salman al-Farsi was restlessly anxious when he heard of the man he had been seeking for so long. As soon as he got a chance, he took a couple of dates he saved as food with himself and went to Ouba. When he came before the Messenger of Allah (saw) he said, "I've heard that you are a righteous person, I have brought you some dates of charity." The Messenger of Allah took the dates and shared them with his companions without having one for himself. The knot in his heart came loose, he became exuberant and the first requirement was realized. Salman al-Farsi returned to the garden and went on his work.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) constructed the first mosque in the history of Islam in Quba and set off for Medina on a Friday. Salman al-Farsi, finding an opportunity, put a few dates between a palm leaf and went to the Messenger of Allah (saw). He said, "The last time I brought dates you didn't have one and it troubled me deeply, so I've brought a few more, this is my gift." The Messenger of Allah (saw) took them, ate one, and shared the rest with his companions. Another mystery was

solved for Salman al-Farsi. He got closer to faith.

He went to the Messenger of Allah (saw) while he was sitting with his companions and began walk around him. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) stood up, and showed his seal of prophethood on his back and said, "Are you looking for this?" Salman al-Farsi fell on his knees, sobbing, "O, Messenger of Allah, I've searched for you far and near." He left his house, his comfort and everything else, travelling here, there and everywhere for 55 years with the desire and hope of seeing the Messenger of Allah (saw).

## Date Palms Planted for the Freedom of Salman al-Farsi: Ajwaa Dates

Salman al-Farsi became a MSalman al-Farsi became a Muslim, but he was still a slave. When the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza heard that Salman became a Muslim, they did not want to set him free. For this reason, Salman could not take part in Badr and Uhud battles. The Messenger of Allah (saw) asked Salman to make an agreement with his master for his freedom. In the history of Islam, the first agreement made between slaves and masters to obtain freedom, which is called mukataba (a contract of manumission), is the agreement made by Salman al-Farsi. However, the Banu Qurayza Jews asked for

300 date palm trees and 40 ounces of gold. Salman al-Farsi felt desperate. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "Do not despair Farsi, where there is faith nothing is impossible." One day, our master (saw) called upon his companions, "Gather 300 date palm seedlings, dig their beds and wait for me." The Messenger of Allah (saw) planted 300 date palm trees one by one. A new type of date palm appeared which did not exist in Medina until then. The sweet, small, black dates we eat today, called ajwaa or prophet dates, come from the trees that were planted for the freedom of Salman al-Farsi, and yielded fruit within a year.

After planting the date palm trees, it was time to pay 40 ounces of gold. The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave the charity brought to him, to Salman al-Farsi and said, "Take this gold, the price for your freedom."

### Strategy of Salman al-Farsi in the Battle of the Trench

An army of ten thousand men from Mecca attacked Medina. The Messenger of Allah (saw) consulted with his companions. They did not know what to do. Salman al-Farsi said, "O, Messenger of Allah, back in my country, there is a war strategy unknown to Arabs. We dig trenches at the weakest spots of the city." The Messenger of Allah (saw)

was pleased with the idea. This idea was confirmed by a revelation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) took the decision to dig trenches at the weakest point of the city. Three thousand people dug these trenches with pickaxes and shovels. The trenches had been dug before the Meccans reached Medina, but there was a problem. At a point in the trench, a large rock was in the way of digging. Salman al-Farsi called the Prophet (saw). On that day, the Messenger of Allah (saw) smashed the rock that no one else could with three sledgehammers the companions said, "Bismillah, Allah-u Akbar!" The Messenger of Allah (saw) gave good news with each strike. He heralded the conquests of Yemen, the Sassanid Empire, which is today Iran, and the Byzantium and Istanbul when Salman al-Farsi was also present there. The good



Magam of Salman al-Farsi

news of our beautiful city, Istanbul in which we are proud of living today, resonating with *takbeer* was heralded to us through this companion, Salman al-Farsi from the Messenger of Allah (saw).

### Salman belongs to Ahl al- Bayt

Salman al-Farsi's determination on the way of faith and his help in the Battle of the Trench made him the apple eye of the companions. Salman was homeless, without a country, Medina became his home, which is the home of faith. He had no family; he had left everyone else to be able find the Messenger of Allah. The immigrants (muhacir) who emigrated from Mecca said that Salman was one of them. Ensar from Medina said that Salman was one of them. And the Messenger of Allah said, "Salman is one of us, do not argue." For this reason, Salman al-Farsi is known to be one of Ahlul Bayt, moreover, one of the four pillars of Ahl al- Bayt.

Salman al-Farsi lived where Ashab us-Suffah, the first educational institution of Islam, was and he passed on 70 hadiths to us from the Messenger of Allah (saw). When Omar sent Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas to besiege Persia, he assigned Salman al-Farsi as the military advisor to him. Persia was conquered and

Salman al-Farsi was appointed as governor to the city of Ctesiphon (Al-Madain). He led his life in *zuhd* and *taqwa* to such an extent that, one day, a stranger who came to the city wanted to have Salman al-Farsi carry the heavy loads in his hands. Both carried the loads until they arrived in Madain. When the people saw that the governor was carrying some goods, they told him, "Dear governor, why are you carrying them? Allow us to carry them." Only then did the stranger realize that he had had the governor carry his loads.

Salman al-Farsi lived until the end of Osman's period. He came to Jerusalem in the time of Osman and stayed here for a while. When Salah ad-Din Ayyub conquered Jerusalem in 1187 and ended the Crusader occupation of 88 years, he revived all memories of Islam. He additionally built a mosque, a complex and a maqam in the memory of Salman al-Farsi in Jerusalem.

### RABIA AL-ADAWIYYA

She is known to be the first *suft* woman in Islamic world. She was born in Basra in 714 CE (95 AH). As she was the fourth daughter of a poor family, she was named Rabia, meaning fourth. She was called Adawiyya or Qaysiyya because she was a freed slave from the Qays bin





Adî tribe. Her moniker is Umm Al-Khair (Mother of Goodness).

According to Fariduddin Attar, who passed down the most detailed information and narrations about Rabia al-Adawiyya her. orphaned at a young age. She started to live alone after her sisters had left home due to famine in Basra. At this time, a cruel person bought her as slave for six coins. Having to work in hard labour during the day, Rabia, devoted herself to prayer at nights. One night when her master saw that a light shone over her head illuminating the whole room he felt afraid and set her free.

The fact that Rabia al Adawiyya abandoned all earthly affairs and turned to *zuhd* (detachment, asceticism) is a common tendency among *zahid* (altruistic) *Sufis*. Rabia is distinguished from other *sufis* in the respect that she integrated the idea of divine love with the sense of *zuhd*. There are various accounts regarding the whereabouts of Rabia al Adawiyya's tomb. According to

one narrative, Rabia al-Adawiyya passed away in 796 CE (183 AH) in Basra and was buried there. In memory of her, a maqam was built where she is believed to have lived on the Mount of Olives. Since the one, whose maqam was built on this spot, is considered a saint according



A Jew visiting the Maqam of Rabia al-Adawiyya



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Al-Khalil Mosque





A view of al-Khalil Mosque from the Jewish quarter

to Christians, and a righteous, Jewish woman according to Jews, members of both religions often visit this tomb.

### Khalil ar-Rahman Abraham and One of the Oldest Cities in the World

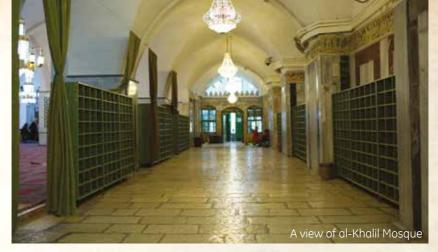
### AL-KHALIL (HEBRON)

The city of Al Khalil, situated in the West Bank, 32 km southwest of Jerusalem was named after Abraham's moniker, "Khalil" meaning "friend" which is mentioned in the 125th verse of Surah An-Nisa. The city, established by Canaanites circa 2000 BCE, was first mentioned as Kirjath-Arba in the Old Testament, later it was called Hebron, Al-Khalil is the city, which is most praiseworthy among Muslims after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, is mentioned as Haram al-Sharif along with Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina.

Al-Khalil annexed to Ottoman lands in 1517 Selim I, became a borough in the Sanjak of Jerusalem in its administration. Many waqf foundations were astablished in Al-Khalil as it was the place pilgrims from all parts of the Ottoman lands passed through on their way.

Al-Khalil, which was under the Ottoman rule until 1917, from this date on, remained under the administration of British mandate until 1948. The city, incorporated into the Kingdom of Jordan in 1948, was occupied by Israel along with the other regions in Jerusalem and the West Bank at the end of the Six-Day War that took place in 1967.

The city is considered sacred by all three divine religions because the tombs of Abraham and his wife Sarah, Isaac and his wife Rebecca, and Jacob and his wife Rachel are all located there.



#### Our Forefather Abraham

Al-Khalil is the city of Abraham, the forefather of all prophets. While performing prayers, we mention both our forefather, Abraham and our Prophet Muhammad (saw) with the prayers, "Allahümme Salli and Allahümme Barik"; My God, honor Muhammad and Muhammad's family as you honoured Abraham and Abraham's family. Surely, you are praiseworthy, the Great. My God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's family as you blessed Abraham and Abraham's family. Surely, you are praiseworthy, the Great.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) commanded, "I am the prayer of my forefather, Abraham, the good tidings of my brother, Jesus, and the dream of my mother, Aminah." Adam was the first to build the Ka'bah. Abraham and his son Ishmael rebuilt the Ka'bah, which was destroyed in the flood of Noah,

on its original foundations, and a new society emerged in Mecca. There were no prophets from the lineage of Ishmael until Muhammad (saw) who was sent as a mercy for all creation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) thus said, "I am the prayer of my forefather Abraham." Abraham was born in 2000 BCE in Urfa, during the Kingdom of Babylon and lived for 175 years. Babylonians did not believe in Allah, the one and only God, but worshipped idols and the stars. They regarded the idols and the stars as representations of their souls.

Nimrod, the King of Babylon of that period, upon a dream of his, was told by oracles and astrologers of the time that a boy named Abraham would be born in that region within a year and would change the religion of people, ending the sovereignty of Nimrod. Thereupon, he gathered all the pregnant women in one place, and ordered the death of all the newborn boys and keeping men apart from their wives.

Musnad, 4:127, 128, 5:262; Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, 2:656





#### "I Love Not Those That Set"

Abraham was born in such a period in a cave and spent fifteen months in the cave. On an evening when Abraham walked out of the cave, Allah showed him to whom the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belong, and ordained him a prophet. This incident is narrated in the Quran as follows:

"And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain [in faith]. So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said, 'This is my lord.' But when it set, he said, 'I love not those that set.' And when he saw the moon rising, he said, 'This is my lord.' But when it set, he said, 'Unless my Lord guides me, I will surely be among the people gone astray.' And when he saw the sun rising, he said, 'This is my lord; this is greater.' But when it set, he said, 'O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate with Allah. Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah." 2





### Abraham is an Ummah (Nation) in His Own

When Abraham was ordained prophethood and sent to his people, his father, who was the custodian of Nimrod's temple of idols, was the first to object him. How egregious is the enemy from one's own kin! His father reacted worse than Nimrod, "If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me a prolonged time"3 Abraham never gave up his cause. Allah the Almighty tells us about his loneliness and his inclination in the direction of tawheed as such, "Indeed, Abraham was an ummah/ nation, [a comprehensive leader], devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah,"4

### Flames That Did Not Burn Abraham

Babylonians, as it were their custom, were away for entertainment on a feast day. They asked Abraham to come along but he refused on the ground that he was unwell. Once they were gone, he smashed the idols in the temple and only spared the largest one so that they would call upon it. This incident is told in the Quran as follows;



He said, "What do you worship?" to his father and his people, "Is it

Abraham Knock down the idols within me With the axe in your hold Who replaces the demolished idols With the new ones -Asaf Halet Çelebi

<sup>3</sup> Maryam 19:42-46

<sup>4</sup> An-Nahl 16:120-121



falsehood gods other than Allah you desire? Then what is your thought about the Lord of the worlds?" Then he cast a look at the stars and said, "Indeed, I am ill." So they turned away from him, departing. Then he turned to their gods and said, "Do you not eat? What is wrong with you that you do not speak?" And he turned upon them a blow.

Then the people came toward Abraham, hastening. He said, "Do you worship that which you [yourselves] carve, While Allah created you and that which you do?" They said, "Construct for him a furnace and throw him into the burning fire." And they intended for him a plan, but We made them the most debased. And then he said, "Indeed, I will go to where I am



ordered by my Lord; He will guide me."5

When Abraham revealed the contradiction of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) with itself, people whose consciences were blunted did not accept the truth and decided to burn Abraham. They lit a fire, the size of which had never been seen before. They catapulted Abraham into the fire. They assumed that by burning him, they would also be burning Him, his faith and eveything he stood for. Allah commanded the fire. The fire was cool and safe upon Abraham.<sup>6</sup>

### Abraham in Al-Khalil

Allah saved Abraham from the fire of Nimrod. He took his wife Sarah and his nephew, Lot and migrated to Palestine through Egypt in 1900s BCE. After his visit to the city. Abraham settled there and thus the city was named after him as Al-Khalil. Al-Khalil is the specific name given to Abraham in the Quran by Allah. When Abraham came to this city he was about 100 years old, and he lived in this city for 75 years more. Abraham was childless until he was 100. His wife, our mother Sarah, thinking that they were childless because of her, she married Abraham to her maid, Hagar, whom Pharoah gave her while migrating from Egypt. Ishmael was born out of this marriage. Later on, the history would be shaped by the predestination ordained by Allah. Allah the Almighty sent Gabriel to Abraham and under the guidance of Gabriel he went to Mecca together with Hagar and Ishmael. The history

<sup>5</sup> As-Saffat 37:83-99

<sup>6</sup> Al-Anbya 21:69

of Mecca would take its shape after Abraham's visit to the city.

Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael there and went back to Al-Khalil. One day, three men came to visit Abraham. Abraham was a generous man who was so fond of visitors. He immediately prepared a good meal for the visitors and served it to them. When he saw that the visitors did not touch the meal he got worried. This incident is narrated in the Quran as follows:

Indeed Our messengers came to Abraham, bearing glad tidings. They greeted him with 'peace', and Abraham answered back to them and hurriedly brought 'peace', to them a roasted calf. When he perceived that their hands could not reach it, he mistrusted them, and felt afraid of them. They said: 'Do not be afraid. We have been sent to the people of Lot. And Abraham's wife was standing by and on hearing this she laughed. And We gave her the good news of (the birth of) Isaac, and after Isaac, of Jacob. She said: 'Woe is me! Shall I bear a child now that I am an old woman and my husband is well advanced in years. This is indeed strange!' They said: 'Do you wonder at Allah's decree? Allah's mercy and His blessings be upon you, O people of the house. Surely, He is Praiseworthy, Glorious.'7

The angels who gave good news to Abraham, later on, went to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy Lot's tribe.

After Ishmael, Abraham's son named Isaac was born to him by his wife, our mother Sarrah. All of the prophets, except Muhammad (saw), descended from Isaac.

### Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi / Sanctuary of Abraham Cave of the Patriarchs

When Abraham migrated to Al-Khalil with his family, he built a small mosque on the site where his tomb is located today.

In the Roman period (37-4 BCE), Herod built an enormous wall around the cave that enclosed the tombs of prophets, and later, Saint Helena built a church here in 326.

The masjid (small mosque), built in accordance with Islamic architecture as al-Haram al-Khalil by the Umayyads, was turned into a mosque during the period of Abbasids. After the Crusaders invaded the city (1099), they converted this mosque into a church. Al- Haram Al-Ibrahimi remained as a church for 88 years, but when Salah ad-Din Ayyub conquered the city in 1187, he turned the church into a mosque again. In the time of Mamluks, a madrasa (a college for Islamic instruction) and a sifahane (cure-house) was added to the mosque.

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Maqams belonging to prophets and their wives inside al-Khalil Mosque

#### **Tomb of Abraham**

The only two prophets whose tombs are known with no doubt in the world are Muhammad (saw) and Abraham al-Khalil ar-Rahman. The holy scriptures and accounts of three religions agree on the truth of of these tombs. The statement cited in the Holy Bible supports this view, "Abraham lived 175 years. Abraham was buried next to his wife, Sarah (Isaac's mother) in the cave of Machpelah. 8

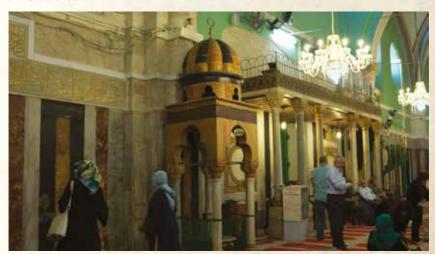
Abraham and his wife, Sarah; Isaac and his wife Rebekah, Jacob and his wife Lea are buried in the cave which is inside the mosque.

The domed structure over this cave was built by the Mamluk

The domed structure over this cave was built by the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun. The Mamluk Sultan Qalawun and the Mamluks after him, built maqams inside the mosque for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and for their blessed wives. In fact, the tombs of all prophets and their wives are in the cave.

Sultan Qalawun. The Mamluks Sultan Qalawun and the Mamluks after him, built maqams inside the mosque for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and for their blessed wives. In fact, the tombs of all prophets and their wives are in the cave.

8 Genesis 25:7-31



A small dome built, in the period of Mamluk Sultan Qalawun, over the cave which shelters the tombs





### The Pulpit of Al-Khalil Mosque

Nur ad-Din Zangi, Seljuk Sultan of Anatolia prepared two pulpits to be placed in al-Aqsa Mosque, in case they conquered Jerusalem some day. This undertaking which was not realized in the time of Nur ad-Din Zangi, was accomplished by Salah ad-Din Ayyub.

The pulpit made of three thousand pieces of wood with the method of *Kündekari*, that is, tongue-and-groove joining with no nails, has been in Al-Khalil Mosque since 1187. This pulpit is believed to be the oldest pulpit made of wood. This mosque has become a site to visit for Muslim pilgrims from all over the world. In the following periods, the city and al-Khalil Mosque were

venerated and considered sacred by the rulers of Islamic states, scholars and other Muslims.



The pulpit made of three thousand pieces of wood with the method of Kündekari, that is, tongue-and-groove joining with no nails.



### Abdul Hamid II's Gift to Al-Khalil Mosque

Of the relics which expresses the love of Anatolian people, that is, Turkish nation for the holy land is the candelabra on both sides of the mihrab. There is still a memorial note of Sultan Abdul Hamid Han on it, "This candelabra is a gift from Hazrat Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan to the Masjid al-Sharif of Hazrat Abraham."

### Current Condition of al-Khalil Mosque

Today, the Mosque of Abraham is divided into two parts. One side is used as a mosque and the other as a synagogue. Until the 1990s, this place was used only as a mosque. In the month of Ramadan in 1994, during a morning prayer at the Al-Khalil Mosque, a Jew named Goldstein entered with his friend and raked the people who were praying; 29 martyrs, 300 injured... After this event, the mosque was closed to prayers for approximately 4 years. With the Al-Khalil Protocol signed in Oslo between the two

There is still a memorial note of Sultan Abdul Hamid Han on it, "This candelabra is a gift from Hazrat Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan to the Masjid al-Sharif of Hazrat Abraham."

presidents of the time, Yasser Arafat and Netanyahu, the city inhabited by 250,000 Muslims and the mosque were divided into two parts. The H1 region, which constitutes 80 percent of the city, was left to the State of Palestine, and 20 percent H2 region, where 600 Jewish households were located, was given to Israeli control.

Khalil-ur Rahman Complex, which is held to be the fourth *haram* (inviolate zone) of Islam, is now located in the H2 region, under the Israeli rule.

In the complex, the part of the mosque including the tombs of Abraham and his wife Sarah, Isaac and his wife Rebecca were left to Muslims. And the tombs of Jacob-the ancestor of the Israelites-, and his wife Laika and Joseph were left in the synagogue side.

According to the protocol, during the holy days, Muslims would be able to visit the synagogue, and during the Jewish festivals, the mosque would be closed to worship and all Jews would be able to visit both the mosque and the synagogue. According to this protocol again, the prayer calls would be recited not from the mosque part, but from the the synagogue part. Today, when it is time for the daily calls to prayer, the *muezzin* (an official who calls to prayer) knocks on the door of the

synagogue, a soldier on duty or a security guard opens the door from inside, the *muezzin* walks in and recites the prayer call.

While mentioning about Abraham in the Qur'an, Our Lord says: Peace be upon Abraham. (Selamun ala İbrahim) <sup>9</sup> There is peace, welfare and safety where Abraham is. We, too, say peace be upon to Abraham and upon all our prophets. My Lord, honor Muhammad (saw) and his family, his companions and those who believe in him till the Day of Judgment as you honoured Abraham and his family. My Lord, bless Muhammad (saw) and his family, his companions and those who believe in him till the Day of Judgment as you blessed Abraham and his family.

### Ottoman Flag Entrusted to the Bosom of Khalilullah from the Bosom of HabibAllah

Fahreddin Pasha won the title of the "Defender of Medina" as a result of his struggles to protect Rawda al-Mutahhara (Garden of the Prophet) and our flag, which are of our religious and national values, in great hardships with his soldiers loyal to their country, flag and duty. The Tiger of the Desert, saying "The bread of enslavement does not pass

<sup>9</sup> As-Saffat 37:109

through our throat, I would never bring the Turkish flag down from Medina Castle with my own hands. We will not allow our sacred sanjaks to be enslaved," has gone down in history as Atatürk pointed out, "the commander who had his name written in golden letters in history when he was still alive." Just like the great-hearted men who call out to the whole world today, "You will not be able to divide the integrity of our nation, bring down our flag, tear our country apart, silence our prayer calls, make this country kneel down before you and subdue this people. You cannot deter us from the path we have been walking

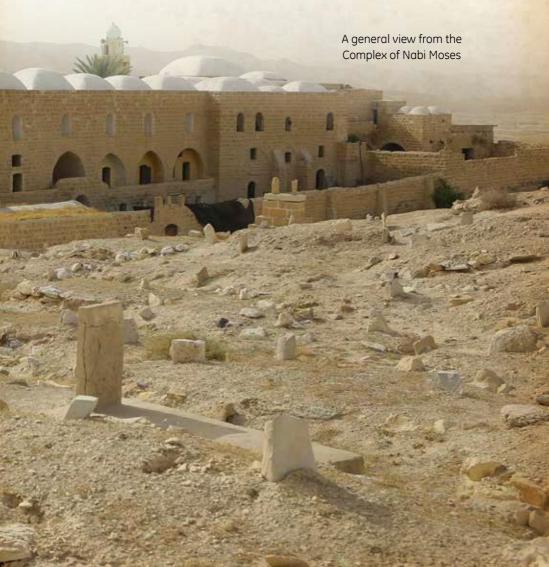


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for 1000 years. Since the Victory of Manzikert in 1071, these lands have become home and country to us. Sultan Fatih was our ancestor. Our *takbeers* resonated across the domes of Suleymaniye Mosque. We were Selim I, who followed our prophet in the Sinai Desert and served the

Haramayn (the two holy cities of Islam).

We were Salah ad-Din Ayyub who conquered Jerusalem. We were Abdul Hamid who said that the land taken by blood cannot be sold for coins. It was us who challenged the seven states in Çanakkale, giving up their lives but not giving passage





to the enemy. We were Corporal Seyit (Seyit Onbaşı) who became a legend when he shouldered the artillery shell. We were the brave men who rushed out of their trenches like an arrow when Gazi Mustafa Kemal said, "I order you to die". In Kut-al-Amara, we were the willpower of the ummah (Muslim community) who believed in victory. In the National Struggle, it was us who made history, rushing to the front with all our strength. We were Sütçü İmam in Maraş, Hasan Tahsin in İzmir, Nene Hatun in Erzurum and Şahin Bey in Antep."

It is said that the Defender of Medina, Fahreddin Pasha, secretly sent the flag on which he hang the silver privilege medallion given to the 42nd Regiment for their victory in Dardanelles, to the city of Al-Khalil. The flag would be preserved in Abraham's tomb so that it could not be be seized by the British. That flag is still in the tomb. It was as if it were entrusted to the bosom of the intimate friend of Allah

### (Khalil Allah) from the bosom of the beloved of Allah (Habib Allah).

This honorable flag has been waiting for the wind, yearning for the sky like the *ummah* of Muhammad. The flag, which is the symbol of the independence of this noble nation that has been the banner bearer of Islam, could only be entrusted to the two exalted prophets to whom Allah entrusted prophethood.

Such is the sensitivity of the ancestor...

This nation has not dropped its flag to the ground and never will.

It has not let its honor be degraded and never will.

My Lord, make us live with this consciousness,

and gather us in the hereafter with this consciousness. Amin.

### PROPHET MOSES/ NABI MUSA

Though there is no definite information about the location of Moses' tomb, whose life story and struggles with Pharoah have been extensively narrated in the Quran, his tomb is in a region between Jerusalem and Jericho according to the sources on Islamic history.

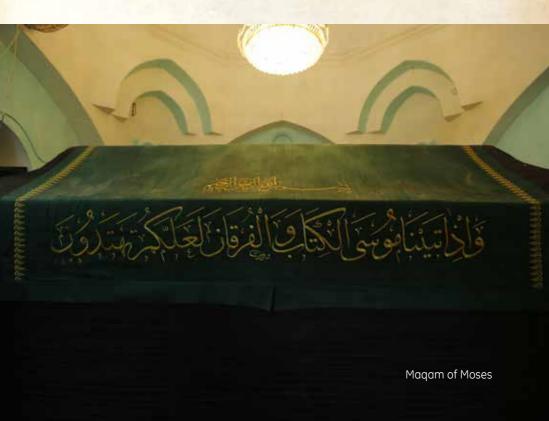
In historical sources, it is reported that after the Israelites had wandered

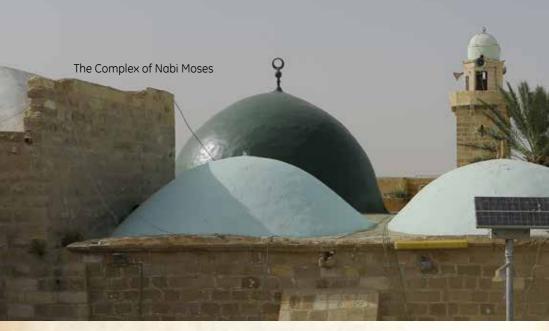
in the Sinai desert for forty years, Moses led them to the south side of the Dead Sea (the Lake of Lut), and they settled on the east of the Jordan River under the leadership of Moses, and that Moses passed away on a mountain between Jericho and Jerusalem.

### **Maqam of Prophet Moses**

Salah ad-Din Ayyub built a tomb and a mosque over the grave which was thought to belong to Moses. And, the Mamluk Sultan Baybars built a complex here in 1269.

The maqam of Prophet Moses has become a large complex containing mausoleums, caravanserais and other outbuildings with additions in various periods during the past centuries. Located on the pilgrimage route, this complex is 20 kilometers away from Jerusalem. The magam of Prophet Moses was one of the stops for pilgrims since the time of Salah ad-Din Ayyub. It was also used as a caravanserai, where pilgrims stayed and met their needs before reaching Jerusalem during the Ottoman period in particular.





In order to meet the needs of the complex, waqf foundations were allocated in the other cities of Palestine, especially in the city of Jericho. This consideration of the Ottomans was because the tomb of Moses was here. The last restoration of this work, which is administered by the Jericho Islam Foundation today, was carried out by TIKA.

The magam of Prophet Moses was one of the stops for pilgrims since the time of Salah ad-Din Ayyub.

#### Nabi Musa (Prophet Moses) Festival

In 1187, Salah ad-Din Ayyub, who rescued Jerusalem from the Crusaders' persecution, noticed that the number of Christians flocking to Jerusalem for Easter celebrations was about 50-60 thousands, and he thought that if half of them were old enough to fight, this would correspond to a force of 20-30 thousand people. In order to protect Jerusalem from the dangers in the future, Salah ad-Din Ayyub, with his great foresight, sought ways to balance this crowd with the Muslim population and eventually started the Nabi Musa Festival, which the Muslims would celebrate on Easter days in Jerusalem. He immediately built a tomb and a mosque over the



tomb that was thought to belong to Moses, and organized visits, offerings and ceremonies. He set up waqf foundations in order to meet the needs of the visitors who would come for celebrations. Nabi Musa Festival. which started in the period of Salah ad-Din Ayyub and went on during the Ottoman period, was celebrated traditionally for hundreds of years as a festival for a week when tens of thousands of Muslims marched to Jerusalem from the Magam of Nabi Musa (the Mausoleum of Moses) with flags in every April, and lasted until 1920.

In the twentieth century, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, guided the groups coming from the other regions of Palestine for celebrations. Nabi Musa celebrations also sparked the revolution realized by Palestinian people against the British invasion.

It is said that Jaffa, one of the oldest port cities of the world in the Eastern Mediterranean, was named after Japheth, the son of Noah. In

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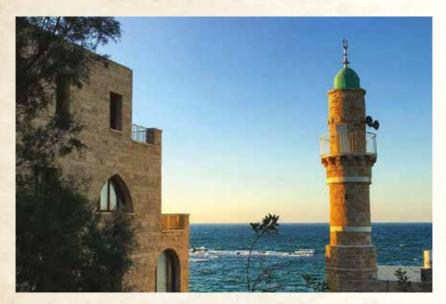
the archaeological excavations that have been going on since the 1950s, some structures have been unearthed, dating back to the Bronze Age. The tree trunks that were prepared for the construction of Solomon Temple were brought from Jabir (Tyrus) to Jaffa on the rafts in the time of King Hiram, and they were transported to Jerusalem from there.

The city was conquered in 636 during the period of Omar. After the Battle of Marj Dabiq (922/1516), it was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In the cadastral record books of the Ottomans, with the date 932 (1525-26), which are in the Prime Ministry Archives, Jaffa is shown as a village of twenty-seven households in Ramla. Under the Ottoman administration, Jaffa was a quiet small coastal town in the Gazza Sanjak and Ramla District. On

May 6, 1799, the city was occupied by Napoleon and 4000 people, who were captured, were executed by shooting.<sup>10</sup>

Jaffa went under Ottoman rule after the Battle of Marj Dabiq (922/1516)

Jaffa, bearing profound traces from the Ottoman Empire, hosts visitors with the works that it preserves at its heart with pride since then, such as Bahr Mosque, Mahmudiye Mosque, Sarkis Mosque, Cebeliye Mosque, Acemi Mosque, Hasan Bek Mosque, Mahmudiye Sabil, the Old Government Building (as-Saray al-Qadim), Governor Mansion and the Clock Tower.



## Al-Bahr Mosque

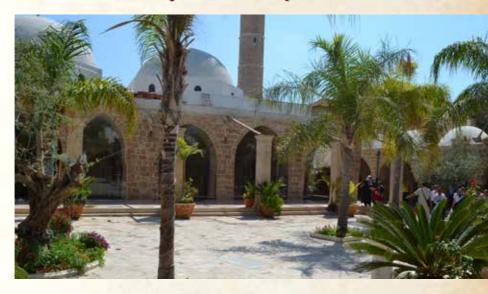
Of the oldest residents of Jaffa, it lays eyes on Turkey across the Mediterranean longingly, it is, as it were, the shelter for the faithful and enduring mothers, waiting for their husbands who went fishing in the past...

## Old Government Building / As-Saray al-Qadim

It was thought that a crusader building was constructed on the site in the 18th century and was completed by the governor Muhammad Abu Nabbut in the early 19th century. The building, which was used as a Government Palace during the 19th century, consisted of a palace, a barracks / prison, a post

office, a *hammam* (Turkish bath) and a small mosque. When the New Government Building was built in 1897, this structure was used as a soap factory. The old government building, which hosted some other factories from the 1948 war until 1961, then began to operate





as the Tel-Aviv Jaffa Museum of Antiquities.

## Mahmoudiya Mosque

Also known as, "Ulu Camii", Mahmoudiya Mosque is the most important Ottoman work in Jaffa. Governor Mohammed Abu Nebbût built it in the time of Mahmud II. This mosque is a refuge today for a handful of Muslim Palestinians who have remained in Jaffa. With its double domes, double *mihrabs* and

unique courtyard; it challenges time, loneliness and unfaithfulness.

The mosque was restored to its current appearance through the renovation works carried out in the time of Sultan Mahmud II in 1812. The inscription on this matter is located on the door at the southern wall of the Mahmoudiya Mosque.

The first line of the inscription reads, "Ceddede haze'l-bina fi haze'l-





Inscription of the Mahmoudiya Mosque

mescidi fi saltanati hami dini'lmüslimin el-sultan Mahmud Han nasarahü'- Azizi'r-Rahman..."

Sabil of Suleiman the Magnificent: It is the symbol of Islamic civilization from past to future not only with its unique architecture and aesthetics, but also with the inscriptions containing wise and profound meanings, which it honors on its chest. You know, there is the saying, if only

the stones could speak, and thus the stones tell us;

There is the signature (tughra) of Sultan Mahmud II inside the medallion on the top of the sabil. And, in the medallion just below that, the word, "Maşallah" is written and there is a tree motif on either side of the word.

On the rightmost inscriptions, which are in the triple way on the same line in the center of the Sabil,





are the names of the Ashab al-Kahf written in two lines,

"Yemliha, Meslina, Mekselina, Mernuş, Debernuş, Şazenuş, Kefeştatayyuş and Kıtmır."

Three couplets in the inscription that is in the middle:

"Bena's-sebile bi-'azmi mevla'lmüslimîn

Mahmud Han nusreten li'lmü'minîn

Halifetü'l-Cezzar (şibli) yakin

Muhammed zü't-tavli ve'r-ra'yi'lemin

Haze'l-'ula mine'l-'ali errahtühü. Men mübsir işrabuuu ya varidîn"



In the last line, the date of 1224 AH / 1809 BCE is written with the help of *abjad* calculations in quotation marks.

It is understood from this inscription that Emir Muhammad built the sabil on behalf of Cezzar Ahmet Pasha.

The leftmost inscription includes the following statement in two lines:

"El-Mülkü lillah men yezfer bi neylin minni yerdudhu kahran ve tedammene nefsuhu ed-derika. Lev enne lî ev ligayri kaderu enmiletin fevga-l besati le-kane'l-emru müştereka."

"All property belongs to Allah. Whoever gains anything by my will, is obliged to return this property eventually, and his *nafs* (self) will deserve hell. Nonetheless, if I or any



other man had property even as little as the tip of my finger on earth, that property would be common."

It is said that Selim I wrote this couplet when they told him, "You've added Egypt, too, to you property" upon his conquest of Egypt. This couplet also reveals the extent to which our ancestors cherish the sense of servitude and humility they learnt from the morality of the Qur'an even if they owned the whole world.

On the rightmost of the inscriptions, which are at the bottom, it reads;

"Allahümme la sehle illa ma cealtehu sehlen. Ve ente tec'elü'l hezne iza şi'te sehlen."

"My Lord, there is no ease other than what you rendered easy, If you will, my Lord, you turn the difficulty /affliction / sorrow / grief into ease/ grace/ joy.

The one in the middle reads,





"Innehu min Suleymane ve innehu Bismillahirrahmanirrahim Zulhijja, the year 1244".

On the leftmost, the following statement is inscribed,

"Yâ nefsü lâ teknati min zelletin azumet. İnnel kebâire filğufrani kellememi."

"Oh my nafs (self)! Don't give up on Allah's mercy because of your great sins. Because the forgiveness of the great sins is just like the forgiveness of the trivial sins under favour of His grace."

At this point, it is a must to mention the verses in Surah an-Najm 32 and Surah az-Zumar 53,

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفُوَاحِشَ اِلَّا اللَّمْمَ اِنَّ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفُوَاحِشَ اِلَّا اللَّمَمَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ اعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذْ اَنْشَاكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ اَنْتُمْ اَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ النَّشَاكُمْ هُوَ اعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقٰی اللَّهُ اِمَنِ اتَّقٰی اللَّهُ اِمَنِ اتَّقٰی اللَّهُ اللِّهُ اللَّهُ اللْمُ اللَّهُ اللْعُلِمُ اللْمُواللَّهُ اللْمُواللَّهُ اللْمُوالِلَّةُ اللْمُوالِمُ اللْمُلْمُ اللْمُوالِمُ اللْمُواللَّهُ اللْمُوالِمُ اللَّهُ الل

"Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast



in forgiveness. He was most knowing of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers. So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him." <sup>11</sup>

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ اَسْرَفُوا عَلَى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تُقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الدُّنُوبَ تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الدُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

"Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah . Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." <sup>12</sup>

### The Clock Tower

The Clock Tower standing as though embedded in the heart of Jaffa, appears in front of us as if to scream that we should set our clocks again back to Jerusalem. As the poet puts it,

"I bear Jerusalem like a wristwatch. Unless in alignment with Jerusalem You will be wasting your time." <sup>13</sup>

It was built to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sultan Abdülhamid II's ascension to the throne in 1901. An identical one was built behind Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) in Jerusalem, but unfortunately,

<sup>11</sup> An-Najm 53:32

<sup>12</sup> Az-Zumar 39:53

it has not survived up to today. In 1919, the British commander Ronald Stors demolished it by way of the Jerusalem Lovers Association, which he founded. The underlying motive for the destruction of this tower was to remove the memory of Abdulhamid Han from the minds.

#### **Governor's Mansion**

It is located right next to the Clock Tower. Built in 1890, this mansion was bombed by a Jewish terrorist organization in 1940, leaving only four pillars.





## **CITY OF JERICHO**

The city of Jericho is situated 36 kilometers away from the east of Jerusalem on the road to Amman and at the junction of the highway to Galilee. The city of Jericho is the oldest town on earth. It is located 258 m below sea level. It dates back more than 10 thousand years from now. The city of Jericho played an important role in the spread of Christianity in the early periods.

Jericho is a settlement dating back to ancient times, which is mentioned in the Old Testament, and a controversial issue among archaeologists in regard to its downfall.



Monastery on the Mount of Temptation

# Mount of Temptation (Quruntul Monastery)

In the early days of Christianity, the hermit priests remained in 30-40 caves, which are on the eastern slopes of the mountain. This region, according to Christians, is the place where Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights fasting and in deep thoughts, and underwent the test of Satan. A Greek monastery (Quruntul) was built in the sixth century over the cave where Jesus stayed.

# DEAD SEA LAKE OF LOT

It is also known as Salt Lake or the Lake of Lot. It is the only gathering place of the water in the Jordan Valley. The area of the Lake of Lot is 85 km long and 17 km wide and its surface area is approximately 677 km². It is 417 m below sea level and it is the lowest point in the world. The Lake of Lot has a salinity between 28% and 33% and it is the third most saline lake in the world.

He told his people to fear Allah and to obey him, and notified that it was a great immorality and sin to be with men instead of women, and asked them to abandon that. His people told him that he would be exiled if he continued to interfere in their affairs, and challenged him, "If you speak the truth, bring us the wrath that you threaten us."

# Lot (as) According to the Quran

Lot (as) was sent as a prophet to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. the Jordan Valley today, which were established between the years 3150 -1550 BCE according to Islamic sources. The. It is reported that Lot, whose name is mentioned in twenty-seven places in the Quran, accepted Abraham's notification14, reached the blessed land with him<sup>15</sup>, he was one of the prophets16, he was rendered superior to the worlds like other prophets<sup>17</sup>, he was given dominion and knowledge, and that he was one of the righteous and received the divine mercy.18 Lot went to Sodom not because of a dispute between his shepherds and his uncle, Abraham's shepherds, or not because he preferred the fertile lands as alleged in the Torah, but because

he was ordained as a prophet<sup>19</sup>. He told his people to fear Allah and to obey him, and notified that it was a great immorality and sin to be with men instead of women, and asked them to abandon that. His people told him that he would be exiled if he continued to interfere in their affairs, and challenged him, "If you speak the truth, bring us the wrath that you threaten us." Then Lot prayed to Allah to exempt him from the responsibility of their actions.20 Allah, accepting the prayer of Lot, commissioned the three angels, who are said to be Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael to vanquish the perverted people. The angels first came to Abraham disguised as handsome young men and gave him the good tidings of the birth of Isaac, and informed him that they were sent to destroy the tribe of Lot.<sup>21</sup> Abraham, reminding them that Lot was living among them, reiterated his

<sup>14</sup> Al-'Ankabut 29:26

<sup>15</sup> Al-Anbya 21:71

<sup>16</sup> As-Saffat 37:133

<sup>17</sup> Al-An'am 6:86

<sup>18</sup> Al-Anbya 21:74-75

<sup>19</sup> As-Saffat 37:133

<sup>20</sup> Al-A'raf 7:80-81; Ash-Shu'ara 26/160-166; An-Naml 27:54-55; Al-'Ankabut 29:28-30

<sup>21</sup> Hud 11:69-70; Al-Hijr 15:57-58; Al-'Ankabut 29:31

prayer about the postponement of destruction and the redemption of the believers.<sup>22</sup> Although the details of the conversation Abraham had with the angels are not included in the Qur'an, these details are mentioned in some Islamic sources. A similar conversation took place between God and Abraham according to the Torah. The Prophet asked the angels whether they would destroy also the place in which 400 believers lived, and and they gave him their word that they would not.

He then gradually decreased the number until ten, but there were not even ten believers there. Soon the angels informed that the commandment for the torment went forth, but Lot and his family would be saved.

When the angels came to the place where Lot lived, he hosted these foreigners whom he had never seen before. On the one hand, he was distressed by thinking about the evil that his people woud do. The people, who were informed of the guests, gathered around the house and asked

22 Hud 11:74



the guests to be delivered to them. Lot told them not to disgrace him in front of his guests, and that they could marry his daughters if they liked, but they should leave the guests in peace. But they insisted on their wishes by reminding Lot that they prohibited him from interfering with the work of others and hosting the strangers. "I wish I had the strength to stand up to you" Lot expressed his distress. Upon this, the angels declared that they were the messengers from Allah and that his people could not cause any harm to him and his family.

They told him to leave the city at night because the torment would come towards morning, and that his people, including his wife, would be destroyed. On the other hand, they drew the people away, who surrounded the house trying to get inside, by blinding their eyes,. Lot and his family left the city, and in the morning the city was turned upside down with a shower of stones of baked clay, layer on layer, thus, Lot's people were destroyed, including his wife.



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Live through the Mount Sinai
So you know where Jerusalem lies
I bear Ierusalem like a wristwatch.
Unless in alignment with Jerusalem
You will be wasting your time
And get frozen
And lose your eyesight.

