



Masjid al-Aqsa's Centrality to the Life of a Muslim

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Dedication

For the love of Masjid al-Aqsa, a gift to the beloved in an endeavour to protect the Holy House of Allah. May Allah grant us a prayer and life with you, free and dignified.

In service of the Muslim Ummah, our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and around the world. May Allah relieve us from the burden of oppression and lift us to peace and strength.

In dedication of our teacher Dr Khalid el-Awaisi and everyone at the Islamic Jerusalem Research Academy who have dedicated decades to developing and spreading this knowledge. May Allah raise your rank and reward you abundantly.

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Preface

This packet has been put together with the purpose of educating Muslims on the importance of Masjid al-Aqsa in Islam, explaining its high value and key qualities in some detail as well as providing the Muslim with a wealth of knowledge on the centrality of Masjid al-Aqsa to their personal lives particularly in these end times.

Masjid al-Aqsa has been under occupation for just over 100 years, an occupation which increasingly trespasses on its purity and takes calculated steps towards its destruction daily. Therefore, it is vital for every Muslim to be armed with knowledge by which they can contribute to, serve, and protect the Sanctity of Allah's Holy House.

This knowledge is intended to make the issue of Masjid al-Aqsa a personal issue for every Muslim. Masjid al-Aqsa does not belong to the Palestinians and therefore it is not solely their responsibility to stand in its defense. The knowledge contained in this packet, derived from the Qur'aan, Ahadeeth and Islamic history will empower the average Muslim in understanding that their support for the Holy Land is not an outsider's support for an oppressed people but a personal duty that has been issued to them by Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. Masjid al-Aqsa is part of the very Aqeedah of a Muslim, it is an inheritance passed down through the generations from the time of the very first Muslim, our father Adam a.s, and it is an inheritance whose tax demands to be paid.

The Palestinians have been shouldering this duty on our behalf due to widespread apathy and ignorance among the Muslims of their own responsibilities, but it is not the Palestinians duty to carry alone. Through the exploration of the many aspects of Masjid al-Aqsa's Holiness and its centrality to the lives of the Prophets it is hoped that Muslims will develop a love for the Holy House and carry its knowledge with them in their lives, using it to affect positive change for Masjid al-Aqsa in whatever opportunities their area of expertise, field of work or place of living gives to them. The Muslim is compelled to

follow in the path of Prophets in lifting al-Aqsa up, placing the Holy House at the top of their agenda, dedicating their lives to its protection and being proactive on the path of its liberation.

The great poet and philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal once said, ‘After you teach your child ‘La ilaha illa Allah’ you must teach them the love of Masjid al-Aqsa.’ This packet strives to illustrate to believers what warrants such a heavy statement and why this level of commitment is Masjid al-Aqsa's right on every Muslim. Heart of the Ummah prays that this work is accepted by Allah and succeeds in its noble goal, connecting the Ummah to its heart Masjid al-Aqsa and becoming a means of its liberation. We ask Allah to have mercy on us and on all the Muslims, to remove the suffering of our Ummah and restore the glory of Islam. Any oversights or errors in the content are entirely due to our own shortcomings and the goodness and truth that is in it is from Allah. And Allah knows best.

The Second Masjid on Earth

Al-Ka'bah was built by Adam a.s under the Bayt al-Ma'mur, the house of Allah in the heavens, which the angels frequent for pilgrimage and prayer. The Ka'bah is the first house of Allah on Earth, built originally by Adam a.s.

Abu Dharr (ra) reported that he asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah, which Masjid was built first on earth”? The Prophet (saw) replied, “The Masjid al-Haram of Makkah”. Abu Dharr (ra) again asked, “Which was next”? The Prophet (saw) said, “Masjid al-Aqsa”. Abu Dharr (ra) further asked, “How long was the period between the building of the two Masjids”? The Prophet (saw) said, “Forty years”. Apart from these, offer your prayer anywhere when it is time to pray, although excellence is in praying in these Masjids. (al-Bukhari)

Masjid al-Aqsa is the Second House of Allah on Earth, built only 40 years after Masjid al-Haram. Most scholars agree that Adam a.s also built al-Aqsa. Some theorise it may have been his son. Regardless, al-Aqsa was built for the purpose of Sacred pilgrimage and prayer for the Muslims since humanity began. Allah gifted the believers al-Ka'bah and al-Aqsa since the start of human life of Earth, a testament to their importance and Holiness to the Muslims.

Note, Islam is not a 1400-year-old religion and it did not begin with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This is the view of secular minds and how they categorize our religion. In truth the first man and Prophet Adam a.s was Allah's Caliph on Earth and he was a Muslim preaching Islam. Throughout the years Allah sent thousands of prophets and revealed books or scriptures to them and these were Islamic revelations. Although the rules and guidelines of Islamic laws and obligations have changed over the years as Allah has matured mankind, the religion and belief have remained the same.



(Above: The topography of the land, in red the Sacred Land of al-Aqsa
Image taken from 'El-Awaise (2008) 'Geographical Dimensions of Islamic Jerusalem

It is important to understand that Islam is the oldest religion on Earth as it reveals Masjid al-Aqsa's origins to be purely Islamic. Masjid al-Aqsa therefore belongs to all Muslims who hold the sole rights to enter and pray inside the Holy House of Allah.

'Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he was a Muslim, upright and was not a polytheist.' Qur'aan 3:67

'Indeed, those who have the best claim to Ibrahim are his followers, this Prophet (Muhammad) and the believers. And Allah is the Guardian of those who believe.' Qur'aan 3:68

'Do you claim that Ibrahim, Ismaeel, Ishaq, Ya'qoob, and his descendants were all Jews or Christians?' Say, "Who is more knowledgeable: you or Allah?" Who does more wrong than those who hide the testimony they received from Allah? And Allah is never unaware of what you do.' Qur'aan 2:140

The First Qiblah for the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ

After Iqra (read), the next command of Allah to Nabi ﷺ. was to pray.

'Oh, you wrapped (in your clothes), stand all night (in prayer) except a little.'

Qur'aan 73:1

To pray not 5 prayers (This was before the gift of 5 daily Salaah), but to pray all of the night except for a small portion. Nabi ﷺ would stand in prayer with the Sahaba for many hours every night facing towards Masjid al-Aqsa. It was the Qiblah of the Islamic Prophets that came directly before him.

Ibn Abbas narrates "The Prophet used to pray towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Masjid al-Aqsa) when he was in Makkah, with the Ka'bah in between. After he migrated to Madinah, he continued to face it for a further sixteen months before he was turned towards the Ka'bah". (Musnad Ahmad)

In Makkah Rasulullah ﷺ would prefer to face both Qiblah together. When not possible to combine the two, he would face Masjid al-Aqsa only. This means when the Sahaba stood with the Prophet ﷺ in the house of Arqam they would face Masjid al-Aqsa. The small Masjid or prayer area that Abu Bakr r.a. had in his garden in Makkah also faced Masjid al-Aqsa.

The effect of the Qiblah creates a spiritual bond and affection for the place that is faced in prayer. Like today all Muslims have a love of and yearning for the Ka'bah as our direction of prayer, so too the Sahaba had a yearning and love towards Masjid al-Aqsa. On the day Umar r.a. accepted Islam the Sahaba were joyous and felt the pride of Islam. They decided to make Tawaf of the Ka'bah in spite of the disbelievers due to this pride. On this same day when this honor of Islam was felt, al-Arqam came to the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ and expressed his longing. He said, 'I am wishing to go to Bayt al-Maqdis, I am wishing to pray in it.'

Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahaba faced Masjid al-Aqsa as a Qiblah for 14.5 years out of the 23 years of Prophethood. So, for the majority of Nabi ﷺ prophethood he faced al-Aqsa as his Qiblah. After the Hijrah to Madinah, the Masaajid of Madinah including Masjid Nabwi were built to face Masjid al-Aqsa. This is a foundational connection set in stone.

The Qiblah was changed to al-Ka'bah 16 or 17 months after the Hijrah. Nabi ﷺ was aware this change would occur previous to it happening as during the second Aqaba (before migration) Al Baraa Ibn Marroor r.a. requested to face the Ka'bah in prayer and Nabi ﷺ ordered him to be patient, to continue facing Masjid al-Aqsa and that soon Allah would change the Qiblah. The reason for the change of Qiblah was a test for the believers and the people of the book.

'We appointed the direction which you formerly observed so that We might distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels.'

Qur'aan 2:143

Those We have given the Scripture recognize this as they recognize their own children. Yet a group of them hides the truth knowingly. Qur'aan 2:146

The people of the book had gone astray and presumed that Allah was confined to a certain direction and out of their arrogance disobeyed the final Prophet in refusing to obey Allah's command. In this way the true Muslims were finally separated from those who came before. Islam was now also differentiated from the mutated versions of it that had been created when the previous peoples had strayed from the Islam which the previous Prophets preached.

The change of Qiblah had nothing to do with a change in the value and status of Masjid al-Aqsa in Islam. Its virtue did not diminish. Majority of the Ahadeeth lauding the virtues and Holiness of Masjid al-Aqsa were related by the Prophet ﷺ after the change of the Qiblah to the Ka'bah.

Named by Allah (and the boundaries of the Holy Land)

Only two Masaajid have the honor of being named directly by Allah in the Qur'aan, Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Aqsa.

Glory be to the One Who took His servant 'Muhammad' by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We may show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He alone is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (Qur'aan 17:1)

Although Masjid al-Aqsa has many names and monikers, its main and most well-known name is taken directly from the Qur'aan where Allah refers to it as 'al-Masjid al-Aqsa'. The name al-Aqsa is commonly translated as 'the furthest Masjid' indicating it is the furthest Holy House from Masjid al-Haram. Mufasssireen have also mentioned the 'furthest' means far removed from impurities. 'Aqsa' can also be translated as 'Highest' or 'Maximum', so another translation is 'the highest Masjid'.



Masjid al-Aqsa has also been called Bayt al-Muqaddas by Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahaba and this name can be traced back at least to the time of the Canaanites in the Holy Land who were the natives living in the land of al-Aqsa when Ibrahim a.s migrated there from Iraq. The name Bayt al-Muqaddas/ Bayt al-Maqdis translates to ‘The Holy House’ or ‘The House of the Holy’. Rasulullah ﷺ used this name in different contexts to mean different things. Occasionally it was used to refer to Masjid al-Aqsa, occasionally to the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and sometimes he ﷺ used it to refer to the Islamic region of the Holy Land, an area of approximately 40 by 40 miles as mentioned by classical Muslim scholars (Approximate boundary in yellow above - For more details see Mapping IslamicJerusalem: A rediscovery of geographical boundaries 2007 - Khalid el-Awaisi - Al Maktoum Academic Institute).

Door to the Heavens / Closest Point to Heaven on Earth (al-Isra wal-Miraj)

Masjid al-Aqsa is known as the 'Door to the Heavens' or the 'Closest Point to Heaven on Earth' due to the ascension of Rasulullah ﷺ from Masjid al-Aqsa to the heavens on the journey of Mi'raj. al-Isra wa al-Miraj comes after all these connections to Bayt al-Maqdis are already formed, and in the most difficult time of Nabi ﷺ life. The Sahaba at this time are already praying towards Masjid al-Aqsa, engaging with the stories of the Prophets set in the Holy Land, and following the political state of affairs in Bayt al-Maqdis. This was at the time of the Quraishi boycott for 3 years on the Muslims, eventually they are released from the boycott and two of Nabi ﷺ greatest supporters, and closest people, Abu Talib and Khadijah r.a. pass away. Nabi ﷺ is also attacked and covered with intestines while praying in the Haram. He ﷺ leaves on foot to Taif, but they reject him also and he ﷺ asks them not to tell the people of Makkah that he came, they stone Nabi ﷺ and chase him out of the city. He ﷺ is bleeding, and he cries to Allah and complains to Allah, of his weakness and humiliation. Nabi ﷺ asks Allah 'Who are you leaving me to Oh Most Merciful' Nabi ﷺ felt broken.

Years later at Uhud Aishah r.a. asks Nabi ﷺ 'Is this not the worst day', Nabi ﷺ says, 'The day in Taif was the worst of my life.' After this Jibraael a.s offers to destroy Taif and Rasulullah ﷺ. refuses out of mercy and says maybe one day their offspring will be Muslim. He ﷺ returns to Makkah and they deny him entry. He sits, stranded, and hurt outside his own city until a man comes and says you will enter under my protection on the condition you do not preach Islam. Rasulullah ﷺ enters, and this is the lowest point in his life where he feels he is failing his mission and alienated by his people and alone. His mental and physical pain is clear to see in his dua to Allah.

To You, my Lord, I complain of my weakness, lack of support and the humiliation I am made to receive. Most Compassionate and Merciful! You are the Lord of the weak, and you are my Lord. To whom do You leave me? To a distant person who receives me with hostility. Or to an enemy You have given power over me? As long as you are not displeased with me, I do not care what I face. I would, however, be much happier with Your mercy. I seek refuge in the light of Your face by which all darkness is dispelled and both this life and the life to come are put in their right course against incurring your wrath or being the subject of your anger. To You I submit, until I earn Your pleasure. Everything is powerless without your support.

At this lowest point in Rasulullah ﷺ's life. his hope and relief will come from Bayt al-Maqdis. And Allah takes him to Masjid al-Aqsa, which he has faced in Qiblah for years but never entered. Rasulullah ﷺ ties the Buraq at the Buraq wall and enters Masjid al-Aqsa. Anas (ra) relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, "I was brought the Buraq, a tall white beast, bigger than a donkey, smaller than a mule. It could place his hooves at the farthest boundary of his gaze. I mounted it until I arrived at Bayt al-Maqdis. I tied it at the ring where the Prophets tied it before (the Buraq Wall). I entered Masjid al-Aqsa Sanctuary and prayed 2 rak'ah there.' (Muslim)

Note: Remember at this time there were no buildings in Masjid al-Aqsa. Some of its boundary walls were present and some were in ruins. When Nabi ﷺ entered al-Aqsa, it was at a time of Byzantine occupation of the Holy Land. It is important to understand that Masjid al-Aqsa is a land, rather than any particular structure on that land. It is also important to understand that a Masjid does not need a dome, minaret, or carpet. Rather its requirements are a specified place, a boundary to the place and a direction of prayer.

After entering al-Aqsa, he ﷺ prays two Rakah, Jibraeel a.s brings two glasses, milk/yogurt, and wine. Rasulullah ﷺ. chooses the milk and drinks and then ascends to the Heavens. Rasulullah ﷺ ascends and meets Prophets individually and ascends with Jibraeel until Jibraeel a.s can go no further. He carries on alone and meets Allah and receives the gift of Salaah. He returns not to the Ka'bah but to al-Aqsa and leads 124,000 prophets in Salaah there. This was a spiritual and religious journey but also a political journey. Al-Aqsa became the home for the Muslims, the journey established Rasulullah ﷺ as the leader of all the previous Prophets who accepted him ﷺ as their leader and his followers are given credence through this as the owners and natural inheritors of the land

of Bayt al-Maqdis. Note: al-Aqsa is the only place where all the Prophets were gathered in summit together. It was in fact a political summit, a symbolic handing over of the flag of the leadership of humanity from the previous Prophets to Rasulallah ﷺ and his Ummah and it happened in Masjid al-Aqsa.

On this night, the Qur'aan was also revealed in Masjid al-Aqsa with a question for Rasulallah ﷺ, to ask the other Prophets there.

And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers; have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshiped? (Qur'aan 43:45)

Masjid al-Aqsa is the place where you, the Ummah of Rasulallah ﷺ received the flag of leadership of humanity and ownership of the Holy Lands. Around a 100 years ago this trust was broken and now the flag of the Ummah has fallen and we must work to make it rise again.

Jabir Ibn Abdullah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, "When the people of Quraysh did not believe me (about the night journey to al-Aqsa), I stood up in Al-Hijr and Allah displayed Bayt al-Maqdis in front of me, and I began describing it to them while I was looking at it.

After the Night Journey to al-Aqsa Rasulallah ﷺ's life changes. From then on Rasulallah ﷺ would recite Surah Isra every night, and he ﷺ loved to be reminded of the special journey Allah took him on to His Chosen Land. The doors of ease also now begin to open for the Muslims, they escape persecution and migrate to Madinah, marking the start of the Islamic calendar, the believers grow in number and strength and Islam begins to spread far and wide.

Masjid al-Aqsa is also known as the 'Door to the Heavens / Closest Point to Heaven on Earth' because of the ascension of Prophet Eesa a.s to the Heavens from Bayt al-Maqdis.

It is clear that if Allah willed, He could have taken Rasulallah ﷺ to the Heavens from any place on Earth and after all Rasulallah ﷺ was already at the Holy Ka'bah. However, Allah has chosen and honored the Holy Aqsa as the go-between between Heaven and Earth and lifted His Prophets to Himself from there.

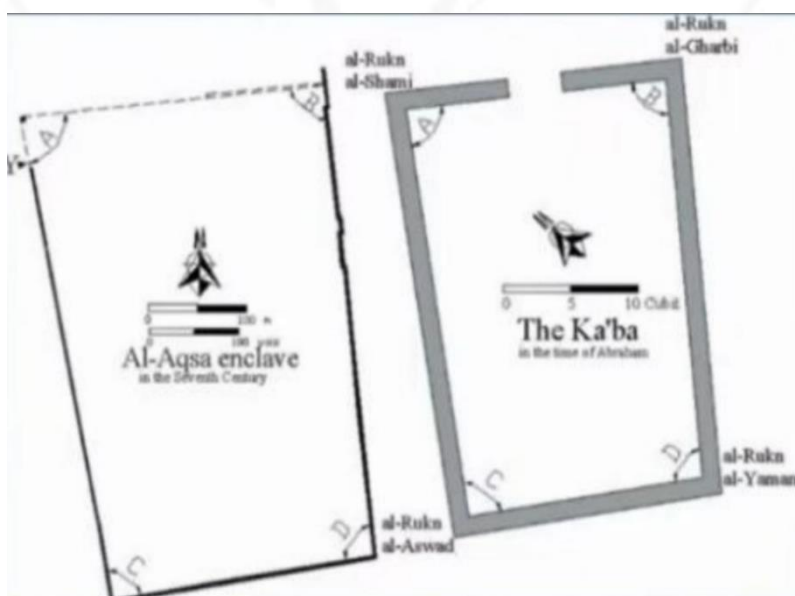
This quality of Masjid al-Aqsa has been attributed by the Muslims as the reason for the surreal feeling they experience when they enter Masjid al-Aqsa. Many Muslims have spoken about the calmness and relaxation that envelops the heart at that moment and the immediate forgetting of all worries and worldly troubles. This phenomenon has also led to Masjid al-Aqsa receiving the nickname of 'Jannah of Allah on Earth' by the believers.



The Twin of the Holy Ka'bah

Al-Ka'bah and al-Aqsa were the first two centers of Monotheism on this Earth. They were built just 40 years apart and established as Blessed Sanctuaries, where the name of Allah was ever to be praised and glorified, entrusted to the believers to guard and sanctify. There, in the moment of their conception was born a beautiful and intertwined destiny.

al-Aqsa was built (on a larger scale) in the image of al-Ka'bah, which was built under al-Ma'mur, (The House of Allah in the Heavens) which is directly under the Arsh of Allah, therefore this architecture is heavenly in nature. The foundations of al-Aqsa are oriented to face al-Ka'bah. Both are irregular rectangles with each side being a different length. The angles of the corners and proportions of the walls match (on the original foundations of both Masaajid). This corroborates the idea that both shared a single architect and builder (Adam a.s) and supports the Hadith which states they were built just 40 years apart.



Above: Diagram showing similarity between the Al-Aqsa enclave and the Ka'ba. Image taken from Al-Ratrout (2013) The Second Mosque on Earth that IslamicJerusalem forgot: Revealing the Ancient Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Al-Ka'bah and al-Aqsa were also the only two places honored by Allah to be a Qiblah, the direction of prayer and prostration for the believers.

They also share a prophetic link, as Allah took His Prophets back and forth between the two throughout history to establish them both. Adam a.s built al-Ka'bah and then traveled north to build al-Aqsa. Ibrahim a.s rebuilt al-Aqsa with Ishaq a.s and then traveled south to rebuild al-Ka'bah with Ismaeel a.s. His progeny settled at both Holy Houses. Rasulallah ﷺ grew up around al-Ka'bah and Allah also took him to Masjid al-Aqsa on the Night Journey after which he ﷺ returned to al-Ka'bah and when Rasulallah ﷺ was on his deathbed, he ﷺ sent his army towards al-Aqsa.

- They are also the only two Masaajid whose names were revealed by Allah in His final message to Mankind.
- Allah has given both al-Ka'bah and al-Aqsa surrounding boundaries with unique qualities. The Ka'bah has been given the Haram of Makkah as well as the boundary of the Meeqat, while the Aqsa has been given the boundary of Bayt al-Maqdis (the Holy Land) as well as the larger region of al-Ardh al-Mubarakah aka Shaam (The Blessed Land surrounding al-Aqsa).
- The return to the purified state of a newborn is reserved as a reward for Muslims in only two cases; 1. An Accepted Hajj. 2. A pilgrimage to Masjid al-Aqsa with the intention to pray there.
- Nabi ﷺ forbade setting out in pilgrimage to any other place beside these two Masaajid as well as Masjid Nabwi.
- The Prophet affirmed that the False Messiah would be unable to enter these two Masaajid. (Along with Masjid Nabwi and Mount Sinai).
- Rasulallah ﷺ forbade facing Masjid al-Aqsa or Masjid al-Haram when using the bathroom.
- There is also a special reward set by Allah for the Muslims who link His two Holy Houses together, Umm Salamah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, "If anyone puts on Ihram for Hajj or Umrah from Masjid Al-Aqsa and then proceeds to Masjid al-Haram their past and future sins will be forgiven, or they will be entered into Paradise. (Abu Dawud)

Place of acceptance of supplication, forgiveness, miracles, and heavenly nourishment

Allah has told us in the Qur'aan of the various duaas of Prophets that were accepted in Masjid al-Aqsa including Zakariyyah a.s dua for a child and Sulayman a.s dua for Masjid al-Aqsa and his kingdom. Dawood a.s sought repentance from Allah in Masjid al-Aqsa and was forgiven. It is also the place where Maryam a.s received the miracle of Eesa a.s. The miracle of the Me'raj also happened from Masjid al-Aqsa. Allah nourished Maryam a.s with foods from Jannah in Masjid al-Aqsa and Rasulullah ﷺ was nourished with heavenly milk in Masjid al-Aqsa. Therefore, Masjid al-Aqsa is a Sacred place where the Chosen servants of Allah have received divine gifts throughout history. It has held the food of the Heavens and been the place of worship for the most righteous servants of Allah.

'Whenever Zakariyyah went in to see her in her sanctuary (Masjid al-Aqsa), he found her supplied with provisions. He said, 'Maryam, how is it you have these provisions?' and she said, 'They are from Allah: Allah provides limitlessly for whoever He will.' (Qur'aan 3:37)

'Has the story of the two plaintiffs, who scaled the (wall of the) sanctuary (Masjid al-Aqsa), reached you (O Prophet)?

'When they came into Dawood's presence, he was startled by them. They said, "Have no fear. (We are merely) two in a dispute: one of us has wronged the other. So, judge between us with truth—do not go beyond (it)—and guide us to the right way.'

'Dawood (eventually) ruled'

'And Dawood became certain that We had tried him, and he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down bowing [in prostration] and turned in repentance [to Allah].'

'So, We forgave him that; and indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return.' (Qur'aan 38:21-25)

Surrounded by land made Blessed by Allah / The centre of Barakah

Allah has created a secondary boundary around Masjid al-Aqsa apart from Bayt al-Maqdis (the Holy Land). The larger region, referred to as Shaam, Bilad al-Shaam or al-Ardh al-Mubarakah is an area of land that encompasses modern-day Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Sinai Peninsula, as well as the majority of Syria and some surrounding areas. Masjid al-Aqsa sits at its approximate centre. (Approximate boundary of The Blessed Land below in yellow). For more information on the Barakah Circle theory see Chapter 2 of 'Introducing Islamic Jerusalem' by Dr Abdul Fattah el-Awaisi.



Glory be to the One Who took His servant (Muḥammad) by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We may show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He alone is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing. (Qur'aan 17:1)

*Then We delivered him (Ibrahim), along with Lut, to **the land We had showered with blessings** for the worlds. (Qur'aan 21:71)*

And to Sulaymaan We subjected the raging winds, blowing by his command to **the land We had showered with blessings**. It is We Who know everything. (Qur'aan 21:81)

Zaid Ibn Thabit (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, “How blessed is al-Shaam”! The Companions (ra) asked, “Why is that”? The Messenger (saw) replied, “I see the Angels of Allah spreading their wings over al-Shaam”.

Place of Hope, the Beginning of Change

Masjid al-Aqsa (and the Holy Land and the Blessed Land by extension) is also the land of hope for all Muslims.

We ordered, "O fire! Be cool and safe for Ibrahim! They had sought to harm him, but We made them the worst losers. Then We delivered him, along with Lut, to the land We had showered with blessings for the worlds. (Qur'aan 21:69-71)

Masjid al-Aqsa is also where Rasulullah ﷺ was brought after the most difficult days of his life, during a time that the mission to spread Islam seemed to be failing and the Muslims were few and weak. After the journey of Isra wal-Meraj Rasulullah ﷺ life changed, and Islam saw success. Similar to Ibrahim a.s who was saved and brought to Masjid al-Aqsa and then saw success in establishing and practicing Islam.

In Madinah, when Rasulullah ﷺ used to visit the sick believers, he would console them by telling them that they and their descendants would liberate Bayt al-Maqdis and be Imams in Masjid al-Aqsa.

So, Masjid al-Aqsa has always been a source of hope and comfort for the believers and the land where change, success and growth has emanated from.

It is also the place of hope for believers today in these end times. The victory of the Mujahideen of Bayt al-Maqdis has been prophesied for us and therefore acts as an anchor of hope and strength as we are promised they will not fall. Rasulullah ﷺ has told us that the final Khilafah will be established in Bayt al-Maqdis and this will be a time of victory for the believers and peace for the world. So, the first step towards relieving oppression on the Ummah everywhere is the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa and the Holy Land after which the Ummah of Muslims and all the peoples of the world will enjoy harmony.

Life and Mission of the Prophets ﷺ

Masjid al-Aqsa has played a central role in the lives and mission of the Islamic Prophets throughout history. al-Aqsa and the land surrounding it were where the Prophets were born, migrated to, lived in, strove to liberate, and passed away in. Multiple Islamic Prophets rebuilt Masjid al-Aqsa throughout the ages, each time purifying and sanctifying Allah's Holy House. A few examples are below.

Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام

We all know the story of Ibrahim a.s but that story is generally missing crucial elements as Ibrahim a.s connection with Masjid al-Aqsa and the Holy Land and the central role Allah gave them in His friend's life and mission. Ibrahim a.s was persecuted in Babylon, where he was born. The king eventually throws him into a raging fire but Ibrahim a.s puts his trust in Allah and stays steadfast. Allah saves His friend Ibrahim and delivers him (and Lut a.s.) to the land He has blessed. Ibrahim a.s enters Masjid al-Aqsa and worships Allah there; he also settles there and has a family. He is tasked with maintaining both of Allah's Holy Houses al-Kabah and al-Aqsa. He rebuilds both with his sons (al-Kabah with Ismaeel a.s and al-Aqsa with Ishaq a.s) and re-establishes them as sacred Islamic sites. Allah chooses for him to pass away in the Holy Land and he is buried in al-Khalil, south of Masjid al-Aqsa.

'Ibrahim was neither a Jew, nor a Christian; he was an upright Muslim' (Qur'aan 3:67)

'And We delivered him and Lut to the land which We had blessed for the worlds' (Qur'aan 21:71)

Prophet Musa ﷺ

The story of Musa a.s is the most mentioned narrative in the Qur'aan, and we have all heard it many times over. However, there are central parts of the story that are lesser known, like Musa a.s connection with the Holy Land and the high station Allah gave Bayt al-Maqdis in the life and mission of the one He spoke to directly. Musa a.s. saved his people from the oppression of the Pharaoh in Egypt and Allah directs him towards the Holy Land and Masjid al-Aqsa. Allah instructs Musa a.s to enter the Holy Land with the Bani Israeel and they are ordered to fight its unjust inhabitants and return Islam to Bayt al-Maqdis and Masjid al-Aqsa. (Note, it is important to understand that the Bani Israeel are not synonymous with Jews. The Bani Israeel were an ethnic group who at this time were Muslims as they followed Islam, the religion of Musa a.s. Judaism and Christianity, according to Islam are deviations from the revealed religion of Islam. Those who changed the religion became known as Christians and Jews because of the changes they made which essentially created new religions. Note also, that Allah does not refer to the followers of Musa or Eesa a.s as Jews or Christians. Rather Allah refers to the people who created a new religion after the passing away of Prophets as Jews and Christians.) The Bani Israeel with Musa a.s. refuse to enter the Holy Land out of fear saying, *'There is a mighty army inside it, we will not enter until they leave'. They tell Musa a.s 'Go forth with your Lord and fight, we will wait here.'*

As punishment for disobeying Allah's command and deserting Bayt al-Maqdis in its time of need Allah forbids the Holy Land for them and decrees that they will wander aimlessly in the wilderness for 40 years. Musa a.s is bound to his duty as a Prophet and must go with them, although he yearns to enter Masjid al-Aqsa.

Abu Hurayrah (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, "The Angel of death was sent to Musa. When he came to Musa, Musa punched him on the eye. The Angel returned to Allah and said, "You sent me to a servant who does not want to die". Allah ordered the Angel, 'Return to him and tell him to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it, he will be granted one year of life'. Musa asked, "O Lord! What will happen after that"? Allah replied, "Then death'. Musa decided, let it be now'. Musa then requested Allah to let him die close to the Sacred Land (near Masjid Al-Aqsa) so much so that he would be at a distance of a stone's throw from it". Abu Hurayrah (ra) added, the

Prophet (saw) then said, “If I were there, I would show you his grave below the red sand hill on the side of the road”.

Allah accepts his duaa and Musa a.s is buried a stone's throw away from Bayt al-Maqdis. Musa a.s pain and longing for Masjid al-Aqsa are clear from the revelations of his story in the Qur'aan.

‘Remember O Prophet when Musa said to his people, ‘Oh my people! Why do you hurt me when you already know I am Allah’s messenger to you?’ So, when they (persistently) deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate, for Allah does not guide the rebellious people.’ (Qur'aan 61:5)

‘Musa pleaded, ‘My Lord! I have no control over anyone except myself and my brother, so set us apart from the rebellious people.’ (Qur'aan 5:25)

‘Peace be upon Musa and Haroon. They were truly (two) of Our faithful servants.’ (Qur'aan 37:120/122)

The Prophet ﷺ said ‘We (Muslims) are more worthy and closer to Musa than you (Jews). (Sahih al-Bukhari 2004, Sahih Muslim 1130)

The Prophet ﷺ tells us that we as Muslims following the religion of Musa a.s naturally have the greatest right to Musa a.s and by assigning the fast of Ashura to us he ﷺ informs us that the legacy of Musa a.s belongs to our Ummah.

Prophet Dawood عليه السلام

The story of Dawood a.s is well-known to Muslims, but do we know the land he fought for was Bayt al-Maqdis? Or that the Goliath he slew was occupying Masjid al-Aqsa? And have you heard of the events that occurred on his army's march to the Holy Land? The Muslims are the time of Dawood a.s. had been oppressed and expelled from the Holy Land. Allah appointed them a king to liberate Masjid al-Aqsa and the Holy Land. The army marched for days and their king warned them that Allah would test their sincerity. The king told them that they would soon reach a river, but they were not to drink more than a handful from it. He told them that whoever stopped and drank to his fill could not continue as part

of the army. On seeing the river some 80,000 soldiers jumped in and rejoiced, refusing to fight and defend Masjid al-Aqsa and Bayt al-Maqdis. The true Muslims including Dawood a.s continued on, now numbering only a few hundred and facing an army of thousands.

'Those expecting to meet Allah said, 'Ever has a small number defeated a large number by the will of Allah, for Allah is with the patient ones.' (Qur'aan 2:249)

The king asked for a volunteer to fight the Goliath and although just a young boy, Dawood a.s stepped forward. He did his duty to the Holy Land courageously, using his slingshot and stones to defeat the enemy of Allah. Allah chose Dawood a.s to later be an Islamic Prophet and King, revealing to him the Zaboor. He cleansed Masjid al-Aqsa and protected its sanctity as the Second House of Allah on Earth.

'Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant Dawood, the possessor of strength; Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back (to Allah). (Qur'aan 38:17)

'When they advanced to face Goliath and his warriors they prayed, 'Our Lord! Shower us with perseverance, make our steps firm and give us victory over the disbelieving people.' (Quraan 2:250)

'So, they defeated them by Allah's will and Dawood killed Goliath. And Allah blessed Dawood with kingship and wisdom and taught him what He willed.' (Qur'aan 2:251).

Prophet Sulayman ﷺ

Sulayman a.s story is famous but how much do we know about his attachment to the Holy Land? Allah gave Sulayman a.s a Kingdom like no other and chose to establish him in Bayt al-Maqdis and Masjid al-Aqsa, showing us the status that Allah honored them with. Sulayman a.s was born in Bayt al-Maqdis. He was the son of Dawood a.s who liberated Masjid al-Aqsa from the disbelievers. Dawood a.s and Sulayman a.s were not sent specifically to the Bani Israeel but served as Allah's Caliphs over all people in the land. Allah made Sulayman a.s a great Prophet and a wise and just king. Sulayman a.s was favored by Allah in His kingship and given many miracles including being able to converse with animals and command the jinn. He was also known as 'awwab' due to his constant repentance. Sulayman a.s was tasked by Allah to continue the work of his father and

rebuild Masjid al-Aqsa. He instructed his Muslim army of humans and jinn in the rebuilding of the Second House of Allah. Sulayman a.s made dua to Allah that no believer would come to al-Aqsa with the intention to pray except that he would emerge free of sin as on the day his mother gave birth to him. Later Rasulullah ﷺ made the same dua for Masjid al-Aqsa in the words of Sulayman a.s. It is said that Sulayman a.s passed away inside Masjid al-Aqsa as he watched his army complete its rebuilding. Leaning on his staff, he stayed upright and so the army continued their work not realizing until after some time that he a.s had passed away.

'And to Sulayman (We subjected) the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by His command toward the land that We had blessed, and we are ever, of all things, knowing.' (Qur'aan 21:81)

'And We gave Sulayman to Dawood, most excellent the servant! Surely, he was frequent in returning (to Allah). (Qur'aan 38:30)

'And most surely he had a nearness to Us and an excellent resort.' (Qur'aan 38:40)

Maryam عليها السلام

The story of Maryam a.s. is legend but did we know that the Masjid she was dedicated to was the Holy House of al-Aqsa? Maryam a.s is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'aan, with an entire chapter of the Qur'aan being dedicated to the one who spent her life in dedication of al-Aqsa. Although not a Prophet, Maryam a.s is the greatest woman to exist and a close servant of Allah and so her connection with the Holy House of Aqsa is mentioned here. Hannah a.s vows to Allah that she will give her child in the service of Masjid al-Aqsa. She gives birth to a baby girl, named Maryam, and dedicates her to Masjid al-Aqsa. Maryam a.s grows up in the Rihab (environs) of Masjid al-Aqsa. Her life is spent in al-Aqsa, worshiping Allah, and serving His Chosen House. It is there in al-Aqsa that Allah bestows on Maryam a.s His mercy and miracles. Allah nourishes her with food from Himself and sends an angel to give her the news of a miracle child. Maryam a.s gives birth to Eesa a.s in the Holy Land, just east of Masjid al-Aqsa. She raises her son Eesa a.s in al-Aqsa and remains a resident of Bayt al-Maqdis.

'So, her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing.'
(Qur'aan 3:37)

'And remember when the angels said, 'Oh Maryam! Surely Allah has selected you, purified you and chosen you over all women of the world.' (Qur'aan 3:42)

Prophet Zakariyyah ﷺ

Zakariyyah a.s was a special Prophet of Allah who had the great honor of spending his life with Masjid al-Aqsa. It was there in the Holy House that Allah's mercy descended on him, his prayers were answered, and a miracle gifted to him. Zakariyyah a.s was born in the Holy Land and was a descendent of Sulayman a.s. Allah chose him to be a righteous Prophet and Imam of Masjid al-Aqsa. Zakariyyah a.s preached Islam on the Shariah of Musa a.s He was selected to be the guardian of his niece Maryam a.s who was dedicated to al-Aqsa's service. Zakariyyah a.s spent his life in and around Masjid al-Aqsa. There he worshiped Allah and served the Holy House with utmost dedication. Zakariyyah a.s's wife was unable to have children, but he never gave up hope in Allah. Allah gave him glad tidings in Masjid al-Aqsa of the birth of Yahya when he was around 93 years old.

'This is a reminder of your Lord's mercy to his servant Zakariyyah, when he cried out to his Lord privately, saying 'My Lord! Surely my bones have become brittle and grey hair has spread across my head, but I have never been disappointed in my prayer to you, my Lord!' (Qur'aan 19:2-4)

'So, the angels called out to him while he stood praying in the Sanctuary (Masjid al-Aqsa), Allah gives you good news of the birth of Yahya who will confirm the word of Allah and will be a great leader, chaste and a prophet among the righteous.' (Qur'aan 3:39)

Prophet Eesa ﷺ

Allah chose for His Messiah to be born, brought up, raised to the Heavens, and eventually return, all to and from Bayt al-Maqdis. The miraculous life of Eesa a.s was centered in and around the Holy House of al-Aqsa. The birth of Eesa a.s was a miracle of Allah bestowed on his mother Maryam a.s in Bayt al-Maqdis. Eesa a.s was nurtured as a baby

in Masjid al-Aqsa where he lived. Allah gave him many miracles and special abilities in the center of Barakah. Allah chose him to be a prophet and he preached to his people in and around the Holy House. Allah revealed His book the Injeel to Eesa a.s in Bayt al-Maqdis. The occupiers of the Holy Land persecuted Eesa a.s and hatched a plan to kill him. Allah saved His Prophet and raised him to the heavens from Bayt al-Maqdis alive. This miracle is linked to one of Masjid al-Aqsa's names 'The door to the heavens'. Eesa a.s will return to the Holy Land in the end times as a Messiah sent to liberate Bayt al-Maqdis and restore justice to the world. It is said that when he returns, he will enter the Holy House of Masjid al-Aqsa from its eastern gate, Bab Rahma. He will return as an Ummati of Rasulullah ﷺ and will follow the shariah of Rasulullah ﷺ. He will follow the leadership of the Mahdi who will establish the khilafah and rule from the Chosen House of Allah, Masjid al-Aqsa.

'(And mention) when the angels said 'Oh Maryam, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from him, whose name will be the Messiah, Eesa, the son of Maryam - distinguished in this world and the hereafter and among those brought near (to Allah). (Qur'aan 3:45)

'But when Eesa felt (persistence in) disbelief from them, he said, 'who are my supporters for (the cause of) Allah?' The disciples said, 'We are supporters for Allah, we have believed in Allah and testify that we are Muslims.' (Qur'aan 3:52)

'And we gave Eesa, son of Maryam, clear proofs and supported him with the Holy Spirit. Why is it that every time a messenger comes to you (Bani Israeel) with something you do not like, you become arrogant, rejecting some and killing others?' (Qur'aan 2:87)

'Say (O believers) 'We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Ibrahim and Ismaeel and Ishaq and Yaqub and the descendants and what was given to Musa and Eesa and what was given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him.' (Qur'aan 2:136)

'Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I will be raised back to life! That is Eesa, son of Maryam. (And this is) A word of truth, about which they dispute.' (Qur'aan 19:33-34)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Nabi Muhammad ﷺ is the greatest creation of Allah and the final Islamic Prophet. He ﷺ was born in Makkah and lived his life in the Arabian Peninsula. And yet Masjid al-Aqsa was always close to his heart and the life of Rasulallah ﷺ was filled with efforts for the protection and service of Masjid al-Aqsa which directly led to the liberation of the Holy House.

In Makkah, the aqeedah of Masjid al-Aqsa was set into the Muslims through the Qur'aanic stories based in and around al-Aqsa, Salaah which they prayed facing al-Aqsa and the physical night journey of Rasulallah ﷺ to Masjid al-Aqsa.

(See 'First Qiblah' section for early connections to al-Aqsa after prophethood).

(See 'Door to the Heavens' section for the role Isra wal Me'raj played in the life of the Prophet ﷺ).

Rasulallah ﷺ and the Sahaba also began following the political news of Bayt al-Maqdis in Makkah based on the revelations of the Qur'aan.

(See 'Masjid al-Aqsa in the Qur'aan')

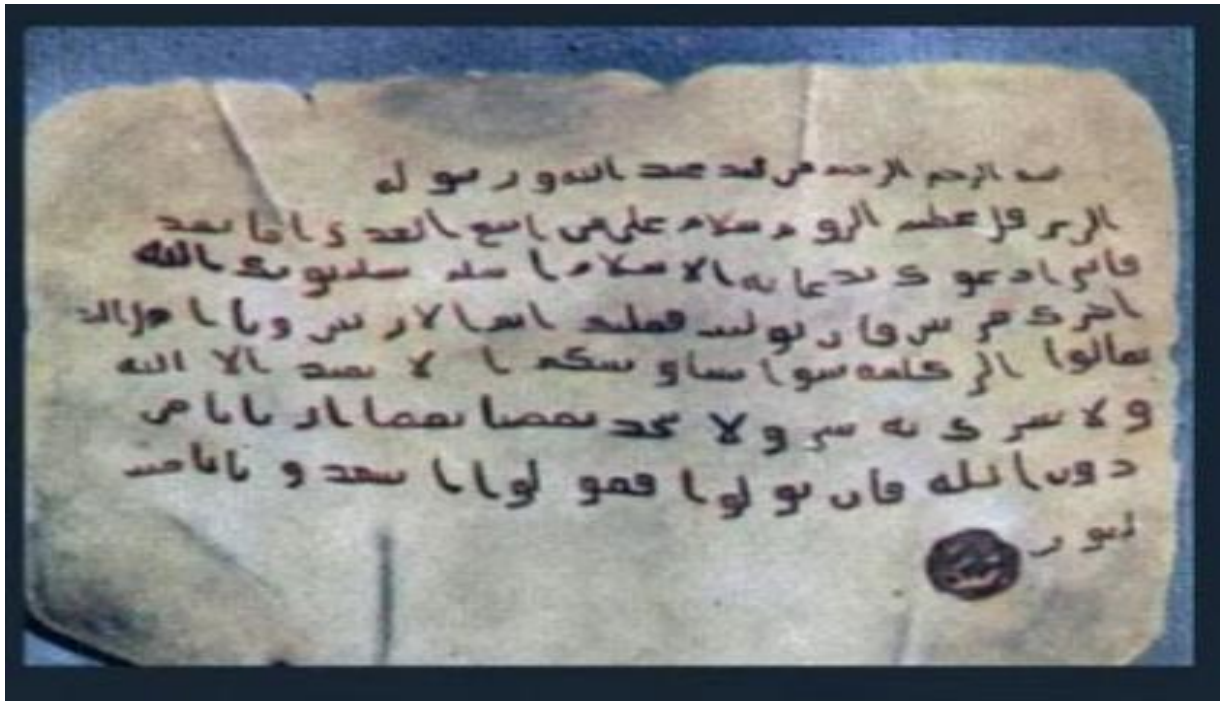
Once the migration to Madinah took place Rasulallah ﷺ established a culture of Bayt al-Maqdis among the Sahaba. It was at this time that many of the ahadeeth were related on the virtues of the Blessed Land surrounding al-Aqsa and the duty and responsibility of the Muslims towards it.

(See 'Ahadeeth' section for the blessed words of Rasulallah ﷺ. on Masjid al-Aqsa, Bayt al-Maqdis and the Blessed Land surrounding the Holy House.)

During the latter part of Rasulallah ﷺ life he began to make diplomatic efforts and send military campaigns in the direction of Masjid al-Aqsa.

After the treaty of Hdaybiyyah Rasulallah ﷺ wrote letters to various leaders inviting them to the call of Islam, including the then Christian occupier of Bayt al-Maqdis, Heraculus. The letter arrives in al-Quds just as the Byzantines defeat the Persians and re-conquer the land. The timing of the letter is to be noted, the invitation and warning lands on the doorstep of Bayt al-Maqdas when it is conquered. 'If you do not accept, we

will come and remove the barrier between the people and Islam.’ Heraculus respects the message of Rasulallah ﷺ, he does not revert to Islam but understand the truth of the message and proclaims, ‘Muhammad will take what is beneath my feet’. (Below the original letter that the scribe of Rasulallah ﷺ wrote)



During this time in Madinah, Rasulallah ﷺ also gives the first Waqf, and it is for a land in Bayt al-Maqdis. It was written by Ali r.a. given to the Sahaba Tamim al-Dari. Tamim r.a., was a priest who reverted to Islam, made the minbar for the masjid of Nabi ﷺ and put light in the masjid. He asks Nabi ﷺ Allah will give you rule over my homeland, the Holy Land, I would like you to dedicate our land in Al Khalil to be solely for me and my offspring until day of Judgement. He goes with his brother and receives the document from Nabi ﷺ who gives the first waqf dhurri (permanent) for the land to Tamim bin Aus al-Dari 'whoever harms them harms Allah and receives wrath of Allah.' Hebron (al-Khalil) is mentioned by name in the waqf. It is witnessed by Umar r.a., Uthman r.a. and other Sahaba. (Below is a copy of the text)



Rasulullah ﷺ now begins to take physical actions towards the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdas and around 27 expeditions are sent towards the Holy Land. One of these being the Battle of Mu'ta which was fought only 80 km away from Masjid al-Aqsa. For the first time in his life Nabi ﷺ sends an army and gives it more than one leader. The leaders were Zayd ibn Harith, Jafar ibn Abi Talib and Abdullah bin Rawaha r.a., chosen from amongst the closest Sahaba to Nabi ﷺ. The best and most beloved to Rasulallah ﷺ were chosen to be martyrs for Bayt al-Maqdis. Nabi ﷺ was in Madinah, but the vision of the battlefield was lifted in front of him to view by Allah. (This is the second time this occurred, and both times are connected to Bayt al-Maqdis. The first time was after Isra wal-Miraj when the Makkans disputed that Rasulallah had physically been to al-Quds, so Allah raised the vision of the city in front of him to describe). So Rasulallah ﷺ watched the battle live and saw the martyrdom of his beloved companions. Nabi ﷺ sees the martyrdom of Zayd and comes down from the minbar and says 'where is Osama, the son of Zayd' and he takes him in his arms and he ﷺ says 'Zayd took the flag and he fell, and then Jafar took the flag and he fell and then ibn Rawaha took it and he fell, Nabi ﷺ was crying saying this and then he said 'the flag was taken by one of the swords of Allah that Allah will give fath (victory) on his hand'. This Sahaba was Khalid bin Walid. Nabi ﷺ wanted to send reinforcements, but it was a long journey, and they would not make it in time.

The following couplets are said to be recited by Jafer r.a. before he was martyred:

طيبة وبارد شربها علي	يا حبذا الجنة واقتربها
ان لاقيتها ضرابها	والروم روم قد دنا عذابها

How wonderful is paradise and its proximity; Pure and cool its drinks are
As for the Romans their fall is at hand; when I meet them with my blows

The below poetry was recited by ibn Rawaha r.a. when he found himself hesitating to go forward in battle after seeing the leaders before him martyred. He encouraged himself and went forward and fought and was martyred

'Abdullah ibn Rawahah radiya Llahu 'anhu took hold of the flag charging with his horse beleaguering himself with the following couplets:

طالعة أو لتكرهه	أقسمت يا نفس لتتزلنه
أراك تكريهين الجنة	فطالما قد كنت مطمئنه

I swear you will go head first in to the battle; willingly or unwillingly
You have been at ease for much; is it that you do not wish for paradise.[4]

It is important to understand the many sacrifices that were made for the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa. From among the closest companions to Rasulullah ﷺ blood was spilt, and lives were sacrificed including the life of the Prophet ﷺ adopted son, Zaid. Note: It is through the martyrs that goals were achieved, and dreams became reality. A Mumin does not fear death. You will either die lying in your bed or die standing, either way death is ordained for every person. When fear of death becomes prevalent among the Muslims the Ummah is weakened.

Khalid ibn Waleed r.a. is a military strategist and says this battle is not possible to win, the only thing we can do is prevent our slaughter. The Qur'aan makes this clear, one believer can defeat two disbelievers. At a maximum, if your imaan is the level of the people of Badr, one can defeat 10. The situation at Mu'ta is 1 to 70, according to the sunnah of Allah, it is not possible. So, Khalid r.a. thinks of strategy whereby he makes out to his enemy as if he is going to attack, as if reinforcements are coming, He switches the left flank to right, front to back, moves them around, raising dust and making noise, raises takbeer till the enemy think a new army has come. They clean their clothes and appear

fresh and attack ferociously. The Byzantines begin to withdraw and then Khalid ibn Walid r.a. slowly withdraws the army, the Byzantines are stuck, thinking a second army will advance on them and Khalid ibn Walid r.a. is halfway back to Madinah before they realize they have been tricked.

On arriving back in Madinah, the army is not received well. Some Sahaba are even stoned on trying to enter the Masjid, the wives of the Sahaba close the doors in their faces, rebuking them saying that they had fled the battlefield. Until Nabi ﷺ emerges and says, 'They have not run away, they will return back to that land.'

Note: majority of historians are unsure what the purpose of the battle of Muta was, why they were sent, the majority quote a singular historian who offers the explanation (by his own admission a weak one) that it is for the killing of one of the messengers of the Prophet ﷺ that was sent to the region, but this happened 2 years prior, also 70 messengers were killed at a place closer to Madinah and no revenge was taken there. This weak explanation from one singular historian who himself admits it was a weak reasoning, is now quoted everywhere as the reason for the battle of Mu'ta.

After the battle of Mu'ta came the liberation of Makkah and the Holy Ka'bah. And now the majority of the Arabian Peninsula accepted Islam and Islam was strong enough to spread outside. Nabi ﷺ leads the biggest army in his life and for the first time Nabi ﷺ declares openly 'I am going to fight the Romans!' Never before had Rasulallah ﷺ pointed so clearly where he was going to, explicitly stating where he was heading, except in this instance. Rasulallah ﷺ sets out with his army and marches towards Bayt al-Maqdis.

Nabi s.aw reaches Tabuk but does not continue. The reason on why they are stopped short is narrated in Bukhari. A Sahaba goes to Nabi ﷺ tent at Tabuk and finds Nabi ﷺ in a serious mood. Nabi ﷺ says 'Count 6 things between now and the Day of Judgement, the first is my passing (This is the first time Rasulallah ﷺ mentions his death to a companion, and at hearing this Awf r.a. cries until Nabi s.aw calms him down). The second after my passing, is the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis.

Ibn Kathir elaborates on this and says this shows the goal, the aim of Nabi ﷺ with these battles was the liberation of the Holy Land but the plan was cut short. A parallel drawn here, both Musa as and Nabi ﷺ came so close to entering Bayt al-Maqdis, but both were

not permitted by Allah to enter as 'fatiheen'. Rather this was the job given to their followers. Note: it took the followers of Musa a.s 40/50 years after that to enter Bayt al-Maqdis and be victorious and this was after they were initially unwilling. It took Nabi ﷺ followers 5 or so years after this to enter victorious into Bayt al-Maqdis and they were always willing. Note: The 6th sign before the Day of Judgement was a battle between the West and the Muslims which was the only sign of the 6 that did not happen in Awwf r.a. lifetime. The enemy would come under a multitude of banners and would fight the Muslims in the area of Shaam (aka modern-day Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria).

This army that stopped prematurely in Tabuk was the biggest army in Nabi ﷺ lifetime. The aim was to go in towards Bayt al-Maqdis and fight the Romans. While there Nabi ﷺ receives revelation that he will not be entering in his lifetime. Crucially Nabi ﷺ does not immediately go back to Madinah, he spends some time in the area and signs treaties with the tribes of the region that they will agree to supply future Muslim armies that pass through the region, creating depots of food, water, and weapons caches in Shaam (modern-day southern Jordan), making sure the preparations for the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa were made.

They return to Madinah and Nabi ﷺ prepares another army and puts Osama r.a. (his adopted grandson) in charge and commands them to enter into certain areas of Bayt al-Maqdis on scouting missions. The army consisted of great Sahaba including Umar r.a. and Ali r.a. All were ready to go under the leadership of this inexperienced 16-year-old boy, Osama r.a.

The army begins to assemble and Rasulullah ﷺ becomes ill. He would lose consciousness intermittently and when he would wake, he would ask 'did the army of Osama leave', 'did the army of Osama go to Bayt al-Maqdis', Nabi ﷺ was so adamant that the army should go towards the Holy Land, and the Sahaba would tell him, the army are assembling.

Nabi ﷺ then told Abubakr r.a. to lead Salaah in his stead.

3 things Nabi ﷺ advised on last.

- Salaah, did they pray, make sure you pray.
- Take care of women.
- Send the army of Osama to Bayt al-Maqdis.

On his deathbed the greatest creation of Allah, His final Prophet ﷺ was immensely concerned about the fate of Masjid al-Aqsa and its liberation. His aim was always towards Bayt al-Maqdis.

Great men after the passing of Nabi ﷺ were broken. Umar r.a. did not accept anyone to say he had passed. Abubakr r.a. in the days of hardship was the strongest. He kissed Nabi ﷺ on the forehead and says, 'you were great in life and you are great in death'. He says, 'Muhammad was just a messenger, if he dies will you turn back on your heels, and whoever turns back you will not hurt Allah'. Discussion then turns to where Nabi ﷺ will be buried, the Muhajir say he will be taken back to Makkah, where he was born, and the Ansar say he will remain in Madinah where he migrated. And another group of Sahaba say he will be taken to Bayt al-Maqdis the land of the prophets, the land he worked for all his life. The discussion starts to get out of hand and Abubakr r.a. says 'I heard Nabi ﷺ say a prophet is buried where he dies' and so to stop this issue, immediately a grave is dug in the same room Nabi ﷺ passed in and he ﷺ is buried.

Note. Abubakr r.a. was chosen as the Caliph before Nabi ﷺ is buried, showing how important the concept of khilafah is, how important it is for the Muslims to have a head, a caliph for protection and progress. Note: Since then, the Muslim Ummah has never been without a Caliph until around 100 years ago, when Sultan Abdul Hamid was ousted by Turkish nationalists and the Ottoman Khilafah was turned against by the Arab nationalists. It has been around 100 years without a Caliph for the Muslims today.

Other Prophets

Apart from the above prophets, many others lived in and sacrificed for Masjid al-Aqsa. To mention some briefly, Adam a.s. built Masjid al-Aqsa originally, Lut a.s. was also taken by Allah to live in the Holy Land, Ishaq a.s. rebuilt Masjid al-Aqsa with his father and lived in the Holy Land, Ya'qub a.s. lived in the Holy Land and worshiped in Masjid al-Aqsa, Yusuf a.s. was born there and although he passed away in Egypt, his final request was for his body to be taken back to the Holy Land. Musa a.s. completed this request when they left Egypt. Yahya a.s. was also born in Bayt al-Maqdis. In addition to this many other prophets and chosen servants of Allah lived, prayed in, and served the Holy House of Masjid al-Aqsa.

Place of Revelation

Al-Ṭabarānī cited [a hadith] in [his *al-Muʿjam*] *al-Kabīr*, from the transmission-path of al-Walīd b. Muslim, from ʿUfayr b. Maʿdān, from Ibn ʿĀmir, from ʿAbū ʿUmāmah, who said: “The Messenger of Allah said: “The Qur'aan was revealed in three places: Makkah, Madinah, and al-Shaam”.

Al-Walīd said: “ (al-Shaam) meaning Bayt al-Maqdis” (Masjid al-Aqsa).

So, Masjid al-Aqsa was also one of the few places where the final words of Allah to Mankind descended, transmitted through Jibrael a.s to the last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who stood in the company of all previous Islamic prophets during Isra wal-Meraj.

The verse revealed in Masjid al-Aqsa below:

And ask those We sent before you of Our messengers; have We made besides the Most Merciful deities to be worshiped? (Qur'aan 43:45)

Centrality in the Qur'an

Masjid al-Aqsa, the Holy Land and the Blessed Land are referenced over 40 times directly and indirectly throughout the Qur'aan. Some of these references are listed here.

Surah Isra 17:1, Surah Qaf 50:41, Surah Naziat 79:14, Surah Baqarah 2:142, Surah Baqarah 2:143, Surah Maryam 19:16, Surah Ale Imran 3:39, Surah Sad 38:21, Surah Noor 24:36, Surah Maryam 19:22, Surah Baqarah 2:114, Surah A'raf 7:137, Surah Anbiya 21:71, Surah Anbiya 21:81, Surah Saba 34:18, Surah Ankabut 29:31, Surah Ankabut 29:34, Surah Hijr 15:67, Surah A'raf 7:82, Surah Naml 27:56, Surah Anbiya 21:74, Surah Furqan 25:40, Surah Saffat 37:137-138

Apart from these references, a major part of the Qur'aan is stories of previous Prophets, most of whom spent their lives in and around the Blessed Land. The geography of the Qur'aan is therefore largely centered on Masjid al-Aqsa.

The politics of the Holy Land was also mentioned in the Qur'aan. The Romans had been defeated in Damascus, Aleppo, Anatolia, Alexandra, and other places but the Qur'an only made mention of it when it was in Bayt al-Maqdis, 'the lowest point in the land' that geologists agree today is around Jericho.

“The Byzantines have been defeated. In the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome. To Allah belongs the command before and after. And that day the believers will rejoice. In the victory of Allah. He gives victory to whom He wills, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful. [It is] the promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know.” (Qur'aan 30:2-6)

Sahaba's love for Masjid al-Aqsa

The Sahaba's relationship with Masjid al-Aqsa began as their first Qiblah, and after Hijrah became the focus of liberation. Many Sahaba were given titles due to their connection with Bayt al-Maqdis and they yearned towards it, sacrificing their wealth and lives in the path of its protection. In Madinah Bayt, al-Maqds became a topic everyone was talking about, all the Sahaba were engaging with the concept from high-ranking peoples to servants and cleaners, Rasulullah ﷺ was establishing this in the minds of Sahaba at the time, as seen through the hadith, the Sahaba would approach Rasulullah ﷺ and ask him about Masjid al-Aqsa and express their longing to go there and work for the Holy Land.

Abdullah Ibn Umar (ra) relates, I asked the Prophet (saw), “Apostle of Allah, tell us the legal injunction about (visiting) Bayt Al-Maqdis” (Masjid al-Aqsa) The Apostle of Allah (saw) said, ” Go and pray there. If you cannot visit it and pray there, then send some oil to be used in the lamps.

Maymunah Bint Sa'd (ra) relates that she asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah, inform us about Bayt al-Maqdis” (Masjid al-Aqsa). He said, “Visit it for prayer “. She further asked, “If one of us cannot visit it, what should we do”? He said, “If you cannot go for prayer then send some oil to be used for its lamps, will be as if he has prayed in it.

Maymunah Bint Sa'd (ra) reports that she asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah, give us a pronouncement about al-Quds (Jerusalem)”. The Prophet (saw) replied, “It is the land where they will be raised (Al-Hashr) and gathered (Al-Mahshar)”.

Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه

Sayyidina Abubakr built a Masjid in his garden in Makkah where he would pray facing Masjid al-Aqsa. His well-known title of al-Siddique was given to him in relation to Bayt al-Maqdis. When the Quraan mentioned the Romans defeat in the Holy Land (Surah 30), it also prophesied their near victory over the Persians. This was contrary to the political analysis at the time, everyone in Makkah was sure the Persians victory was lasting. During this time Abubakr r.a. was sat with one of the polytheists of Makkah who was boasting that the polytheists had beaten the monotheists in Bayt al-Maqdis and that soon the polytheists of Makkah would beat the Muslims just like that. Abubakr r.a. made a bet (betting was not yet impermissible) of first a few, then after speaking with Nabi ﷺ, a hundred she-camels that the Romans would defeat the Persians within 9 years as per the Qur'aan foretold.

Of course, events unfolded as the Qur'aan had foretold and so Abubakr r.a. gained the title of al-Siddique (The Trustworthy). Abubakr r.a. was also the one who insisted the army of Osama r.a. leave for Bayt al-Maqdis after Rasulullah ﷺ passed away. He personally walked the army out of the city of Madinah and resisted attempts to stop the army from leaving. During the Prophet's lifetime and after Abubakr r.a. himself contributed time, efforts, and wealth in the path of Masjid al-Aqsa's liberation through various campaigns. After the campaign of Osama Abubakr r.a. immediately begins sending armies to Bayt al-Maqdis and Bilad al-Shaam. The Muslims are coming from Yemen and Abubakr r.a. says I will send all the heroes of the Muslims and all the great men to the Blessed Land because Nabi ﷺ told me of his plan for the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis. Abubakr r.a. chooses four armies, and he tells Amr bin al-Aas r.a. you are commanded to go to Palestine and Aelia as two separate provinces, and we know that when he conquered 'Palestine Tretta' he writes to Abubakr r.a. saying I have conquered Palestine the Third, the southern part, Sinai and I will now head to Palestine the First, Aelia (The Byzantine name for al-Quds).

Then Abubakr r.a. writes to Khalid bin Waleed r.a. who is fighting in Iraq against Persians. He tells him 'Hurry to your brothers in Shaam for one small village in Bayt al-Maqdas is worth a large province of Iraq to me.' Khalid ibn Waleed r.a. heads to the Holy Land moving a huge army across the harsh empty desert with speed. And now like

Abubakr r.a. did, all that time ago, waited for news from Bayt al-Maqdis when surah Rum was revealed for the outcome of his bet, he was now waiting for the news of the Muslim armies from Bayt al-Maqdis. Abubakr r.a. now was on his deathbed waiting for the news of the liberation of al-Aqsa, as Nabi ﷺ waited on his ﷺ deathbed for news of the army leaving for Masjid al-Aqsa.

This is how beloved Masjid al-Aqsa was for the closest person to the Last Messenger and the best creation of Allah.

Umar رضي الله عنه, Khalid ibn Waleed رضي الله عنه, Ali رضي الله عنه

Umar r.a. becomes Caliph and continues the charge towards Masjid al-Aqsa. They then had the great victory at Yarmouk which was a very difficult battle. This was the most decisive battle 200,000 Byzantines and Arab Christians vs 30,000 Muslims in a ratio of 1:7. The great military strategist Khalid ibn Waleed said this is possible, but it will be difficult. Khalid r.a. led the army, A group of 300 Sahaba vow to fight till death and this is turning point in the battle. 300 Muslims walk into the army of Byzantines and fight until death. In the evening of that day, they are walking among the wounded. and there are the last 3 of the 300 and they bring water to them one by one and they each prefer one another to drink first and all are shaheed, martyred for the great cause of the Holy Land and the Holy House of Allah.

This is the land that Prophets of Allah have fought for, that Sahaba were martyred for. Every inch of al-Aqsa's land has been paid for by the blood of martyrs. These were the men of Rasulullah ﷺ. These are the people who were given their education by Nabi ﷺ. Khalid ibn Waleed r.a. crushes the Byzantine army, forcing them off a cliff. A large section falls, and one brings down the other in a domino effect. When Umar r.a. switched positions of the leaders, Khalid r.a. says 'I am an arrow from among Umar r.a. arrows, wherever he puts me I will go. I do not fight for Umar; I fight for Allah.' And

he was happy with the decision of Umar r.a. And he said, 'I am happy to be under your leadership Abu Ubaydah' and he continued to serve faithfully. Abu Ubaydah writes to Umar r.a. and says, 'Allah has given us victory, now shall we go to their biggest stronghold

or shall we go direct to Bayt al-Maqdis?' Umar r.a. discusses this with his counsel and Ali r.a. says they should go to Bayt al-Maqdis because Nabi ﷺ told me of this.

From Yarmouk the Muslim army head towards Masjid al-Aqsa in 7 brigades each one led by one of the Sahaba or Tabieen, the best of people after the Prophets, liberating and being martyred for the land of the Prophets. Each division of the army takes a corner and like this they surround the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem). Khalid r.a. and other brigades and leaders take different positions around the Old City, they came with Takbeer, in the month of December or January, it was snowing, and the Muslims were getting frustrated, it was a cold 4 months of siege and then the occupiers said they would only surrender to the Caliph of the Muslims. So, the Muslim army writes to Umar ra and says 'They are willing to surrender if you come' Umar r.a. takes counsel, and again Ali r.a. advises he should go and receive the Holy Land and Masjid al-Aqsa.

Umar r.a. comes with 4000 companions and come to al-Aqsa from the mountain at its south side, raising their voices with Takbeer as they marched and the name of this mountain today is Mount Mukabbir, the mountain of Takbeer. Umar r.a. comes into the city, receives the keys, some of the Christian even welcomed the Muslim conquest takeover by caliph Umar r.a. and the assurance of safety was then given by Umar r.a. for lives possessions churches crosses, the sick and healthy, no compulsion of religion and no one will be maltreated. In stark contrast of the previous Secular, Pagan, Jewish and Christian conquests where thousands including children, women, the elderly, and the saints had all been slaughtered and violated, the Islamic liberation was one of justice, fairness, and peace. The keys of the church of the holy Sepulchre, the most holy place of Christianity was placed in the hands of Muslims as the Christians would fight over which sect would hold the rights to open its doors. Until today the key remains in the hands of Muslims.

The Christians say to Umar r.a. 'pray in the church', which he refuses fearing that later Muslims would take over the church if he had prayed there. He leaves the church and prays outside. Today Masjid Umar in the Old City stands in this very spot. Umar r.a. then heads to Masjid al-Aqsa, at this time the occupiers had been using it as a rubbish dump. Seeing its Holiness desecrated, Umar r.a. began with his hands to remove the piles of rubbish until he entered inside. When he sees Masjid al-Aqsa, he says 'I swear this is the place Nabi ﷺ described'. He, together with the Muslims then cleanse Masjid al-Aqsa,

picking up the rubbish with their hands, returning the sanctity of this Heaven on Earth. Umar r.a. then builds a Musallah at the southern end of Masjid al-Aqsa, in roughly the same spot that the Jami/Qibli Musallah (Umayyad era building) was later built.

Umar r.a. original Musallah in al-Aqsa was the same size and shape as Masjid al-Nabwi, built from the same material. Then the Muslims ask Umar r.a. to ask Bilal r.a. to make Adhaan. And Bilal r.a. had not made adhan since shortly after the time of Nabi ﷺ passing away. Every time he would make Adhaan when Nabi ﷺ was alive he ﷺ would come out of his house into the masjid at 'Ashadu anna Muhammad ar Rasulullah" After the death of Nabi s.aw, he ﷺ does not enter and Bilal r.a. cannot bear his grief and says, 'I will never make Adhaan after today.' But for Masjid al-Aqsa Bilal r.a. agrees to raise his voice in Adhaan and for Masjid al-Aqsa the Caliph Umar had left Madinah and for the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa the Sahaba had been taught and prepared by Rasulullah ﷺ and it culminated here. On hearing the Adhaan of Bilal r.a. the Sahabahs got goosebumps on remembering the time of Nabi ﷺ. and when Bilal r.a. said 'Ashhadu anna Muhammad Rasulullah' all of the Sahaba including Umar r.a. wept and cried until their hearts were ready to explode when Allah and his messenger were mentioned. They wished that Rasulullah ﷺ who had fostered this love of Masjid al-Aqsa in them and led them to its liberation, they wished he were with them that day.

Umar r.a. preserves the Sanctity of the Holy Aqsa, honoring its purity and rules that any Christian (i.e., Non-Muslim) who enters Masjid al-Aqsa should be subjected to punishment and beaten severely. (Note, today many non-Muslim tourists and settlers trespass the Holy House daily under facilitation of the occupation and some historical experts (non-Muslim) are even officially permitted by the Islamic Awqaf to enter Masjid al-Aqsa for the purpose of their studies. This is a clear violation of the Sacredness of Allah's Holy House and a shame on the Ummah that is imposed on us by our weakness and ignorance).

'And whoso venerates the sanctity of all that have been ordained as Symbols of Allah surely does so because it is part of the true piety of the hearts.' (Qur'aan 22:32)

Khalid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه (continued), **Jaffar al-Tayyar** رضي الله عنه

Khalid r.a. received the title 'the sword of Allah' during the battle of Mu'ta, one of the early battles for Bayt al-Maqdis during Nabi ﷺ lifetime.

Jaffar al-Tayyar received his title of al-Tayyar (the Winged) during the battle of Mu'ta also, when he took up the flag and one of his arms was chopped off and he took up the flag of Islam with his other arm and it was also cut off. So, he held the flag to his chest with the stumps of his arms and he did not let the flag fall and he was martyred. Nabi ﷺ mentioned that Jaffar r.a. arms were replaced by wings with which he flies in Jannah. His son was also known by 'the son of the winged'. (See section 'Life of the Prophets - Rasulullah ﷺ' for some more information on Jaffer al-Tayyar role in the battle).

Allah and his Prophet bestowed titles on those who gave their blood and lives for Masjid al-Aqsa and this was a great honor by which the Sahaba are still known today.

Other Sahaba رضي الله عنهم

Two key Sahaba, Shaddad bin Aws r.a. and Ubadah bin Samit r.a. are buried in the Bab Rahma cemetery which runs along the length of Masjid al-Aqsa's eastern wall on the outside.

Many Sahaba had connections with Bayt al-Maqdis, and they are not all mentioned here. What is key to note is that just like the Prophets, the Sahabahs mission was also the protection and liberation of the Holy Land and establishment of the Sanctity of the Holy Aqsa.

A Responsibility Given to the Muslims

'Enter the Holy Land which Allah hath assigned unto you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then will ye be overthrown, to your own ruin.' (Qur'aan 5:21)

This command was given to the Muslims at the time of Musa a.s. (Note, it is important to understand that the believers at the time of Musa a.s were following the religion of Islam and they were not Jews. Allah refers to them as the ethnic group of Bani Israeel. Only after they changed the religion and the Islamic Holy Book of the Torah, were they then called Yahud (Jews) by Allah in the Qur'aan).

Rasulullah ﷺ also gave injunctions on Masjid al-Aqsa:

Abdullah Ibn Umar (ra) relates, I asked the Prophet (saw), "Apostle of Allah, tell us the legal injunction about (visiting) Bayt Al-Maqdis" (Masjid al-Aqsa) The Apostle of Allah (saw) said, " Go and pray there. If you cannot visit it and pray there, then send some oil to be used in the lamps.

Maymunah Bint Sa'd (ra) relates that she asked the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah, inform us about Bayt al-Maqdis" (Masjid al-Aqsa). He said, "Visit it for prayer ". She further asked, "If one of us cannot visit it, what should we do"? He said, "If you cannot go for prayer then send some oil to be used for its lamps, will be as if he has prayed in it.

Place of Ribat and Jihad

Umamah Al-Bahili (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, “A group of my Ummah will remain on truth, they will vanquish their enemy and those who disagree with them will not be able to harm them until Allah commands”. “Where are these people”? The Companions (ra) asked. The Prophet (saw) said, “In and around Bayt al-Maqdis. (Ahmed)

Muawiyah Ibn Sufyan (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “There is a group among my followers who will continue to be openly on the truth. No one who opposes them can harm them until the coming of the Hour”. The Companions (ra) asked, “Where will they be”? The Messenger of Allah said, “They will be in and around Bayt Al-Maqdis”. (Ahmed)

Abu Hurayrah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “A group of my Ummah will not cease to fight at the gates of Damascus and at the gates of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and its surroundings. The betrayal or desertion of whoever deserts them will not harm them in the least. They will remain victorious, standing for the truth, until the Final Hour rises”. (Tabarani)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said regarding the inhabitants of the blessed land, “They and their wives, children and slaves (male and female) are in ribat (guardians, literally a fort) in the cause of Allah”. (Tabarani)

Third Most Rewarding Salaah on Earth

Abu Darda (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “A prayer in Makkah (Ka’bah) is worth 1000,000 times (reward), a prayer in my Masjid (Madinah) is worth 1,000 times and a prayer in Al-Aqsa is worth 500 times more reward than anywhere else. (Tabrani, Bayhaqi, Suyuti)

Anas Ibn Malik (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, ” The prayer of a person in his house is a single prayer; his prayer in the Masjid of his people has the reward of 27 prayers; his prayer in the Masjid in which the Friday prayer is observed has the reward of 500; his prayer in Masjid Al-Aqsa has a reward of 5,000 prayers; his prayer in my Masjid (the Prophet’s Masjid in Madinah) has a reward of 50,000 prayers, and the prayer in the Sacred Masjid (Ka’bah) has the reward of 100,000 prayers. (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)

Better Than the Whole World and What is in it

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, ‘What an amazing place of worship it (Masjid al-Aqsa) is! Surely, there will soon come a time when, for a man to have land equivalent to his horse’s rope - from which he can see Bayt al-Maqdis (The Holy House) - will be better for him than the whole world!’ (The narrator said, ‘or he [saw] said, “Better for him than the world and everything in it!”’)

Place of Major Events and the Final *Khilafah*

Mujamma Ibn Al-Harith (ra) narrates that the Prophet (saw) said, “Ibn Maryam (Eesa a.s) will kill Al-Dajjal (the Anti-Christ) at the door of Ludd (a town in Bayt al-Maqdis)”. (Ahmed, Tirmidhi)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said regarding Al-Dajjal: “He will stay in the land forty days; he will enter every place on earth except the Ka’bah, the Prophet’s Masjid, Masjid al-Aqsa and Mount Sinai”. (Ahmed)

Nahik Ibn Suraym Al-Sakuni (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “You will fight the pagans until the remnant of you fights on the river of Jordan, you to the east of it (present day Jordan) and they to the west of it (present day occupied Palestine)”. (Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaani)

Muadh Ibn Jabal (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “The Flourishing state of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) will be taken when Yathrib is in ruins, the ruined state of Yathrib will be when the Great War comes, the outbreak of the Great War will be at the conquest of Constantinople and the conquest of Constantinople when Al-Dajjal (Anti-Christ) comes forth”. He (the Prophet) struck his thigh with his hand and said, “This is as true as you are here or as you are sitting (meaning Muadh Ibn Jabal). (Abu Dawood)

Al-Nawwas Ibn Saman Alkalbi (ra) narrates that the Prophet (saw) said, “If Al-Dajjal comes forth while I am amongst you then I shall dispute with him on your behalf, but if he comes after I am not with you, a man must dispute on his own behalf, and Allah will take to protecting every Muslim. Those of you who live up to his time should recite over him the opening verses of Surah Kahf, for they are your protection from his trial”. We asked, “How long will he remain on earth”? He (saw) replied, “Forty days, one like a year (1 day will be equivalent to 1 year), one like a month, one like a week and the rest of his days like yours”? We asked, “Will one day’s prayer suffice us in the day which will be like

a year”? He replied, “No, you must estimate of its extent. Then Isa, son of Maryam will descend at the white minaret to the east of Damascus. He will then catch Al-Dajjal up at the gates of Ludd and kill him”. (Abu Dawood)

Awf Ibn Malik relates, “I went to the Prophet (saw) during the battle of Tabuk while he was sitting in a leather tent. He said, ‘Awf, Count six signs, between now and the approach of the Hour (Qiyamah/Doomsday): my death, the conquest of Al-Quds (Jerusalem); a plague that will afflict you (and kill you in great numbers) as the plague that afflicts sheep; the increase of wealth to such an extent that even if one is given 100 hundred Dinars (Arabian currency), he will not be satisfied; then an affliction which no Arab house will escape; and then a truce between you and Banu Asfar (i.e. Byzantines) who will betray you and attack you under eighty flags. Under each flag will be twelve thousand soldiers”. (Bukhari)

Shadad Ibn Aws (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, “al-Sham will be conquered, and Al-Quds (Jerusalem) will be conquered and you or your sons will be Imams there, if Allah will”. (Tabarani)

Abdullah Ibn Hawwala Al-Azdi (ra) reported, the Prophet (saw) put his hand on my head and said, “Ibn Hawwala if you see that the Caliphate has taken abode in the Holy Land then the earthquakes and tribulations and great events are at hand. The last Hour on that day will be closer to people than my hand is to your head”. (Ahmed, Abu Dawood)

“Prophethood will last with you for as long as Allah wants it to last. Then He will end it if He wishes to end it. Then there will be Khilafah according to the method of Prophethood, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then He will end it if He wishes to end it. Then there will be a hereditary rule, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then He will end it if He wishes to end it. Then there will be an oppressive rule, and things will be as Allah wishes them to be. Then He will end it if He wishes to end it. Then there will be a Khilafah according to the method of Prophethood.” Then he (saw) fell silent” (Ahmed) Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Abi Umayrah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “There will be an oath of allegiance according to guidance in Al-Quds (Jerusalem)”. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Place of Gathering and Resurrection

Maymunah Bint Sa'd (ra) reports that she asked the Prophet (saw), "O Messenger of Allah, give us a pronouncement about Al-Quds (Jerusalem)". The Prophet (saw) replied, "It is the land where they will be raised (Al-Hashr) and gathered (Al-Mahshar)". (Ahmed, Tabarani)

The Chosen Land of Allah

Masjid al-Aqsa has received the moniker of 'Allah's Chosen House' by the Muslims for two reasons. One, all the special virtues, blessings and boundaries Allah has bestowed on Masjid al-Aqsa, its surroundings, its people, and its service. And two, for the fact that Allah has again and again chosen Masjid al-Aqsa as the place where He brings His chosen and most precious servants.

Abdullah Ibn Hawwala (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, "I saw on the night of Al-Isra and Al-Miraj (the Night Journey) a white column resembling a pearl which the Angels were carrying . I asked them, "What are you carrying"? They said, "The Column of the Book, we have been ordered to place it in Al-Sham. Later in my sleep, I saw the Column of the Book being taken away from under my headrest. I began to fear lest Allah the Almighty had abandoned the people of the earth. My eyes followed the Column of the Book. It was a brilliant light in front of me. Then I saw it was placed in Al-Sham. (Tabarani)

Awf Ibn Malik (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, "The rest of the world will be destroyed forty years before Al-Sham is". (Ibn Asakir)

Abdullah Ibn Umar (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, There will be migration upon migration. The best of the inhabitants of earth will reside where Prophet Ibrahim migrated (al-Quds / Bayt al-Maqdis)". (Abu Dawood)

Abdullah Ibn Amr (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) repeated the following statement three times: "When the dissension takes place belief shall be in Al-Sham". One version of hadith states, "safety will be in Al-Sham". (Tabarani)

Abdullah Ibn Hawwala reports that the Prophet (saw) said, “At some point you will be (split into) standing armies: one army in Al-Sham, one in Yemen and one in Iraq”. Abdullah Ibn Hawwala asked the Prophet (saw), “Choose for me, Messenger of Allah in case I live to see that day”. The Prophet (saw) replied, “You must go to Al-Sham, for it is the Chosen Land of Allah in all His earth. He protects, by sending them there, the chosen ones among His servants. If you do not wish to go there, then go to Yemen. Allah has given me guarantee concerning Al-Sham and its people. (Abu Dawood, Ahmed)

Once the Prophet (saw) advised Abdullah Ibn Hawwala (ra) to join the army in al-Sham, over any other. However, the Prophet (saw), noticing Ibn Hawwala’s indifference said, “Do you know what Allah says about Al-Sham? Allah said, ‘Al-Sham you are the quintessence of My lands (safwati min biladi) and I shall inhabit you with the chosen ones among My servants’”. (Tabarani)

A Plea to the Muslim Ummah

Oh Muslims! Masjid al-Aqsa is under occupation and suffers desecration! The Holy House has been invaded and everyday bears pain from its occupiers. Oh Muslims! Do not leave the Holy House alone. Accept the mission of your Prophets and pious predecessors and make all efforts towards the liberation of your Aqsa. This is the Chosen and Beloved House of Allah, honor its Sacredness, protect its purity, and have *Gheerah* over your Aqsa. There are plans for Masjid al-Aqsa's destruction that escalate every day so where are the believers that will escalate the plans for his liberation? The path to Jannah is here and it is wide open, vast treasures lay on this road ready for those servants of Allah who would claim them.

The knowledge of Masjid al-Aqsa's centrality to your life has come to you so do not allow it to fall on deaf ears or apathetic hands. A Zakaat is imposed on this knowledge and it must be paid by every Muslim. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to spread this knowledge among the Ummah, in the current and future generations, to pass on this Prophetic inheritance that originated with our father Adam a.s.

Let every Muslim make a personal roadmap to the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa and prepare a gift for it. Be bold, be innovative, be ambitious in your goals. Use this knowledge in your areas of expertise, in your circles of influence and let not a meeting with a Muslim pass by but you have reminded them of the right Masjid al-Aqsa has on them. Let us rebuild the culture of Bayt al-Maqdis that Rasulullah ﷺ built in Madinah which led to the liberation of Masjid al-Aqsa by Umar r.a.

The culmination of Mankind on Earth has come and by the words of Rasulullah ﷺ we live in the End Times. So, what were we instructed in regard to our mission and purpose in these times? Let us not get lost in the ever-increasing superficial pleasures of this world, built to distract, and used by Shaytaan to lead us astray. Hold on to your religion, become

an asset for your Ummah, be useful to the Muslims and a guardian and protector for Masjid al-Aqsa and the Holy Land.

And adhere firmly to the Rope (i.e., the Covenant of Allah -the Qur'an) of Allah, altogether, and do not be disunited; and remember the favor of Allah upon you as you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so you have become brethren by His favor. And you were upon the brink of a hole of the Fire, so He rescued you from it. Thus, Allah makes evident His signs to you, that possibly you would be guided. (Qur'aan 3:103)



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