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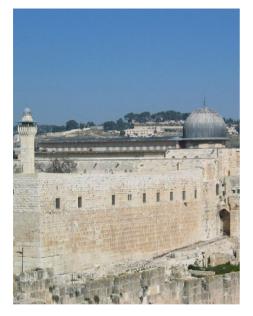
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# **Al-Aqsa Sanctuary**



Al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) is the holiest site in al-Quds (Jerusalem); a place used for worship, residence and meditation by many Prophets and pious individuals, past and present. It is a site blessed by Allah **36** and selected by Him to be one of the most holy areas on earth, where angels descended with Allah's **36** message to many of His Prophets.

It is also the site of the most fantastic and incredible journey undertaken by Prophet Muhammad & during the night of al-Isra' and al-Mi'raj, when he was taken up to the heavens by the command of Allah . The revered site of al-Aqsa Sanctuary was also the first qiblah in Islam, before Allah in inspired the Prophet Muhammad to change it to the Holy Masjid in Makkah.



The Holy Sanctuary of al-Aqsa saw the second house of Allah ﷺ, after the Ka'bah built by Prophet Adam ﷺ on

the earth. Palestine was also the place to where Prophet Ibrahim migrated and lived for most of his life. Here, Ibrahim lived and traded, taught the Tawh'id of Allah fre-built the Masjid within the sanctuary of al-Aqsa and finally passed away. The grave of Prophet Ibrahim is in a place near al-Aqsa Sanctuary called al-Khalil (Hebron).

This is where Yaʻqub (Jacob) araised his twelve sons and from where Yusuf (Joseph) was taken and sold in Egypt as a slave child. A few centuries later, Musa (Moses) was directed by Allah to migrate from Egypt with the descendents of Yaʻqub and travel back to al-Quds (Jerusalem). After the flight from the Pharaoh, Musa travelled across the desert with his people and he prayed to the Almighty that, he would

prefer to be at a place near al-Aqsa Sanctuary when overtaken by death.

Dawud (David) was from the people of Musa and after conquering the city of al-Quds (Jerusalem), he spent a great deal of time in al-Quds meditating and with the power of Allah the very hills of the glorious city of al-Quds celebrated the praises of the Almighty:

"the hills declare in unison with him (Dawud) Our Praises, at evening and at break of day, and the birds gathered all with him did turn to Allah"

(38: 18-19)

The private chamber of Dawud sell mentioned in the Qur'an are thought to have been in al-Quds:

"has the story of the disputants reached you. Behold, they climbed over the wall of the private chamber"

(38:21)

Sulayman (Soloman) (He son of Dawud (He soloman)) (He son of Dawud (He soloman)) (He son of Dawud (He soloman)) (He soloman) (He soloma

Aramiah (Jeremia) preached at al-Aqsa Sanctuary and worked towards bringing the divergent and divided tribes of Banu Isra'il towards Tawh'id. It was during his era that Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon invaded the city, destroyed all the buildings within al-Aqsa Sanctuary and levelled the whole city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) to the ground.

In later times, Zakariya see was the Imam of the Masjid al-Aqsa and he supplicated to the Almighty Allah see for a son:



"there did Zakariya pray to his Lord, saying, my Lord, grant me a child who is pure..."

(3:38)

These are some of the many major incidents that took place around al-Aqsa Sanctuary and ensured its high and lofty status in the hearts of Muslims throughout the centuries. To reflect their devotions, Muslims of previous generations have constructed the most

fantastic places of worship within al-Aqsa Sanctuary. They have maintained it by investing their wealth, energy and



resources, and when it was required, they gave their lives to protect al-Aqsa Sanctuary.

The city of al-Quds (Jerusalem) now extends over an area of 45 km square. Within al-Quds is the 'old city' where major historical events took place and within the old city on the southeast corner is the area referred to as al-Haram. al-Sharif or al-Aqsa Sanctuary. Al-Aqsa Sanctuary covers an area of approximately 35 acres and within this area, at the southern end, is the black domed Masjid called Masjid al-Aqsa; in the centre lies the golden domed Masjid, Qubbat al-Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock) and there are within al-Aqsa Sanctuary 42 other monuments and buildings. It has become common practice to refer to the whole area simply as al-Haram al-Sharif



(al-Aqsa Sanctuary) and the black domed Masjid as Masjid al-Aqsa.

However it is important to be aware

of the distinction between the al-Aqsa Sanctuary and Masjid al-Aqsa. As it is extremely important to appreciate that it is the land of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Agsa Sanctuary) that is the most precious and blessed. When the Holy Qur'an (in Surah al-Isra') refers to Masjid al-Aqsa (meaning a place of prostration) it is this land of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) that is implied and not any of the buildings. Although the buildings within the Noble Sanctuary like the black domed Masjid al-Aqsa and gold domed Dome of the Rock (Qubbat al-Sakhrah) are of great historical significance, however, one must understand it is the land that is holy and blessed and not the bricks and mortar.

The love and sacrifice of the pious predecessors indicates the importance and centrality of al-Aqsa Sanctuary. However,

there are healthy theological debates on whether al-Aqsa Sanctuary is a "Haram" or not. The various views include-Ash-Shafi'i (rah'imah'ullah') and ash-Shawkani (rah'imah'ullah'), who regard al-Aqsa as a Haram but others think only Makkah and Madinah are the Haramain. Yet others consider only Makkah to be the Haram. Regardless of its status as Haram or not, no one can dispute the great virtues, blessings and holiness of al-Aqsa Sanctuary. The debate in no way undermines the eminence and the deep central position al-Aqsa Sanctuary has carved within the psyche of the Muslim Ummah and formed the nucleus of one of the most Holy sites on earth.

Above and beyond these great events and personalities associated with al-Aqsa

Sanctuary which brings to the fore glorious memories of Prophets and miraculous events, one can never forget that Majid al-Aqsa is mentioned by name in the Holy Qur'an. Further, Almighty Allah are refers to the region of al-Aqsa Sanctuary as blessed and holy.

The Noble Sanctuary of al-Aqsa and al-Quds are referred to directly or indirectly many times in the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet has repeatedly mentioned the importance of Al-Aqsa.

You are indeed extremely fortune to be travelling to al-Aqsa Sanctuary, use your time valuably in the remembrance of Allah , recollecting the major events that took place here and the great personalities involved. I humbly request you remember me in your prayers.



#### **Ahadith**

#### **Travel for Prayers**

Abu Hurayrah serelates that the Prophet said, "You should not undertake a special journey to visit any place other than the three Masajid with the expectations of getting greater reward: the Sacred Masjid of Makkah, this Masjid of mine, and Masjid al-Aqsa (of Jerusalem)". In another narration the words are, "For three Masajid a special journey may be undertaken: The Sacred Masjid (Ka'bah), my Masjid, and the Masjid of al-Quds (Jerusalem)".

[Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and Sunan Abu Dawud]

#### The Virtues of Praying

Abu Darda' serelates that the Prophet said, "A prayer in Makkah is worth 100,000 times, a prayer in my Mosque (Madinah) is worth 1,000 times, and a prayer in al-Aqsa Sanctuary is worth 500 times, more than anywhere else".

[Al-Tabarani, al-Bayhaqi and as-Suyuti]





#### Starting Hajj or 'Umrah from Masjid al-Aqsa

Umm Salamah , Umm al-Mu'minin, relates that the Prophet said, "If anyone puts on ihram for Hajj or 'Umrah from the Masjid al-Aqsa and then proceeds to the Sacred Masjid, his former and latter sins will be forgiven, or he will be guaranteed Paradise". The narrator 'Abdullah doubted which of these words he said.

[Sunan Abu-Dawud]





- 1. Masjid Al-Aqsa
- 2. Dome of the Rock
- 3. Bab al-Silsilah (Chain Gate)
- 4. Bab al-Sakina (Tranquillity Gate)
- 5. Silsilah (Chain) Minaret
- 6. Bab al-Matarah (Ablution Gate)
- 7. Bab al-Qattanin (Cotton Merchants Gate)
- 8. Bab al-Hadid (Iron Gate)
- 9. Bab al-Nadhir / Majlis (Council Gate)
- 10. Minaret of Ghawanimah
- 11. Bab al-Atim (Gate of Darkness)
- 12. Bab al-Hittah (Gate of Remission)
- 13. Minaret al-Asbat
- 14. Bab al-Asbat (Gate of the Tribes)
- 15. Bab al-Dhahabi (Golden Gate)
- 16. Cradle of Isa
- 17. Musallah Marwani (Solomon's Stables)
- 18. Islamic Museum
- 19. Fakhriyah Minaret
- 20. Dome of Yusuf Agha
- 21. Al-Buraq Wall (Western Wall / Wailing Wall)
- 22. Al-Kas (The Cup)

- 23. Summer Pulpit (Mimbar of Burhan al-Din)
- 24. Dome of Yusuf
- 25. Dome of Nahwiyyah (School of Literature)
- 26. Dome of Musa
- 27. Fountain of Qasim Pasha
- 28. Pool of Raranj
- 29. Fountain of Qayt Bey
- 30. Muezzin's Gate
- 31. Dome of the Chain (Silsilah)
- 32. Bab al-Magharibah (Moroccan's Gate)
- 33. Dome of al-Nabi (Dome of the Prophet)
- 34. Dome of the Mi'raj (Ascension)
- 35. Dome of al-Khalili (Hebronite)
- 36. Mihrab Ali Pasha
- 37. Dome of al-Khidr
- 38. Dome of the Ruh (Spirits)
- 39. Fountain of Sha'lan
- 40. Solomon's Dome
- 41. Dome of the Lovers of the Prophets
- 42. Fountain of Sultan Sulayman
- 43. Sulayman's Throne
- 44. Fountain of Ibrahim al-Rumi

# 1. Al-Aqsa Masjid

A vast congregational Masjid rose up, accommodating more than five thousand worshippers. Originally commissioned by 'Abdul Malik ibn Marwan, it was apparently completed by his son Al-Walid in 705 AD.

The building became known as Masjid Al-Aqsa, Al-Aqsa Masjid, although in reality the whole area of the Noble Sanctuary is considered Al-Aqsa Masjid, the entire precincts inviolable according to Islamic Law.

Every Friday prayer, the Al-Aqsa

Masjid building overflows, with thousands of worshippers who must make their prayers outside in the courtyards of the vast open expanse of greater Al-Aqsa Masjid.

While the Dome of the Rock was constructed as a Masjid to commemorate

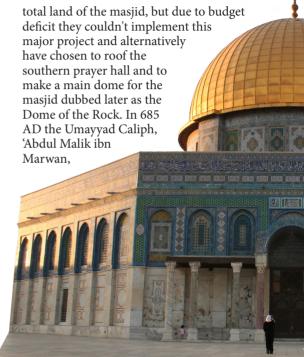


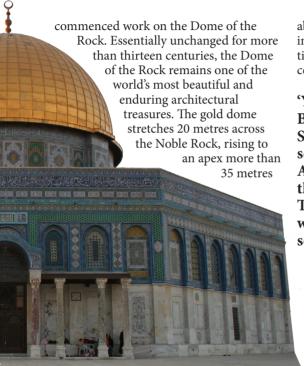
the Prophet's & Night Journey, the the local population. GUIDE BOOK The form of the present structure has building known as Al-Aqsa Masjid remained essentially the same since it was became a centre of worship and learning, attracting great teachers from all over the reconstructed by the Calif Al-Dhahir in world. It has been modified 1033 AD. It is said that he did not alter it several times to protect it from from the previous architecture except to earthquakes, which narrow it on each side. sometimes occur in the area, and to adapt to the changing needs of

### 2. The Dome of the Rock

Jerusalem became known as Al-Quds, the Holy. Many of the Prophet's companions travelled to worship at the blessed spot to which Muhammad , was brought in the night journey and from which he ascended through the heavens to his Lord. According to the authenticated traditions of the Prophet , travel for the sake of worship is undertaken for only three Masajid; the Sacred Masjid in Makkah, the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah and the al-Aqsa Masjid in Jerusalem.

It is believed that the Umayyad Caliph 'Abdul Malik ibn Marwan had suggested to roof the whole 35 acres the





above it. The Qur'anic verse 'Yasin' is inscribed across the top in the dazzling tile work commissioned in the 16th century by Sulayman the Magnificent.

'Yasin.
By the wise Qur'an.
Surely you are amongst those sent on a straight path.
A revelation of the Mighty, the Compassionate.
That you might warn a people whose fathers were never warned, so they are heedless.'

(Qur'an, 36:1-6)

## Other structures

The importance of Al-Aqsa Masjid in Islam is reflected in the wealth of smaller structures which surround the Al-Aqsa Masjid building and the Dome of the Rock. Constructed over time both to commemorate and to extend the functionality of the site as a religious and educational centre. These are monuments to commemorate the Ascension of the Prophet, the various other prophets and individuals associated with Jerusalem. What follows is a brief description of the structures within the al-Aqsa Sanctuary:

#### 3. Bab al-Silsilah (Chain Gate)

One of the 14 entrances, on the Western Wall of al-Haram al-Sharif. This gate with Hittah, Sakina and Nadhir are thought to have been built from the time of 'Abd al Malik in the 8 century and renovated during the Mamluk era.



**4. Bab al-Sakina** (*Tranquillity Gate*) Next to the Bab al-Silsilah on the Western Wall of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary).



#### 5. Silsilah (Chain) Minaret

This minaret, like others around al-Aqsa Sanctuary, was built on the foundation of the original minaret during the Umayyad period. The present minaret is the

traditional
Syrian square
tower type. It
was reconstructed
in around 1329.
This minaret was
reserved for the
best muezzin
and it was from
this minaret
that the call for
prayers began,
followed by
other minarets.



# **6. Bab al-Matarah** (*Ablution Gate*) The entrance is almost in the middle of the Western Wall. Small gate of Mamluk era restored by Al-Zahir Baybars in the 13 Century.



7. Bab al-Qattanin (Cotton Merchants' Gate) Next to Bab al-Matarah. Built around 1336 by the Mamluk. The Governor Tankiz al-Nasiri was appointed by Emir Nasir al-Dunya Wa'l-Din Muhammad to undertake restoration of Aqsa Sanctuary.



#### 8. Bab al-Hadid

Further along the Western Wall, and next to Bab al-Qattanin. Designed by Emir Arjun Al-Kamili of Damascus in the 14 century.



**9. Bab al-Nadhir** / **Majlis** (*Council Gate*) The Awqaf has its office just outside the Bab al-Nadhir gates, along the Western Wall.



#### 10. Minaret of Ghawanimah

This minaret took its name because it is next to the Bab al-Ghawanimah. That gate was so called after the family, descendants of Shaykh Ghanim ibn Ali ibn Husayn, who was appointed Shaykh of the Salahiyyah Madrasah by Salah al-Din. It was built around 1298.



#### 11. Bab al-Atim

This is the first entrance along the Northern Wall al-Aqsa Sanctuary. Previously called Bab Sharef al-Ambiya. The present structure is from the Mamluk period and gives you access to Darl al-Iman.



12. Bab al-Hittah (*Gate of Remission*) This is the second entrance along the Northern Wall of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) and it is used as the main entrance for people entering al-Aqsa Sanctuary from the Northern side of the Old City.



#### 13. Minaret al-Asbat

This was constructed during the Mamluk era around 1367. This lies between the Bab al-Hittah and the Bab al-Asbat along the Northern Wall of al-Agsa Sanctuary.



**14. Bab al-Asbat** (*Gate of the Tribes*) This is the last entrance on the Northern Wall of al-Aqsa Sanctuary. Renovated during the Mamluk era.



15. Bab al-Dhahabi (Golden Gate)



One of the earliest gates dating back to the Umayyad times, the Golden Gate lies along the Eastern Wall of al-Aqsa Sanctuary. The Golden Gate's two vaulted halls lead to the Door of Mercy, Bab ar-Rahman, and the Door of Repentance, Bab at-Tawbah. Imam al-Ghazali is thought to have written his Revival of the Religious Sciences - Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, while sitting and teaching above these gates. The Christians believe that Isa will, on his second coming, enter through this gate. While standing in the courtyard of al-Aqsa Sanctuary to the right of the Golden Gate is Bab ar-Rahmah (Door of Mercy) and to the left is Bab at-Tawbah (Door of Repentance).

#### 16. Cradle of Isa

A small niche in the ground at the extreme southeast corner of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) above the Musalla Marwani.



17. Musalla Marwani (Solomon's Stables) Just below the paved courtyard in the southeast corner of the al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) lies the vast vaulted subterranean area referred to, mistakenly, as Solomon's Stables. The actual construction is Umayyad dating back to the 8th Century. This area is accessible via a flight of stairs leading down to a recently renovated prayer area.



#### 18. Islamic Museum

An excessive Qur'an collection and Islamic ceramics, coins and glassware stand together with guns, swords and daggers in the oldest museum in al-Quds (Jerusalem). A unique group of architectural elements help document the history of al-Aqsa Sanctuary.



#### 19. Fakhriyah Minaret

This minaret lies at the junction of the Southern Wall and Western Wall. The exact date of this minaret's construction is difficult to ascertain, but it was definitely built in the Mamluk era some

time between 1345 and 1496 CE (745-901 AH). The minaret was completely re-built during the Ottoman period and the muezzin's gallery renewed in 1920.

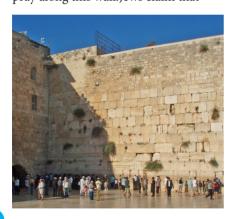


#### 20. Dome of Yusuf Agha

Positioned along the line of the entrance to the Masjid al-Aqsa half-way between the Western Wall and the Masjid al-Aqsa.



21. Al-Buraq Wall (Western Wall/Wailing Wall) It is along this Wall that the Prophet tied Buraq on the night of Ascension and then entered Masjid al-Aqsa. Jews throughout Islamic history have been permitted to pray along this wall. Jews claim that



al-Buraq Wall or "the Wailing Wall", which is an integral part of the western boundary wall of the Noble Sanctuary is all that remains of Herod's Temple. Today they are claiming an exclusive right over this area. However, after a two year study, in 1931 a League of Nations Commission confirmed the following: "To the Muslims belong the sole ownership of, and the sole propriety right to, the Western Wall, seeing that it forms an integral part of al-Aqsa Sanctuary, which is Waqf property. To the Muslims there also belongs the ownership of the pavement in front of the Wall and of the adjacent so-called Maghribi quarters opposite the Wall, in as much as the last-mentioned property was made Waqf under Muslim Shariah law, it being dedicated to charitable purpose."

**22. Al-Kas** (*The Cup*) The place of ablution. This is between Masjid al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock.



**23. Summer Pulpit** (*Mimbar of Burhan al-Din*) Originally built in the 14th century, this open air pulpit is named after the Qadi of al-Quds (Jerusalem). Here Khutba for Eid

and for special occasions were performed. It is in two parts; the two tiered domes and the staircase, which was added later.



#### 24. Dome of Yusuf

A dome built to commemorate Yusuf during the reign of Sallah ud Deen Ayubi. This was later renovated by the Ottomans.



**25. Dome of Nahwiyyah** (School of Literature) Built in 1207 by al-Mu'azzam Isa as a school of literature.



#### 26. Dome of Musa

A dome built to commemorate Musa in 647/1249-50. It was built by Emir Najm Din.



# 27. Fountain of Qasim Pasha If you enter the al-Haram al-Sharif

(al-Aqsa Sanctuary) through Bab al-Salam, immediately in front of you lies the Fountain of Qasim Pasha.



#### 28. Pool of Raranj

To the left of the Fountain of Qasim Pasha, from Bab al-Salam is the Pool of Raranj.



#### 29. Fountain of Qayt Bey

Directly beneath this lies a vast cistern, which is the source of sabil's water supply and said to have been an ancient gate passage. The present sabil has been built over the original whose date is not known. The present sabil carries a date of



restoration made in 1883 by the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid. The original structure was constructed in 1453 by Mamluk Sultan Inal.

#### 30. Muezzin's Dome

If you enter al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) via the Bab al-Matarah (Ablution Gate) and proceed to the Dome of the Rock, to the right of the flight of stairs is the Muezzin's Dome.



#### 31. Dome of the Chain (Silsilah)

Directly east of the Dome of the Rock is the Dome of the Chain, built by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. It marks the exact centre of al-Aqsa Sanctuary. A 11 sided open building that provides a venue for contempletion and zikr. Restored by the orders of al-Zahir Baybars in 13 century.



**32. Bab al-Magharibah** (*Moroccan's Gate*) This gate led to the Magharibah quarters. So called because people from north Africa settled here in the 12 century. This area was destroyed by the Israelis in 1967 and its inhabitants made refugees. The area is now accessible only to Jews and they have built a plaza there.



**33. Dome of al-Nabi** (Dome of the Prophet)
A dome built to commemorate Prophet
Muhammad . Restored in 1620 by Faruq
Bey, the Governor of al-Quds (Jerusalem).



#### 34. Dome of the Mi'raj (Ascension)

A dome built to commemorate Prophet Muhammad's ascension. Restored in 1200; most probably built during the Ayyubid era.



# **35. Dome of al-Khalili** (*Hebronite*) An early 18th century building dedicated to Shaykh Muhammad al-Khalili.



#### 36. Mihrab Ali Pasha

The Mihrab lies between Bab al-Hadid (Iron Gate) and Bab al-Qattanin (Cotton Merchants' Gate) along the Western Wall.



#### 37. Dome of al-Khidr

A dome in the far north-west corner of the raised esplanade on which rests the Dome of the Rock. The dome is supported by 6 pillars.



**38. Dome of the Ruh** (*Spirits*) Slightly to the left of Dome of al-Khidr as you face Masjid al-Aqsa again, on the esplanade is the Dome of the Ruh supported by 8 pillars. This dome is frequented regularly by Sufis for dhikr.



#### 39. Fountain of Sha'lan

Just to the right of the steps for the esplanade facing the Western Wall is an old brick structure, which was once used to supply water for the visitors.



#### 40. Solomon's Dome

A dome built to commemorate Prophet Sulayman , built most probably during the Ayyubid era. Solomon's Dome lies to the right as you enter al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) via the Bab al-Atim (Gate of Darkness).



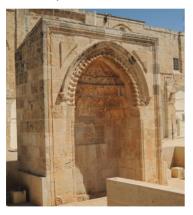
#### 41. Dome of the Lovers of the Prophets

A solid structure with large arches open on all sides. The Dome lies to the left as you enter al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) via the Bab al-Atim (Gate of Darkness).



#### 42. Fountain of Sultan Sulayman

A rectangular column set in the ground just before the Dome of the Lovers, again as you enter al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Sanctuary) via the Bab al-Atim (Gate of Darkness).



#### 43. Sulayman's Throne

Facing the Golden Gate, Sulayman's Throne is on the left along the Eastern Wall.



#### 44. Fountain of Ibrahim al-Rumi

Built in 1435 CE for the sole purpose of giving water to the needy and travellers. It was built during the reign of Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf. The fountain is placed in front of Bab al-Nadhir/Majlis (Council Gate).



سُبْحَن ٱلَّذِي أَشْرَىٰ بِعِبْدِهِ لَيْلَا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِي بَسْرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيْهُ رِمِنْ ءَاينيَنَا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ۞

Holy is He Who carried His servant by night from the Holy Masjid (in Makkah) to the farther Masjid (in Jerusalem) whose surroundings We have blessed that We might show him some of Our Signs. Indeed He alone is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

[Al-Isra' 17: 1]