

7726 - The importance of al-Quds for the Muslims - and do the Jews have any right to it?

the question

As a muslim, I am always told that the city of Jerusalem is important to us. But why? I am aware that Prophet Yaqoob built the Asqa Mosque in it and that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) led the previous Prophets in prayer signifying the unity of the message and all divine revelations; are there any other major reason or is it just because it is that we are dealing with Jews. It seems to me that the Jews have more stake to it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly: with regard to the importance of Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), you should know - may Allaah bless you -that the virtues of Bayt al-Maqdis are many:

-Allaah has described it in the Qur'aan as being blessed. He said (interpretation of the meaning): "Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allaah) Who took His slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haraam (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsaa (in Jerusalem), the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed..." [al-Israa' 17:1]. Al-Quds is part of the neighbourhood surrounding the mosque and hence it is blessed.

-Allaah has described it as being holy, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): "[Moosa said:] O my people! Enter the holy land (Palestine) which Allaah has assigned to you..." [al-Maa'idah 5:21]

-In al-Quds there is al-Masjid al-Aqsaa, and one prayer there is equivalent to two hundred and fifty prayers elsewhere.

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It was reported that Abu Dharr (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: we were discussing, in the presence of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), which of them was more virtuous, the mosque of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or Bayt al-Maqdis. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: One prayer in my mosque is better than four prayers there, but it is still a good place of prayer. Soon there will come a time when if a man has a spot of land as big as his horse's rope from which he can see Bayt al-Maqdis, that will be better for him than the whole world. (Narrated and classed as saheeh by al-Haakim, 4/509. Al-Dhahabi and al-Albaani agreed with him, as stated in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, at the end of the discussion of hadeeth no. 2902).

One prayer in al-Masjid al-Nabawi is equivalent to one thousand prayers elsewhere, so one prayer in al-Masjid al-Aqsa is equivalent to two hundred and fifty prayers elsewhere.

With regard to the famous hadeeth which says that prayer in al-Masjid al-Aqsa is equivalent to five hundred prayers elsewhere, this is da'eef (weak). (See Tamaam al-Minnah [?] by Shaykh al-Albaani - may Allaah have mercy on him - p. 292).

-The one-eyed Dajjal ("Antichrist") will not enter it, because of the hadeeth, "He will prevail over all the earth, apart from al-Haram [in Makkah] and Bayt al-Maqdis." (Narrated by Ahmad, 19665. Classed as saheeh by Ibn Khuzaymah, 2/327, and Ibn Hibbaan, 7/102).

-The Dajjal will be killed close to al-Quds. He will be killed by the Messiah 'Eesa ibn Maryam (peace be upon him), as was stated in the hadeeth: "The son of Maryam will kill the Dajjal at the gates of Ludd." (Narrated by Muslim, 2937, from the hadeeth of al-Nawwas ibn Sam'aan). Ludd (Lod) is a place near Bayt al-Maqdis.

-The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was taken to Bayt al-Maqdis on his Night Journey (al-Israa') from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allaah) Who took His slave (Muhammad) for a

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journey by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haraam (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsaa (in Jerusalem)..." [al-Israa' 17:1].

-It (al-Quds) was the first qiblah of the Muslims, as was reported by al-Baraa' (may Allaah be pleased with him): the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 41 - this version was narrated by him - and by Muslim, 525).

-It is the place where Wahy (Revelation) came down, and it is the homeland of the Prophets. This is well known.

-It is one of the mosques to which people may travel.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "No journey should be made except to three mosques, al-Masjid al-Haraam, Masjid al-Rasool (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and Masjid al-Aqsaa." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1132. Also narrated by Muslim, 827, from the hadeeth of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, with the words, "Do not travel except to...").

-The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led the Prophets in one prayer in al-Aqsaa, as reported in the lengthyhadeeth: "... Then the time for prayer came, and I led them in prayer." (Narrated by Muslim, 172, from the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah).

It is not permissible to travel to any spot on earth for the purpose of worshipping there, except these three mosques.

Secondly:

The fact that Ya'qoob (peace be upon him) built al-Masjid al-Aqsaa does not mean that the Jews have more right to the mosque than the Muslims, because Ya'qoob was a monotheist and the Jews

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are mushrikeen. The fact that their father Ya'qoob built the mosque does not mean that it belongs to them. He built it for the monotheists to worship in it, even if they were not his children, and he did not allow the mushrikeen to enter it, even if they are his children, because the call of the Prophets has nothing to do with race; it is based on taqwaa (piety, awareness of Allaah).

Thirdly:

Your saying that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led the previous Prophets in prayer to signify the unity of the message and all divine revelations is correct from the point of view of the origin of the religion and 'aqeedah (belief) of the Prophets. All of the Prophets received their Message from one source, which was the Wahy (Revelation), and they all had the same 'aqeedah, which was the belief in Tawheed (absolute unity of Allaah) and the worship of Allaah Alone, even though there were differences in the details of their laws. This was confirmed by our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when he said: "I am the closest of mankind to 'Eesaa ibn Maryam in this world and in the Hereafter. The Prophets are brothers although they have different mothers, and their religion is one." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3259; Muslim, 2365).

The phrase "brothers although they have different mothers" means brothers who have the same father but different mothers, i.e., they are the children of co-wives.

Here we would caution readers against believing that the Jews, Christians and Muslims are following the same principles nowadays, because the Jews have changed the religion of their Prophet. Indeed, part of the religion of their Prophet is that they should follow our Prophet and not reject him, but they disbelieve in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and associate others in worship with Allaah.

Fourthly:

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The Jews do not have any stake in al-Quds, because even though they may have lived in the land previously, that land now belongs to the Muslims from two points of view:

1. The Jews disbelieved and are no longer following the religion of the believers among the Children of Israel who followed and supported Moosa and 'Eesaa (peace be upon them).

2. We Muslims have more right to it than them, because land does not belong to the people who lived there first, but to those who establish the laws of Allaah therein. Allaah created the land, and He created people to worship Allaah in the land and to establish therein the religion, laws and rulings of Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... Verily, the earth is Allaah's. He gives it as a heritage to whom He wills of His slaves; and the (blessed) end is for the Muttaqoon (the pious)." [al-A'raaf 7:128]

Hence if some Arabs came who were not followers of Islam and they ruled the land with kufr, they would have to be fought until they submitted to the rule of Islam or were killed.

It is not the matter of race or ethnicity; it is the matter of Tawheed and Islam.

Here it is useful to quote the words of one of the researchers:

"History tells us that the first people to settle in Palestine were the Canaanites, six thousand years BCE. They were an Arab tribe who came to Palestine from the Arabian Peninsula, and after their arrival, Palestine was named after them [i.e., Canaan]."

(al-Suhyooniyyah, Nash'atuhaa, Tanzeemaatuhaa, Inshitatuhaa, by Ahmad al-'Awadi, p. 7).

"As for the Jews, the first time they entered Palestine was approximately six hundred years after Ibraheem had entered the land, i.e., they entered it approximately 1400 years BCE. So the Canaanites entered Palestine and lived there approximately 4500 years before the Jews."

(Ibid., p. 8)

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Hence it is clear that the Jews have no right to the land, whether according to religious law or in terms of who lived there first and possessed the land. They are aggressors who are seizing the land by force. We ask Allaah to rid Bayt al-Maqdis of them sooner rather than later, for He is Able to do that and He is Most Generous in answering. Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.