

# Journey to *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) & Jordan

By Shaykh Mushtaq Shaikh

## Introduction

On hearing the name *Baitul-Muqaddas* or Jerusalem, immediately one's mind is diverted towards the current heartrending state of this historical city. A city that is very near and dear to the hearts of all the faithful of the three Abrahamic faiths, Christians, Muslims and Jews, all claiming ownership of this Holy Land. This city has seen its share of bloody battles and the rise and fall of countless kingdoms. I am not an expert on Medieval History neither am I an analyst of the current political crisis that has gripped the Holy Land in a continuous cycle of peace meetings and negotiations, but I do know that the father of the three major religions, Prophet Ibrahim/Abraham (A) would never sanction violence, tyranny, usurpation of land and property, killing of innocent men, women and children, demolition of homes, and fighting amongst his children.

*Al-Hamdulillah* (All Praise is for Allah), I have travelled twice to this goldmine of history during my lifetime. The first time I travelled was from mid-Dec. 1997 – mid-Jan. 1998 with a group of friends and most recently in mid-Nov. 2010 with my wife and three children. My two journeys to the Blessed Land have left me with an inseparable love and attachment for *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem). This is something that has penetrated the core of my heart. It has compelled me to read and learn the history behind this sacred city. I thank Allah for instilling this profound love in me and granting me the ability and courage to visit *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) and ultimately, to pray and thank Him, in *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa*.

I have also travelled twice to Jordan. The first time was in Jan. 2006 with my wife and most recently also in mid-Nov. 2010 with my family.

The land of *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) and its environs, along with Jordan are dotted with historical places pertaining to the Prophets, *Sahaabah* (Companions of Prophet Muhammad [S]) and important events and personalities from Islamic history. Travelling to these places rekindles one's faith and strengthens the bond between the believer and the noble Prophets and *Sahaabah*. When travelling along the highway one can only close his eyes and imagine how the great companions of the Prophet (S) traversed these mountainous lands on camel and horseback. When sitting in Masjid Umar of *Baitul-Muqaddas*, one can replay the pages of history of how the great Khalifah/Caliph Umar (Rd) established peace and security between the followers of

the prevailing faiths, in the Holy Land. His foresight in declining to perform *salat* in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is a great lesson for all of humanity. The experience of walking around *Al-Haram Ash-Sharif* (The Holy Sanctuary), the same place where the Prophet Muhammad (S) led all the Prophets in *salat*, is beyond description. For thousands of years the Holy Land has seen great empires rise to power only to be defeated by another, a cycle that has continued till this day. *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) is a city that has been conquered and demolished multiple times over the course of history, a land that has witnessed unmatched humanitarian gesture and great carnage. It is a city that has been ruled by Prophets and kings. The noble and righteous, scholarly and mystics migrated here and adopted this land as their permanent home. If the Mount of Olives overlooking the Old City of *Baitul-Muqaddas* (Jerusalem) was able to speak, what story would it tell us?



1 Looking west from Mount of Olives, by MS

In the language of the Qur'an it is known as *Al-Ardbul-Mubarak*<sup>1</sup> and *Al-Ardbul-Muqaddasab*<sup>2</sup> i.e. The Blessed Land and The Holy Land. This is the land which has been the focus of attention for many centuries and will remain so till the end of time and beyond. It is the land which will be converted into the plain of the Grand Assembly before our Lord and Judgement Day.

During our stay in *Baitul-Muqaddas*, we saw hundreds of Christians, bus loads, travelling around *Baitul-Muqaddas* and Bethlehem, visiting their places of religious significance. These people had come from different parts of the world, from the Philippines to the UK and Eastern Europe to North America. The sad part of our journey (apart from being an eye-witness to the plight of our Palestinian brothers and

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<sup>1</sup> The Prophets, verse #81

<sup>2</sup> The Repast, verse #21

sisters) was that we did not come across a single Muslim family who had travelled from a foreign country for the sole purpose of *ziyaarah* (visitation) of *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa*.

After returning home in early Dec. 2010, I decided to write about my experiences of this trip and my previous trip to *Baitul-Muqaddas* and Jordan. In my most recent trip, I had taken a camera with me. I also hope to share some photographs with you.

The aim behind sharing my experiences and reflections with you, is to firstly, please Allah, The All-Mighty and secondly, for it to be a source of motivation and encouragement for our Muslim brothers and sisters to visit the Blessed Land. Unfortunately, *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa* is (intentionally or unintentionally) ignored by many Muslims who have the resources to travel there. The importance of *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa* has subconsciously diminished from the minds of many Muslims. Due to this negligence many Muslims cannot even correctly point out to it. I strongly feel that all Muslims should at least undertake two journeys throughout their lifetime, one for *Hajj* and *‘Umrah* and the second for *ziyaarah* of *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa*.

Prophet Muhammad (S), is reported to have said, “You should not undertake a journey (with the intention to visit a Masjid for worship) except the three Masjids, *Al-Masjidul-Haram* (Makkah), Prophets Masjid (Madinah) and *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa*.<sup>3</sup>

Below is a list of places that can be visited in and outside of *Baitul-Muqaddas* and in Jordan. By the Grace and Help of Allah, *Al-Hamdulillah* we had visited all of these places except for three. We also took pictures of some of these places. *In-Sha-Allah*, with the Help of Allah and your prayers (*duas*), I will be writing about these places and submitting my work over the next few months and maybe beyond.

### *Al-Ardbul-Muqaddasah* / The Holy Land

1. *Baitul-Muqaddas* / Jerusalem
2. *Al-Masjidul-Aqsa* / The Furthest Masjid
3. *Qubbatus-Sakbrah* / The Dome of the Rock
4. *Al-Haram Ash-Sharif* / The Holy Sanctuary
5. Historical sites outside *Al-Haram Ash-Sharif* / The Holy Sanctuary
  - a) Prophet *Dawud* / David (A)
  - b) *Maryam* / Virgin Mary & her parents (A)
  - c) Masjid ‘Umar
  - d) Rabi’ah Bastriyyah (Rh)

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<sup>3</sup> Bukhari

6. *Al-Khalil* / Hebron
7. *Bayt-Lahm* / Bethlehem
8. *Maqam Musa(A)* / Memorial of Prophet Musa (A)
9. *Arihaa*/Jerico [did not visit]
10. *Maqam Yunus* / Jonah (A)
11. *'Amwaas* / Emwaas
12. *Ludd* / Lod
13. *Baiysaan*
14. *Buhairah Tabariyyah* / Lake Tiberias / Sea of Galilee
15. Some *Sabaabah* / Companions of Prophet Muhammad (S) buried in and around *Baitul-Muqaddas*
  - a) 'Ubaadah bin Samit (R)
  - b) Shaddad bin 'Aws (R)
  - c) Tamim Ad-Dari (R) [did not visit]
16. *'Akkā* / Acre
17. *An-Nasirah* / Nazareth
18. Kafr or Kfar Manda

### Jordan

1. Al-Mazar Al-Janubi
2. Maddin
3. Dead Sea
4. Mount Nebo
5. Crusader Castle in Karak
6. Ajloun Castle
7. Prophet *Yusba'* / Joshua (A)
8. Prophet *Shu'aib* (A)
9. *Sabaabah* / Companions of Prophet Muhammad (S) buried in Jordan
  - a) Shurahbil bin Hasanah (R)
  - b) 'Aamir bin Abi-Waqaas (R)
  - c) Mu'adh bin Jabal (R)
  - d) Abu-'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (R)
  - e) Dhirar bin Al-Azwar (R)
10. *As-Haabul-Kahf* / The Sleepers of the Cave
11. Battle of Yarmouk
12. Battle of Fahl [did not visit]

I would also like to inform the readers of the fact that the information of these sites is based on historical narrations that are either mentioned in the books of *Tafseer* (Commentary of the Holy Qur'an) and history books or has been popular for

generations amongst the local people living in the area of the historical site. Also, regarding some sites there are conflicting reports. This will be pointed out when necessary. Citations and references will be provided whenever possible. Our private guides in *Baitul-Muqaddas* and Jordan did inform us that many of these sites have been seen by the local Ulama (Islamic scholars). Nevertheless, it is better to do your own research prior to your travel to *Baitul-Muqaddas* and Jordan.

If readers plan to travel to *Baitul-Muqaddas* and Jordan and would like some information for their journey, you can email me at: [mushtaq77shaikh@yahoo.ca](mailto:mushtaq77shaikh@yahoo.ca).

**Note**

Many of these historical sites are graves of Prophets, *Sahaabah* and other important individuals from Islamic history. We must not forget that grave worshipping in any shape or form is tantamount to *shirk* (polytheism). When visiting these places ones conduct and actions must be within the framework of Qur'an and Sunnah. Acts of innovation must be completely avoided.

To be continued.....