

## Jerusalem - Myths and Facts

History books state that Islam was sent down to the city of Makkah, in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and that the Prophet of Islam and his followers emigrated later to the Medina to establish the first geographic entity for this religion.

If Islam emerged and grew up in a land of Hijaz and the Arabian Peninsula, then why Muslims have such a reverence for this city? Why do they cherish it that much?

The establishment of Jerusalem dates back more than 4000 years BC. Jerusalem is the first documented name for this city, it appears twice in the Amarna letters; those letters are slabs inscribed in the cuneiform writing system of the Akkadian languages. The letters were found in the archives of king Akhenaten in the area of Tel al-Amarna in Egypt, and Jerusalem means 'city of peace'

Under the rule of king Melchizedek changed its name to Jonas, under the Romans reign on the Mediterranean region they called it Alia Capitolina. In the later period of the Middle Ages it was called Al-Quds, which means, 'the holy house'

Jerusalem is a unique city, is one of the most important ancient city throughout history; this city was established on three hills, the first is known as the Hill of Ophell, this hill was the centrum when the city was established, the second hill is 'Maraia' on which al-Aqsa mosque was built, and the third is Bezetha located in Bab al-Zahira.

The city was established on those three hills, it's surrounded with very deep valleys, like the Qedron Valley and Hanoum valley; the valleys and mountains surrounding them represent the geography of the city.

The city of Jerusalem was established 4500 years ago, it was established on the hill of Ophell, know nowadays as Helwa valley located in the eastern neighborhood of Selwan, it was established during the Jebusite Canaanite era and it was called Jebus. The city was also famous for worshipping and obedience. The king of the city was Melchizedek; King Melchizedek was mention in the letters of Tel al-Amarna which proofs that Jerusalem has a deep rooted magnificent history.

Jerusalem was established 3000 BC or 2500 BC, this proofs that this has been always an Arabic Palestine city in the sense that it was established before the iron age, the age marks the coming of prophet David, pbuh, to the city of Jerusalem; but it was for a short time there, then the city was rebuilt when emperor Hellen was in Jerusalem.

At the time of emperor Hellen the city was transferred from above the hill of Ophell or the Cannanite area in Selwan to the area of the church of the holy sepulcher was built, it was transferred from the south side to the western side were it was rebuilt.

Al-Aqsa mosque became an inseparable part in this city, which its latest name is Jerusalem by the time of emperor Hellen it was called 'Alia Capitolina'. The Holy City, The House of the Holy, The Holy One, The Holy Sanctuary, these are names given by Muslims to the city. These are names reflecting the city status for sanctity for Muslims.

Islam obligates Muslims to believe in all prophets and messengers sent prior to Islam and because some prophet were linked to the city were for a living some of their lives there or they passed by the city it is of a great importance for Muslims.

Prophet Abraham passed by the city, in addition to the prophets Lot, David, Salomon, Zakariya, Jonah, Jesus, the son of Mary, ending with Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon all of them.

Prophet Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, as mentioned in the Quran, prophet Abraham has nothing to do with the Jews because Judaism was revealed centuries later; second, the Quran refutes the claim that Jerusalem is a Jewish city.

The holy Quran prohibits the Jews from the entire Palestine land because they disobeyed the commands of Allah, because they did not obey the prophet Moses, pbuh; and Almighty Allah says in the Quran that 'indeed it is forbidden to them'. That means Palestine it's forbidden to them because of their disobedience and rebellion and because they said 'we will never enter it until they leave it...but if they leave then we will enter' that means they want the land without the people; they want to enter Palestine without facing its people inside.

Esraa and Mirage, the miraculous night journey of Prophet Muhammad, it is two parts of a miraculous journey that prophet Muhammad took in one night from Makkah to Jerusalem and then in ascension to the Heavens. In Jerusalem, the prophets of God Abraham, Mosses, Jesus and others were waiting for prophet Muhammad to lead them in prayer; this wall was called al-Burak referring to al-Burak the name of the heavenly steed that Prophet Muhammad rode on his nocturnal journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to the Heavens.

Prayer is the second pillar of Islam and because Jerusalem is such a holy place for Muslims, they were commanded by God to pray facing Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, then later they were commanded to change their Qiblah, which means the direction they take while praying, they turn to pray towards Al-Kaaba in Makkah.

The time the Esraa and Mirage took place represented a new turning point in the history of the city and gave it great value. During the first 30 years of Islam in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) headed towards Al-Aqsa mosque in prayers with al-Kaaba in between.

The Al-Aqsa mosque was the spiritual direction for all those who worshipped Allah Almighty. Also the worshippers in Judaism and Christianity headed to Jerusalem.

The Dome of the Rock is one of the most famous sides of the old city of Jerusalem, it was given that name because it was built on a rock, from which prophet Muhammad ascended to Heavens in the miraculous journey of Esraa and Mirage.

Aqsa mosque is located not far from this Dome, this mosque is the first Qiblah of Muslims, and the third holy mosque after the Grand mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's mosque in Medina. Muslims have such a high regard for al-Aqsa mosque. One prayer in this mosque is equal to 500 prayers anywhere else; it is one of three mosques that Islam allows and encourages travelling to pray in them.

The Jews claim that the alleged Salomon temple is located some meters or maybe kilometers under the secret Islamic locations. The preset of the al-Aqsa mosque and the area surrounded by its wall it's about 144 square meters, one of the landmarks is the yellow Dome or the Dome of the Rock. The Great Dome above the Qibly mosque, this mosque was established 40 years after the sacred mosque in Makkah.

When the prophet Muhammad was asked, which mosque was built first? He said, 'the sacred mosque is al-Aqsa mosque'; then he was asked, how much time between the two? He said, 'forty years'. That means it existed from the beginning of creation.

Almighty Allah determined the spot of the Holy Kaaba, where prophet Abraham and prophet Ismael raised its foundations. Allah defined the place of the blessed Aqsa mosque and He named it, so, al-Aqsa mosque is heavenly named by a heavenly decision. All the precinct surrounded by the wall of the mosque is 144 square meters, and that represents the biggest mosque on earth at a certain time.

Israelites can claim whatever they want and say whatever they want, but the facts on the ground proves the totally opposite to what they say. All the historians, archeologists, scholars, those with religious knowledge and anthropologists, know that this city is originally Arabic.

The Cannanite tribe of Jebusites built this city and inhabited it for thousands of years, when the first Hebrews entered this city. The Canaanites Jebusites where inhabitants of this city for more than 2000 years. Those Hebrews were dismissed from the Arabian peninsula and they came from the region behind the Caspian sea.

Today, they say that this mosque was built on the ruins of their temple and the Burak wall is part of the remains of the alleged temple wall. They claim that this city is the original homeland of the Jews that they inherited from generation after generation.

The Jews claim that they have an historical right on Jerusalem because it is part of the Promised Land, that God promised to give prophet Abraham, according to the Torah.

Now the Lord said to Abraham 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing' (Genesis 12:1)

It's well known that all the excavations that have been taking place since 1967, and until this moment, did not lead to find even one rock. That has any link with the Jewish or Hebrew history. They used to make excavations before 1967, but under the name of archeological discoveries.

Through the British school of archeology and foreign archeologists, they've been coming to Palestine ever since the 17th century looking for the Jewish identity but under the name of studying Palestine archeology and they did not find one stone to prove Jewish history.

All the excavations were done in Jerusalem, not only the 56 Israelite excavations but they are increasing in number until this moment. All the excavations during the British colonial ruling and even before the British; they were excavations during the ottoman ruling. All these excavations until today prove that the city has 19 archeological layers on top of each other. The beginning and the end of these layers is unknown. The first of those layers is Cannanite that means that is a pure kannanite-arabic city.

Al-Quds is part of the Levant, it a pearl of the Levant region, it is also the extension of the Arabian Peninsula, so, we are the people of Levant, we are the people of Jerusalem and we are the extension of the Arabian Peninsula which ends with the Red Sea. This is why the early Arabic migration from Yemen and Hejaz arrived to Palestine and populated it.

“The pact of Umar to the people of Jerusalem 15 AH. In the name of Allah, The Merciful The Compassionate. This is the assurance of safety with the servant of Allah. Umar, the commandant of the faithful, has given the people of Jerusalem. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves, their properties, their churches, their crosses; the sick and healthy of the city and for all the rituals that belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited by Muslims, and will not be destroyed; nor them or the land, in which they stand, nor the cross, nor their properties will be damaged; they will not be forcedly converted. No Jew will ever live in Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem must pay the taxes, like the people of other cities and they must expel the Byzantines and the robbers, those of the people of Jerusalem who want to live with the Byzantines take their properties and abandon their churches and crosses will be safe until they reach the place of refuge. The villagers may remain in the city if they wish but must pay taxes like the citizens. Those who wish may go with the Byzantines, and those who wish, may return to their families nothing is to be taken from them before the harvest is ripped if they pay the taxes according to their obligations, then, the conditions lay out in this letter are under the covenant of Allah of the responsibility of His Prophet, of the caliph and of the faithful”

Since prophet Moses, pbuh, the messenger of Judaism was born in Egypt and he never set foot in Palestine or Jerusalem at all. He died in Sinai, as mentioned in the Torah, then giving the city a Jewish identity is mere fabrication. The Torah and legislations of Moses has nothing to do with Jerusalem in Palestine.

Unfortunately, the Muslims don't realize the importance of Jerusalem in general. They do not realize that Jerusalem is like the sacred city of Makkah and Madinah.

Al-Aqsa mosque it's as important as the sacred mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's mosque in Madinah.

This is the problem that we face today; the Muslims didn't realize that Jerusalem is the gate between the earth and the heaven; it is the gate between the heavens and the earth. They didn't realize that Jerusalem has been honored by Almighty Allah, that it's connected with the cities of Makkah and Madinah.

Allah honored Jerusalem by obliging Muslims with prayers, which is one of the pillars of Islam, praying was obligated upon Muslims in the heavens upon Jerusalem in the night of Esraa and Mirage.

The duty of every free man is to support Jerusalem in the three tracks. The first track, if we want to protect Jerusalem we have to protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem that means providing the education and the enlightenment for the people. We should support them to be able to stay and live in Jerusalem without problems.

The second track, I think we should preserve the history of the city. Jerusalem contains a lot of history; the visual sight of the city represents and shows a lot of history. When you see the alleys and the streets of the city, when you see the sites and sites, the sacred places you will see how beautiful and sacred the city is. We have to protect these sacred places because they represent our Arabic Palestinian and Islamic identities.

The third track is the daily life in the city of Jerusalem that means that people of the city should unite; they should put together new programs to create a new reality, this new reality should be love and brotherhood. And let's not forget that these three tracks cannot be completed unless we find Arabic and Islamic protection to support the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the sanctities, the identity and the civilization of this holy city.

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