

In the Blessed Lands

Jordan & Palestine

The land of the Ambiyaa (Alayhimus Salaam)
and
The Sahaabah (Radiyahallahu Anhum)

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Published and distributed by:
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First Edition: Muharram 1434 / December 2012

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Introduction

Al-hamdulillah, it is with the grace and Mercy of Allah Ta'ala that He allowed us another wonderful, blessed journey to the Haramain and also afforded us with an enlightening visit to Masjidul Aqsa in the company of our respected and honourable sheikh, Hadhrat Mufti Ibraaheem Salehjee Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) in Ramadhaan 1433.

For many of us it was the first time that we visited Jordan and Palestine. We found these places to be very rich in Islamic history with great virtue, barkat and blessings. Indeed these lands are blessed for Allah Ta'ala Himself, in the Qur-aan has called it, "The land which We have blessed its surroundings."

Once Rasulullah ﷺ said to his Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum), "How wonderful is Shaam!" The Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum) asked, "Why is that?" Rasulullah ﷺ replied, "I see the angels of Allah Ta'ala spreading their wings over Shaam."

Ibn Abbaas ؓ then added, "The Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) lived therein and there isn't a place in Al Quds (Jerusalem) where a Nabi has not prayed or an angel has not stood."

Each place is full of history and has great lessons in it for those that visit. Since many Muslims from our country visit the blessed lands, it would be beneficial to note down the history and virtues of each site as this will make the trip more meaningful for the visitor.

Knowing the virtues of each place will most definitely increase the value of the noble journey and create love and respect in the heart of the visitors.

Most of the facts mentioned in this booklet have been taken from the works of Hadhrat Mufti Taqi Usmaani Saahib and his elder brother Hadhrat Mufti Rafee' Usmaani Saahib (daamat barakaatuhuma). They have written a detailed treatise in the urdu language named *Jahaan Deeda* and *Ambiyaa ki Sarzameen me*. Both these books are worth reading as they contain a great wealth of knowledge.

Together with this, our respected ustaaz, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) had given us valuable advices throughout the journey. These advices have also been penned down for the benefit of the reader.

May Allah Ta'ala accept this little treatise and make it a means of attaining the Radhaa (pleasure) of Allah Ta'ala. *Aameen*.

10 Muharram1434
Isipingo Beach

Jordan

Al-hamdulillah with the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ala we landed safely at the Amman International Airport on Tuesday 16 July 2012 and were welcomed by Sheikh Hassan, a local national, who *alhamdulillah* is actively involved in the work of da'wat and tableegh and has a very pleasant disposition.

Very quickly, he loaded our luggage in his comfortable coaster and suggested that we drive immediately towards the battlefield of Muta as time was of essence. It was extremely hot with temperatures ranging between 40 to 45 degrees. It was peak summer.

As we drove through the city, we witnessed the hot, vast desert sands and thoughts flashed through our minds of how the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radiyallahu anhum) had travelled and made jihaad in such difficult terrain. Whilst we found it difficult travelling in an air-conditioned vehicle, they travelled by foot and fought for the cause of Islam with their wealth and their lives.

At Muta

In a short time we reached the battlefield of Muta. We disembarked and stood for a long time in silence gazing at the battlefield,

imagining the decisive battle that took place here in the 8th year after Hijri.

Our guide, Sheikh Hasan mentioned to us that, before the University of Muta was erected next to the battlefield, the sounds of horses neighing and swords clashing on the battlefield were often heard by the locals. He also mentioned that there are many people still alive who have personally heard these sounds. However after the construction of the university, these sounds are not heard anymore.

One of our *saathies* (companions) asked Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) what he felt about this theory to which he mentioned an incident recorded in one of the books of Hadhrat Moulana Thaanwi (rahmatullahi alayh).

The incident is as follows:

There was a historian once travelling in India. On one of his travels, lost his way and could find no accommodation. After seeing some light in the distance he followed it until he found a house and asked permission from the owner of the house if he could stay over the night to which the owner agreed on condition that he does not come out of his room at night. The man agreed but during the night, his curiosity got the better of him and he crawled out to investigate. As he came out, he saw a number of pigs grunting in a most despicable manner. Frightened at the scene, he quickly went back into the house and crept back into his bed. In the morning he confessed to the host that he had broken his promise but insisted that the host offer him a complete explanation.

After reprimanding him, the host eventually explained that those pigs were actually the bodies of the British soldiers who had committed severe atrocities against the Muslims in India. They have all been now transformed into swines as a punishment for their deeds.

The Battle of Muta

This battle took place in the 8th year A.H. The cause of this battle was that Nabi ﷺ had sent a Sahaabi by the name of Haaris ibn Umair Al-Azdi ؓ to the leader of Shaam with a letter inviting him to Islam. On the way, Shurahbeel bin Amr Al-Ghassaani, the governor, intercepted him and had him killed.

Killing a messenger in those days was against the international law and was regarded to be a serious crime. Nabi ﷺ was extremely disturbed to hear this news and immediately prepared an army of 3000 Sahaabah under the leadership of his adopted son, Hadhrat Zaid bin Haarisah ؓ. At that time the Muslims were going through untold difficulties but Nabi ﷺ would not allow the blood of a Muslim to be spilt unjustly and could not remain silent about it.

Nabi ﷺ himself organised the armies and instructed them that if Zaid ؓ is martyred then Ja'far bin Abi Talib ؓ must be appointed the Ameer and if he is martyred, Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ must be appointed the Ameer and if he is also martyred then the Muslim soldiers should make *mashwarah* (consult) amongst themselves and appoint someone as the Ameer.

In this statement was an indication that these three Sahaabah will be martyred in this battle. A Jew who was sitting nearby overheard this conversation and said to Hadhrat Zaid ؓ, "In the Bani Israeel, if a Nabi spoke in this manner then one would be rest assured that in this manner they would all be martyred. If your Nabi is really true, then know very well that you will not be returning to him." The intention of this Jew was probably to frighten Hadhrat Zaid ؓ but on the contrary Hadhrat Zaid ؓ replied very calmly, "I bear testimony that he is a true and pure Nabi of Allah Ta'ala."

Rasulullah ﷺ then handed over the flag himself to Hadhrat Zaid ؓ and the army of 3000 Sahaabah left Madinah Munawwarah towards Muta. Nabi ﷺ himself as well as many other Sahaabah came up to *Saniyatul Wada* (a mountain pass outside Madinah) to bid farewell to them.

The army marched forward towards Ma'aan (a city in Jordan which exists up to this day) least expecting Heraclius and his army consisting of 100 000 soldiers waiting to attack the Muslims. Together with him gathered another 100 000 troops from neighbouring tribes. The Muslims never imagined confronting such a large army and were in a doubt as to the way forward. Eventually they sat in *mashwarah* (consultation) to decide what to do. Many of the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) felt that this issue should be discussed with Rasulullah ﷺ as this was not initially his intention. Perhaps Nabi ﷺ would change his mind. This seemed to be the most sensible thing to do as it seemed impossible for an army of 3000 to fight an army of 200 000.

Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ delivers a fiery speech

Whilst this discussion was in progress, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ stood up and delivered the following fiery speech.

“O People, the thing for which you are scared off now is exactly the thing for which you left your homes in search of (martyrdom). Remember that we have never fought a battle previously based on our numbers and weapons. I was present in Badr and by the qasam of Allah we had only two horses. I was also present in Uhud and we had only one horse. We always fought for the sake of this Deen which Allah Ta’ala has honoured us with. It is for this reason that I request you all to move forward. You will definitely gain one of two victories. Either you will overpower your enemy or you will attain martyrdom and meet your brothers in Jannah. The promise of our Nabi ﷺ can never be false.”

The Sahaabah ؓ March on

What more could be said? The Sahaabah ؓ with a renewed fervour marched forward and met the enemy in Muta. Zaid bin Haarisa ؓ took the flag and fought with his full strength and bravery until he

was martyred. According to the instruction of Rasulullah ﷺ, Hadhrat Ja'far ibn Abi Taalib ؓ took the flag and advanced into the thick of the battle with the rain of arrows and spears around him. He dismounted and leaped into the rows of the enemy fighting bravely until his right arm was severed. He immediately carried the flag with his left hand until that was also cut off. He now tried to balance the flag between his chest and his forearms until he was martyred in the path of Allah.

Hadhrat Ibn Umar ؓ narrates that I had examined his body later on and counted more than 50 wounds on his body and every wound was at the front of his body with no wounds on his back.

In accordance to the instruction mentioned by Nabi ﷺ, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ now took up the flag and began moving forward. The signs of hunger were apparent on his face as he had not eaten for many days. One of his cousins saw him in this condition and brought a piece of meat to him saying, "Have this as you are striving very hard. Eat this, at least you will be able to straighten your back."

Hadhrat Abdullah ؓ began eating the meat when he heard the sound of a loud shriek coming from one side of the Muslim army. Hadhrat Abdullah ؓ admonished himself saying, "At a time like this you are busy in works of this dunya." He immediately left the meat, took up his sword and penetrated the enemy lines. He fought so gallantly and bravely until he was wounded and eventually martyred in the path of Allah. (May Allah be pleased with him and all the other Sahaabah ؓ).

Khaalid ؓ takes the flag

Nabi ﷺ did not select anyone else. Rather he left it to the Sahaabah ؓ to decide. Eventually, the Muslims appointed Hadhrat Khaalid bin Waleed ؓ as their leader. Hadhrat Khaalid ؓ then took the flag in his hand and fought with such valour, that on that day 9 swords broke in his hand fighting in the path of Allah. Eventually the

Muslims were triumphant and Hadhrat Khalid ؓ brought the Muslim army back safely to Madinah Munawwarah.

In the meantime, Rasulallah ﷺ was fully informed of the happenings of the war. One morning, Rasulallah ﷺ addressed the Sahaabah ؓ saying, “Zaid has taken up the flag and now he has been martyred. Ja’far has now taken it and he has also been martyred. Ibnu Rawaaha has taken it and he has also been martyred.” Saying this, tears welled up in the eyes of our beloved Master ﷺ. Thereafter he mentioned, “Now the flag has been hoisted by a sword from among the swords of Allah Ta’ala and Allah Ta’ala has granted the Muslims victory on his hands.”

Nabi ﷺ consoles the family of Ja’far ؓ

Hadhrat Asmaa bint-e-Umais (radiyallahu anha), the wife of Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ says, “In those days I was at home bathing and changing my children when Hadhrat Nabi ﷺ entered my home and hugged my children. I saw tears streaming down the mubaarak eyes of Rasulallah ﷺ and I asked him, “O Prophet of Allah ﷺ, May my parents be sacrificed for you, why are you crying like this? Has information regarding Ja’far and his companions reached you?”

Rasulallah ﷺ replied, “Yes, today Ja’far has been martyred.”

Hadhraat Asma (radiyallahu anha) says, “When I heard this I shrieked and all the women began gathering at my home to console me. Rasulallah ﷺ then left the house, went home and instructed his family to prepare food for the household of Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ.¹”

On this occasion, Rasulallah ﷺ had also mentioned, “In Jannah, Allah Ta’ala has given Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ wings in place of his hands with which he flies around as he wishes and where he wishes. It is for this reason that he became famously known as Ja’far Tayaar (One who flies).

¹ From this incident one learns that it is a sunnah to send food to the house of the deceased rather than burdening them with having to go and eat at their home.

On the battlefield

From our childhood days, we heard the incidents of Muta, read about the martyrs of Muta and also taught the history lessons in the classrooms. But today Allah Ta'ala gave us this golden opportunity to stand on the battlefield and witness the area where the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) gave their lives and spilt their blood for the cause of Deen. These were the men of Allah Ta'ala who sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam and attained ranks even higher than that of the Malaaiakah.

These were the heroes of Islam, for whom there is no parallel found anywhere in the world. Allah Ta'ala has announced His pleasure for them in the Qur-aan, (Radiyallahu anhum waradhu anhu). Allah Ta'ala is pleased with them and they are pleased with Allah Ta'ala. How is it ever possible for people to ever revile the Sahaabah when this was the spirit of Islam they had within them. They were the ones whom Allah Ta'ala accepted to spread His pure deen throughout the world and they were the ones selected to be the companions of our beloved Nabi ﷺ.

May Allah Ta'ala bless us all with the true love of Nabi ﷺ and his beloved Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum).

Upto this day, when standing on the battlefield of Muta, one is still able to perceive the blessings of this mubaarak place where Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) sacrificed their lives for Deen.

A little distance away from the battlefield are the graves of the three leaders, Zaid bin Haarisa ؓ, Ja'far bin Abi Taalib ؓ and Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ. We then went over to visit the graves of these three great martyrs.

What to do at the graves of the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum)?

When visiting the graves of the Sahaabah, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) advised us to stand with this frame of mind that; “O Allah! Bless us also with some part of the goodness and qualities You have blessed the Sahaabah with.” One may also make salaam at the graves and recite from the Qur-aan, etc. as is done at any Muslim graveyard.

Ja’far ibn Abi Taalib ؓ

We first stopped at the grave of Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ and Zaid bin Haarisa ؓ. There is a little Masjid built next to where they are buried. We quickly made wudhu and performed our Zuhr Salaah at this Masjid and thereafter went to pay our respects at the grave of Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ.

Hadhrt Ja’far ؓ was the cousin of Rasulallah ﷺ, the elder brother of Hadhrt Ali ؓ. He was approximately 10 years elder than Hadhrt Ali ؓ and was very close in resemblance to Rasulallah ﷺ. One day Nabi ﷺ said to him, “You resemble me in my appearance as well as in my akhlaaq (character).”

Hadhrt Ja’far ؓ was extremely kind to the poor and destitute. He would always try and help the poor whenever he managed to do so. It was for this reason that he became famously known as Abul Masaakeen (The father of the underprivileged). Hadhrt Abu Hurayrah ؓ used to say that after Rasulallah ﷺ, Hadhrt Ja’far ؓ is the best person.”

He had migrated to Habsha (Abyssinia) when the Quraysh began persecuting the Muslims in Makkah and was the person responsible for delivering a memorable speech in the presence of Najaashi which

eventually led him to accept Islam. He returned to Madinah Munawwarah at the occasion of Khaybar. Rasulallah ﷺ came out to welcome him and kissed him on his forehead and mentioned, *“I am not sure whether I am happier with the arrival of Ja’far or with the conquest of Khaibar.”* This took place in 7 AH, one year before the battle of Muta.

Zaid bin Haarisa ﷺ

Next to the grave of Hadhrat Ja’far ؓ, on a little hill, is the grave of Hadhrat Zaid bin Haarisa ؓ. This Sahaabi enjoys some special qualities and was regarded to be among the higher ranking Sahaabah ؓ. Among his specialities is that he is the only Sahaabi who is mentioned by name in the Qur-aan. No other Sahaabi enjoys this privilege of having his name mentioned in the Qur-aan. Rasulallah ﷺ had also adopted him as his son. He was the first slave to accept Islam. The incident of him coming into the home of Rasulallah ﷺ is also very strange.

Zaid ؓ is brought into the house of Rasulallah ﷺ

He had been captured as a young boy and sold as a slave in the days of ignorance. His master sold him in the market of Ukaaz to Hakeem bin Hizaam ؓ for 400 dirhams who in turn gifted him to his cousin, Ummul Mu’mineen Hadhrat Khadeeja (radiyallahu anha).

She in turn gifted him to Nabi ﷺ and thus he became the slave boy of none other than the Master of the Worlds (may the peace and blessings of Allah Ta’ala rain upon him forever and forever). How fortunate was this young child that Allah Ta’ala favoured him in this way and brought him into the house of Rasulallah ﷺ to serve the Nabi of Allah ﷺ.

Eventually after some time, his father found out where he was and came with his brother to purchase him. Nabi ﷺ, made it very clear to them that he will send him without any ransom money but, on the contrary if he wished to stay with him, he would also not force him to go. When Zaid's father heard this, he felt extremely relieved and said to Rasulallah ﷺ, "You have lightened my burden for me." In his mind he was sure that Zaid will prefer to go back home with him.

Rasulallah ﷺ then called Zaid and asked him if he recognised these people to which he replied, "Yes, this is my father and this is my uncle." Nabi ﷺ then said to him, "Zaid, you have stayed for a considerable amount of time with me. If you wish, you may go back home with them or if you prefer to stay behind you may continue to live with me."

To this Hadhrat Zaid ؓ replied, "I can never prefer living with anyone else besides you even though it maybe living with my own father."

When his father heard this he shrieked saying, "What has happened to you Zaid? Do you prefer living as a slave rather than gaining your freedom and do you prefer living with a stranger rather than coming back home with us?"

Hadhrat Zaid ؓ replied, "Yes, I would rather live with this stranger than go back home with you for after living with him I will never want to live with anyone else I have seen such qualities of this man that I cannot leave him ever."

[May our lives be sacrificed for the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum). They practically demonstrated the meaning of the Hadith, "None of you can be a true believer unless I, (Muhammad ﷺ) am more beloved to him than his parents, children and all of mankind."]

Rasulallah ﷺ adopts Zaid ؓ

When Rasulallah ﷺ heard Zaid ؓ saying this, he took hold of his hand, went into the hateem and announced, "Let everyone be a witness, from today Zaid is my son. He will inherit from me and I will inherit from him."

When the father and uncle of Zaid ؓ saw this, they felt much relieved and went back home. From that day onwards people would address him as Zaid bin Muhammad and not as Zaid bin Haarisah. However, later on, the verses were revealed that an adopted son must be attributed to his biological father.

On several occasions, Rasulallah ﷺ appointed him as the leader of many expeditions until eventually in the last battle of his life he was appointed the Ameer in Muta. In this manner Rasulallah ﷺ practically demonstrated the justice of Islam and that virtue is based only on taqwa and not on physique or colour.

The feeling one experiences when standing at the grave of this great Sahaabi who sacrificed his family, parents and entire life for Rasulallah ﷺ cannot be explained in words. May our lives be sacrificed for the Sahaabah of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ.

Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ

Then we went to the grave of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ. He was among the Ansaar of Madinah and was very famous for his poetry throughout the Arab lands. After accepting Islam, he left out poetry completely. On one journey Rasulallah ﷺ himself instructed him to encourage the army with some of his poetry. He replied, “O Rasulallah ﷺ I have abandoned this completely.” Hadhrat Umar ؓ rebuked him saying, “When the messenger of Allah ﷺ says something to you, you should obey immediately.” Hence at that occasion he read out the following poem,

وَلَا تَصَدَّقْنَا وَلَا صَلِّتْنَا	وَاللَّهِ لَوْلَا أَنْتَ مَا اهْتَدَيْنَا
وَوَيْتِ الْأَمَامِ إِنْ لَقِينَا	فَأَنْزِلْ لَنَا سَكِينَةً عَلَيْنَا
وَإِنْ أَرَادُوا وَجْهَهُ أَيْبِنَا	إِنَّ الْكُفَّارَ قَدْ بَعُثُوا عَلَيْنَا

*Wallahi, Had it not been that You (O Allah Ta'ala) had guided us,
we would not have performed salaah nor given sadaqah.*

*O Allah, descend upon us your sakeenah (tranquillity) and keep us
firm when we meet the enemy.*

*Verily the kuffaar have rebelled against us and if they intend any evil
(fitnah), we will prohibit it.*

When Rasulallah ﷺ went to perform the Umratul Qadha, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ entered the Haram Shareef with Nabi ﷺ and walked in front of him clearing way for Rasulallah ﷺ to walk.

On several occasions Rasulallah ﷺ had made him the ameer in battles and also appointed him as one of the leaders in the battle of Muta where he eventually sacrificed his life for Islam and was martyred for the cause of Deen. May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with him and all the other Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum).

The experience at Muta was indeed a great boon from Allah Ta'ala upon us which will remain imprinted on our hearts which we will remember insha Allah for the rest of our lives.

Towards Madyan

We then drove on towards Madyan. This area is extremely beautiful and lush area with olive and fig plantations on both sides of the road. We climbed up a beautiful, steep mountain until we could see the entire valley below in the horizon.

Allah Ta'ala has spoken on several occasions in the Qur-aan about the people of Madyan. They were a very thriving, influential nation whom Allah Ta'ala had blessed with abundant wealth. However due to their greed for wealth and disobeying the Nabi of Allah, they were also destroyed.

Allah Ta'ala especially points out one weakness in them as a lesson for us, the ummat of Hadhrat Muhammad ﷺ, that they would measure and weigh items less than the actual value trying to deceive the customers and obtain more for themselves. But like the nations of the past they rebuked Hadhrat Shuaib عليه السلام when he advised them and refused to listen to him, thus they faced the everlasting doom and destruction from Allah Ta'ala.

Hadhrat Shuaib عليه السلام was also the father-in-law of Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام. Allah Ta'ala makes special mention in the 20th juz of the Qur-aan Kareem of how Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام came into the household of Hadhrat Shuaib عليه السلام.

Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام comes to Madyan

When a warrant of arrest was sent out for Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام, he fled from Egypt and came to Madyan seeking shelter there. He rested near a well where many shepherds were providing water to their animals. Here he saw two young girls standing in a corner with their animals. When he enquired from them as to why they were standing there, they mentioned that their father was an old man and it was not possible for him to tend to his animals himself hence they were forced to emerge from their homes to feed their flock of sheep. Thus Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام lifted the heavy cover off the well and drew out

water for them very quickly, provided water to their animals and sent them off.

These girls then narrated this incident to their father who called for Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام. Seeing what a wonderful person he was, Hadhrat Shuaib عليه السلام offered to marry Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام to one of his daughters in exchange of working for him for a period of 8 years. Hence this is where Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام eventually took shelter and lived in peace away from Firaun and his army. It was thereafter that Allah Ta'ala blessed Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام with Nubuwwat and commanded him to go back to Firaun.

At the Well

Our driver, Sheikh Hasan then took us to the well from which Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام drew water. The well is now closed but he took us to the source which fills the well. A few steps away from the well is a little cave. We climbed through the entrance and found a little spring gushing out of the rocks which fills into the well. Sheikh Hasan brought a few bottles and cups and gave us the fresh sweet water to drink. May Allah Ta'ala reward him for this.

Serve the creation of Allah Ta'ala for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala

Whilst sitting there, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) commented that the work of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) was to serve the deen of Allah as well as the makhlooq (creation) of Allah solely for the pleasure of Allah. In the case of Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام, look at the rewards Allah Ta'ala blessed him with for serving His makhlooq. Allah Ta'ala immediately blessed Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام with 4 favours. He was blessed with a shelter, security, job and a wife. Subhanallah! These are some of the cash benefits of serving Allah Ta'ala's creation. What reward will be in store for such people in the Aakhirat?

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) also stated that we should remember that the underlying factor is ikhlaas. Hadhrat Moosa عليه السلام had no personal motive behind this service. It was done solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. This is what we all have to try and achieve. May Allah Ta'ala bless us all with true ikhlaas and may He be pleased with us in this world and the hereafter.

Ashaab-e-Kahaf

At Asar time we reached the cave of the 7 sleepers. Next to this cave is a beautiful Masjid which was recently built. *Al-hamdulillah* we performed our Asar Salaah here with ease and then went over to visit the cave.

Is this really the cave of the sleepers?

To claim with certainty that this is the cave of the 7 sleepers mentioned in the Qur-aan is not possible. In-fact Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) mentioned on several occasions that besides the Raudha Mubaarak (the blessed grave of Rasulullah ﷺ) no other grave can be established with certainty. Yes one may speculate that this is perhaps the place.

There is also another cave in Iraq that people claim is the cave of the Ashaab e Kahaf. However, according to the Imaam of the Masjid, some salient features prove that this is the actual cave of the sleepers:

1. Ibn Abbaas رضي الله عنه says that he asked Ka'b Ahbaar (Rahimahullah), the famous Tabiee if he heard of a place called Raqem and Ka'b (rahimahullah) mentioned that Raqem is the name of the town where the Ashaab-e-Kahaf used to live before they went to the cave. Raqem is the name of a city in Jordan.

2. In 1953, Zabyaan, the famous historian, had written an entire theses proving that this is actually the cave of the Ashaab-e-Kahaf. One may refer to *Jahaan Deeda* for the details.

From the apparent signs it seems as though this is really the cave of the Ashaab-e-Kahaf. Hadhrat Mufti Taqi Usmaani Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) has also mentioned that it seems more likely that this is the cave of the seven sleepers and obviously Allah Ta'ala knows best.

The incident of the Ashaab-e-Kahaf

Allah Ta'ala has mentioned many details of this incident in the Qur-aan Shareef. In fact one entire surah of the Qur-aan has been named after this cave, Surah Kahaf.

Approximately 100 years after Hadhrat Isa عليه السلام had been lifted to the heavens, there lived a tyrant king by the name of Diqyaanoos. He worshipped idols and refused to follow the deen of Hadhrat Isa عليه السلام. Certain youngsters boldly expressed their belief in the oneness of Allah Ta'ala and refused to follow the ways of the king. Eventually the king threatened to have them killed if they did not leave their beliefs.

They made mashwarah amongst themselves and decided to take refuge in a cave to protect themselves from the king. They took with them some food, money and belongings and proceeded to the cave. They were seven in total and also a little dog that joined them to the cave.

As they reached the cave and settled down, Allah Ta'ala cast upon them a deep sleep for a number of years. The Qur-aan Shareef says that they slept for 309 years. During this time they slept so soundly that nothing disturbed them. Allah Ta'ala protected them in such a way that the sun would not shine directly into the cave. However the heat and the light of the sun would reach them. From time to time their bodies would turn from left to right and from right to left so that the blood continued flowing in their bodies and thus the

creatures of the earth would also not consume their bodies. Furthermore, Allah Ta'ala placed the dog at the mouth of the cave as a guard protecting them.

When they eventually woke up, they began asking one another, "How long have we slept for?" Some of them replied, "It seems like we have slept for a day or some part of a day." After sleeping for 309 years they felt as if they had slept for only a day.

The Qur-aan-e-Kareem then explains that they decided that someone should go quietly into the town and buy some halaal food. One of the sleepers by the name of Tamleekha took some coins and ventured into the town. As he walked through the streets he found everything had changed. By then a pious king by the name of Baydusees had taken over the government who was known to be pious and righteous upon the deen of Hadhrat Isa عليه السلام.

At that time there were many people who disbelieved in the *aqeeda* (belief) of life after death. They felt that it was impossible for a person to be brought back to life after he had died. In this regard the king was extremely worried and one day he spread out his musalla, wore old clothing and cried before Allah Ta'ala to rectify this belief of his people. Allah Ta'ala accepted his dua.

Tamleekha went into a shop to purchase some food. The shopkeeper was surprised to see such an old coin. He showed it to another shopkeeper until gradually the news reached the king himself.

It had become quite famous that there were a few youngsters who ran away in the era of Diqyaanoos, the tyrant and sought refuge in a cave. However, when they realized that they could not find them, they wrote their names down in a register and kept it as a criminal record. The king called for Tamleekha and felt that these may be the youngsters that had run away from Diqyaanoos. The king asked for the register and asked him his name. He found it written amongst the names of those who had disappeared. When he asked him the names of his companions he was elated to find that all their names were written in that register.

The king was overjoyed and intended accompanying Tamleekha to the cave. As they reached the cave, Tamleekha suggested that the king and his courtiers wait outside so that he may inform his friends of the circumstances.

Thereafter there are two narrations as to what had happened.

One narration says that Tamleekha and his friends came out, met the king and when they went back into the cave, they all passed away. The other narration is that when they heard that the king had come to see them, they passed away in the cave without meeting the king.

However, those who had disbelieved in the *aqeeda* (belief) of the Aakhirat and of life after death, changed their belief after witnessing this great miracle. How difficult can it be for Allah Ta'ala to give life a second time to one who has died in this world?

In the cave

Al-hamdulillah we had the opportunity of going inside the cave. There are seven graves on either side of the cave which the Imaam mentioned are the graves of the 7 sleepers. One of the graves has a hole where one is able to see the remains of some bones which may have been part of a dead body. According to the mujaawar (grave keeper), this is perhaps the remains of the people of the cave.

The dog of the Ashaab-e-Kahaf

How fortunate is the dog of the Ashaab-e-Kahaf that repeatedly it has been mentioned in the Qur-aan-e-Kareem. This is actually the barkat of keeping the company of the pious. No matter how filthy and najis you may be, keeping the company of the *ahlullah* (pious) will also make you blessed. This is one of the great lessons we learn from the Ashaab-e-Kahaf. Keep in the company of the *ahlullaah* and you will also be blessed with them like how the dog was blessed in this incident.

Hadhratjee Moulana Maseehullah Saahib (rahmatullah alayh) used to say, “When a train moves, the third class coach reaches upto the same destination where the first class coach reaches. Even though you may be a third class passenger, join yourself to those who are in the first class and you will reach up to where they will reach, Insha Allah.”

A delightful Supper

After visiting the cave, we went over to eat at an Arab brother’s place who is also, Masha Allah, actively involved in the effort of da’wat and tableegh. He had just returned from four months in the path of Allah Ta’ala a few weeks prior to our coming. Sheikh Hasan informed us that this brother slaughters his own animals and prepares it very well. After a long day’s journey, we were delighted to enjoy a sumptuous meal which further lifted our spirits. Being in the company of our respected ustaadh and sheikh, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) in the land of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) brought about a feeling of great shukar in our hearts. How unworthy we are but yet Allah Ta’ala through His infinite mercy bestows us with so many favours. [All praise is due to Allah and all thanks is to Allah.]

We stopped over at a fruit shop next to the restaurant and were astounded to see the beautiful fruit, the likes of which we had never seen before. It was the season for peaches and we were amazed to taste such beautiful and sweet peaches. Sheikh Hasan informed us that if we thought that these fruit were astounding, then we were yet to see the fruit of Baitul Muqaddas, the land which is so blessed. Sheikh Hasan, who now resides in Jordan, is originally a Palestinian who was forced to move out of his country. Unfortunately, today he is unable to even visit Baitul Muqaddas. May Allah Ta’ala forgive us and the entire ummat. It is because of our collective misdeeds that this third Haram of the Muslims now lies in the hands of the Jews. May Allah Ta’ala free Al-Aqsa from their clutches and once again bring it back into the control of the Muslims, *Aameen*.

The Second Day

The next morning, after loading our luggage, we left for Al-Aqsa by road. Our hearts were now yearning for Al-Aqsa. For many of us, it was the first time and the excitement began increasing within us.

Sheikh Hasan, our guide, informed us that on the way to the Jordanian border, we could visit many historical places. This is the benefit of a guide. He is able to lead you to your destination through the easiest and best path. Why is it that we then don't realise the importance of a guide in our day to day lives. Why do we tend to walk the path or rather find the pathway to our destination on our own when we can take the services of experienced guides who will hold our hands and lead us home. Here we tend to apply our intelligence and feel that we can find the path to Allah Ta'ala on our own. Don't be deceived by the thoughts of nafs and shaytaan. Just as we need the services of a guide to travel in this dunya, we also need the services of a guide to travel safely to the aakhirat. Yet, strange enough when a person holds onto a sheikh and follows his guidance, people begin taunting him from all sides calling him names and saying that he is now worshipping his peer.

Yarmook

Our first stop was at Yarmook. There is a beautiful viewing deck situated on the top of the mountain overseeing the Jordanian and Israeli borders where the actual battle took place. On the balcony there are diagrams with some basic facts describing the battle for the benefit of the visitors.

The Battle

The Battle of Yarmook was the most decisive battle fought after the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ. This was the battle that was responsible for breaking the backs of the Roman Empire once and for all.

This battle ensued after the Battle of Muta. When the Romans were disgraced by this small band of Muslims, they intended to take a larger army and attack Madinah Tayyiba. In retaliation to this, Rasulullah ﷺ prepared a large army consisting of 30 000 Sahaabah ؓ. It was a time of severe heat and the Sahaabah ؓ came out to fight the Romans.

When the Romans heard that Rasulullah ﷺ and his army have come out from Madinah and have already reached Tabuk, it struck awe in their hearts and they immediately retreated. Nabi ﷺ stayed at Tabuk for a few days and then returned to Madinah Munawwarah.

The next time when the news reached Madinah that the Romans were going to attack, Nabi ﷺ prepared another army under the leadership of Hadhrat Usaama bin Zaid ؓ, who was the son of Zaid bin Haarisa ؓ and Umme Ayman (radhiyallahu anha). Hadhrat Usaama ؓ at that time was only 17 years old. Nabi ﷺ appointed him the ameer of this army whereas people like Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddeeq ؓ and Sayyidina Umar Farooq ؓ were also in this army under his leadership.

Nabi-e-Kareem ﷺ himself led Hadhrat Usaama ؓ out of Madinah and gave him the following advice;

“I am sending you against such an army that had martyred your respected father. Fight the kuffaar in the path of Allah Ta’ala for the sake of Allah.”

But unfortunately at about that time, Hadhrat Nabi ﷺ passed away and Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq ؓ was appointed the Ameer of the Muslims. He asked permission from Hadhrat Usaama ؓ to keep Hadhrat Umar ؓ behind as he needed assistance in running the affairs of the Muslims. He then despatched this army as quickly as possible and instructed Hadhrat Usaama ؓ to try and return as soon as possible.

Hence, prior to the Battle of Yarmook, three battles were fought against the Romans;

1. Battle of Muta
2. Battle of Tabuk
3. Jaishe Usaama

The Romans were extremely perplexed at the strength of the Muslims. Heraclius, the emperor of Rome, prepared four armies with a total of 240 000 to attack the Muslims and end this chapter once and for all. Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq ﷺ also prepared four armies that left Madinah separately and met up at Yarmook. This army consisted of 30 000 troops.

Hadhrat Khaalid bin Waleed ﷺ at that time was fighting the Persian Empire in Iraq. Hadhrat Abu Bakr ﷺ wrote to him informing him of the evil intentions of Heraclius and instructed him to reinforce the Muslim army in Yarmook. Hadhrat Khaalid ﷺ had an army of 20 000 troops. He left Hadhrat Musanna bin Haarisa ﷺ in charge of the jihaad in Persia and continued with an army of 10 000 immediately towards Shaam.

The Romans had positioned themselves very strategically with the Jolaan Mountains behind them and the Jordanian River on their right hand side. The Muslims had set up camp on the opposite end. Hadhrat Khaalid ﷺ positioned himself on a hill from where he would direct the armies during the battle. Approximately two months passed without much fighting taking place.

(We were now standing in front of the battlefield with the river in front of us and the hill of Khaalid ﷺ on our right picturing the entire battle taking place before us.)

The Battle begins

One night Hadhrat Khaalid ﷺ received information that the Romans were going to launch a severe attack the next morning. He quickly prepared small groups of mujaahideen and in the morning when the Romans attacked, Hadhrat Khaalid ﷺ and his small band of men

were ready for them. They fought a fierce battle clashing swords with the enemy until in a short time, the enemy was forced to flee the battlefield.

A Roman general accepts Islam

Another group of Romans appeared and the general asked for peace. He stepped forward and asked for the Muslim leader to also step forward. Khaalid ﷺ stepped forward and the Roman general whose name was Jarja bin Zaid began asking him some questions about Islam. Hadhrat Khaalid ﷺ in a very beautiful manner presented Islam to him. Allah Ta'ala inspired the heart of this general and he immediately accepted Islam. Without any delay he joined the Muslim army and began fighting against the Romans. He fought so bravely and valiantly that in this same battle he was martyred in the path of Allah. May Allah Ta'ala bless him and shower His special mercy on him and all the Mujaahideen that fight in His path. *Aameen.*

The Battle intensifies

The next day severe fighting ensued. The Muslims despite their small numbers fought bravely putting forward their lives for the sake of Allah Ta'ala and the cause of Islam. Abu Sufyaan ﷺ spurred the Muslims with his poetry to continue fighting. In the thick of the battle, Hadhrat Ikrimah bin Abi Jahal ﷺ stood up and announced, "Who is there to take bay'at (pledge) of death on my hands? We will penetrate the enemy until we either meet our death or gain victory." Hadhrat Dhiraar ibnul Azwar ﷺ was the first person to stand up and take bay'at on his hands. 400 Mujaahideen then joined him to fight till death.¹

Thereafter, like hungry lions, they attacked the enemy and uprooted them from their base. The Roman soldiers were now

¹ Hayaatus Sahaabah by Hadhrat Moulana Yusuf Khaandelwi (rahmatullahi alayh)

scattered and began running in all directions. Where were they to run? The Jolaan Mountains were behind them, the Muslim army in front of them and the Jordanian river on the right hand side. The Muslims then attacked with full force killing approximately thousands of Romans. Many tried escaping through the river but drowned therein. Approximately 140 000 Romans died in this battle. By the morning, the entire battlefield was clear. A small army of 40 000 had wiped out an army of 240 000.

May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum ajmaeen). They laid down their lives for the sake of Islam so that you and I today can enjoy the fruits of this beautiful tree. May Allah Ta'ala accept us as well to spread and propagate this beautiful Deen throughout the earth. *Aameen.*

A remarkable incident of selflessness

It was in this battle that the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) displayed an example of unmatched ikraam (love and honour) for one another even in their last moments. Hadhrat Haaris bin Hishaam ؓ, Ikrimah bin Abi Jahal ؓ and Ayyaash ibn Abi Rabee ؓ were all martyred in this battle but as they left this world, they left behind a priceless lesson of selflessness for every Muslim till the day of Qiyaamah.

Hadhrat Haaris bin Hishaam ؓ was severely wounded and was lying on the ground on the battlefield. In this condition he shouted out for water. His cousin heard his cry and immediately brought some water for him. Before Hadhrat Haaris ؓ could take a sip, Ikrimah ؓ shouted out for water. Haaris ؓ instructed his cousin, "Go and give the water to him first." When the water was presented to Ikrimah ؓ, Ayyaash ؓ shouted out for water. Ikrimah ؓ indicated that the water should be taken first to him. But by the time he reached Ayyaash ؓ, he had already passed away. He quickly ran back to his cousin with the water in his hand only to find that he had also passed away. Quickly he took the glass to Ikrimah ؓ but found that he had also reached the mercy of Allah Ta'ala.

What great men were the Sahaabah! Their living and their dying held great lessons for us. At these last moments of their lives they portrayed such love and care for one another that they would rather die thirsty but share what they possessed with others. May Allah Ta'ala bless us also with a miniscule of what the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) possessed? How far have we strayed from their path?

Standing on the top of the mountain and looking down at the battlefield of Yarmook reminded us of these incidents of the noble Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) and their sacrifices for Deen. Indeed they were the best of the ummat and that is why they were chosen to be the companions of the best of mankind, Sayyiduna wa Mawlana Muhammadur Rasulullah ﷺ. How is it possible for people to revile such a class of men who laid down their lives, comforts, luxuries and families for the cause of Islam. (*radiyallahu anhum wa radhu anhu*).

Buhayrah Tabariyyah

From Yarmook, our driver suggested that we go to see the Buhayrah Tabariyyah. The Jordanian government doesn't easily allow people to go there because it is on the border of Jordan and Israel and security is very intense. We had to pass three check points before we managed to reach a place where we were able to see the buhayrah from a distance. However, at every check point, when it was told to the security, that we were from South Africa and we were on our way to Masjidul Aqsa, they would smile broadly and request us to make dua for them.

Buhayrah Tabariyyah is that lake which Rasulullah ﷺ has mentioned in the Hadith that close to Qiyaamah, when the Yajooj and Majooj will emerge from their constraints, one part of their army will come to this lake and drink up all its water. When the last part of the army reaches there, they will find no water at all. They will say,

“Perhaps there was water here some time ago.” This lake is approximately 23 kilometres long and 13km wide.

Aghwaar

From Yarmook, we began moving downwards towards the border. The valley between Jordan and Israel is known as Aghwaar. This area is very close to Baitul Muqaddas which unfortunately due to our sins and evil is now under the rule of the Yahood (Jews).

In Aghwaar, there are the graves of many Sahaabah (Radiyahallahu anhum), who were martyred in the *ta'oon* (plague) of Amwaas that occurred during the era of Hadhrat Umar bin Khattaab ؓ. Amwaas is a place in Palestine where this plague commenced. A large number of Sahaabah (Radiyahallahu anhum) and Tabieen were martyred in this plague.

In those days, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria were all one and was known as Shaam. Among the great Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) that were martyred in this plague was Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ and Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ.

As we moved through these lands, hundreds of pages of History began unfolding before us. The incidents and sacrifices of the Sahaabah ؓ for the sake of Deen were refreshed in our minds and we felt it a great honour to stand at the graves of these great men of Islam.

Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ

At the foot of a mountain, in a beautiful valley lies the grave of this great Sahaabi of Rasulullah ﷺ, Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ. We were fortunate to also present ourselves at his grave. There is a

beautiful little Masjid built there and on the right hand side of the Masjid is the grave of Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ.

Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ is that Sahaabi regarding whom Nabi ﷺ had mentioned, **“The one who is most knowledgeable regarding halaal and haraam is Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ.”** He is from the Khazraj Tribe in Madinah Tayyibah and was among the 70 people who had taken the pledge of Aqabah prior to hijrat. At that time he was so young that he did not even have a beard as yet. At the time of Badar he was only 20 years old and thereafter fought in every battle with Rasulullah ﷺ. It was only in the Battle of Hunain that he was absent because Nabi ﷺ had sent him to Makkah to teach Deen to the new Muslims.

I love you O Muaaz

Nabi ﷺ had great love for Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ. On one occasion Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ narrates, “Rasulullah ﷺ met me, took hold of my hand and said to me, **‘I love you O Muaaz.’** I said ‘By the qasam of Allah, I also love you O Rasulullah ﷺ.’” Thereafter Rasulullah ﷺ said to him, “Should I not teach you such words that you should recite after every salaah. Recite;

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِني عَلِي ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحَسَنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

O Allah assist me in making Your zikr and showing gratitude to You and help me to execute excellent acts of worship

How fortunate is this great Sahaabi. Rasulullah ﷺ explicitly expressed his love for him. May our lives be sacrificed for our beloved Nabi ﷺ. Imagine if Nabi ﷺ mentioned to us, I love you..... May Allah Ta'ala bless us with His love and the love of His Rasul ﷺ.

Allahumarzuqni Hubbaka wa hubba Rasulika ﷺ

Once Nabi ﷺ said, “What a wonderful person is Abu Bakr ؓ, what a wonderful person is Umar ؓ and what a wonderful person is Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ.”

Muaaz ؓ is sent to Yemen

Towards the end of the mubaarak life of Rasulullah ﷺ, he sent Muaaz ؓ to rule over the people of Yemen. At the time when Muaaz ؓ was leaving, Nabi ﷺ himself went to see him off. Muaaz ؓ was riding on a camel and Nabi ﷺ was holding the reigns of the camel. For a long time they walked together. Nabi ﷺ knew that this was his last meeting with Muaaz ؓ and expressing his love for him said, “O Muaaz, perhaps you may not meet me again. Perhaps you may pass by my Masjid and my grave.”

Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ who was riding the camel and suppressing his emotions for some time now, burst into tears. Perhaps he was consoling himself thinking that he would go for a short time and return to the company of Rasulullah ﷺ but when these words emerged from the mubaarak lips of Nabi ﷺ, it only confirmed that his eyes would never again set on the mubaarak countenance of his beloved Nabi ﷺ. Nabi ﷺ also turned his mubaarak eyes away towards Madinah avoiding contact with the eyes of Muaaz ؓ. Thereafter Nabi ﷺ mentioned to him, **“Verily the closest people to me are those who have taqwa, whoever they are and wherever they are.”**

May Allah Ta’ala bless us with this great quality of taqwa (fear of Allah). One who possesses this quality has indeed gained the proximity of Rasulullah ﷺ even though he may be living thousands of miles away from Madinah Munawwarah.

Muaaz ؓ thereafter proceeded to Yemen and only returned after the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ. He intended to join the expedition to Shaam and began preparing for Jihaad with the desire of being martyred and joined to his beloved Rasul ﷺ. Umar ؓ sensed this and requested Hadhrat Abu Bakr ؓ to hold him back in Madinah as the people of Madinah needed him more, but Abu Bakr ؓ replied,

“When he has chosen a route for himself, I cannot hold him back.” Thus Muaaz ؓ joined the army to Syria. He participated in the jihad but also played a pivotal role in teaching and propagating Islam in this region. He was also a pillar of support for Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ.

Hadhrat Umar ؓ also enjoyed a strong relationship with Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ. He used to say, “No woman is able to bear a child like Muaaz.”

Umar ؓ tests Muaaz ؓ

On one occasion, Hadhrat Umar ؓ gave his slave 400 dinars and instructed him to give it to Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ. He also instructed him to carefully see what Abu Ubaydah ؓ would do with the money. The slave delivered the money to Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ who made dua for Hadhrat Umar ؓ and thereafter told his treasurer to take 7 dinars and give them to this person and 5 to that person until the entire amount was depleted. The slave reported the entire incident to Hadhrat Umar ؓ.

Thereafter Hadhrat Umar ؓ gave the same amount of dinars to the slave and instructed him to pass it onto Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ and also watch what he does with the wealth. When the slave made over the money to Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ, he did exactly what Abu Ubaydah ؓ had done. As the wealth was finishing, his wife shouted from inside the home, “We are also needy. Send some amount here as well.” At that time there were only two dinars left in the bag. Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ passed the two coins over to her. The slave returned and narrated the entire incident to Hadhrat Umar ؓ who was elated. He then mentioned, “They are brothers and are exactly the same.”

Demise

When Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ was afflicted by the plague, he appointed Hadhrat Muaaz ؓ as the governor of Shaam. At

that time the plague had gained rapid momentum and affected many people. Muaaz رضي الله عنه addressed the people saying, “I heard Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, “You people will migrate to Shaam and you will conquer this land. Thereafter such a sickness will appear which will be like sores and boils. Allah Ta’ala will bless you with Shahaadah (martyrdom) and purify your actions.”

Thereafter, he made the following dua, “O Allah if Muaaz really heard this from Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم, then bless him and his family with this virtue. The plague then entered his home and no one from his family was spared. When Muaaz رضي الله عنه saw the signs of the plague appearing on him he smiled and said, “If someone had to give me red camels in exchange of this it would not please me.”

Someone began crying when he saw the condition of Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal (RA). Muaaz رضي الله عنه asked him, “Why are you crying?” This person replied, “I am not crying over any worldly benefit which I acquired from you, rather I am crying at the loss of the *i’lm* (knowledge) I used to gain from you.” Muaaz رضي الله عنه consoled him saying, “Don’t cry over that as well. Look at Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام. He was born and brought up in places where there was no knowledge. Allah Ta’ala blessed him with knowledge. After my demise, you should obtain knowledge from four people. Abdullah ibn Mas’ood (RA), Salmaan Faarsi (RA), Abdullah bin Salaam (RA) and Abu Dardaa (RA).

He eventually passed away as a result of that plague in the year 18 hijri at the age of 34. His son Abdur Rahmaan bin Muaaz bin Jabal رضي الله عنه who also passed away in this plague is buried next to him. We spent a few moments at both the graves and then continued our journey.

One very famous saying of his which is inscribed near his grave is as follows:

تَعَلَّمُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنْ تَعَلَّمُوا

فَلَنْ يُنْفَعَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِالْعِلْمِ حَتَّى تَعْمَلُوا

*You may attain as much knowledge as you wish
But Allah will not allow that knowledge to benefit you so long as you
do not practice on it*

Hadhrat Aamir bin Abi Waqqaas ؓ

We were also fortunate to visit the grave of Hadhrat A'amir ibn Abi Waqqaas ؓ. He was the younger brother of Hadhrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaas ؓ. He had accepted Islam in the early stages and fought in most of the battles against the Kuffaar. His younger brother Umayr ؓ was martyred in the Battle of Badar.

Hadhrat Shurahbeel ibn Hasanah ؓ

Situated at the bottom of a hill is the grave of Hadhrat Shurahbeel ibn Hasanah ؓ. He was also known as the conqueror of Jordan. His name is attributed to his mother whose name was Hasanah. He is also among the first Muslims to accept Islam. He was among the Muslims who made hijrat to Abyssinia and later on migrated to Madinah Tayyibah. He was among the leaders of the Muslims appointed by Hadhrat Abu Bakr ؓ when they marched towards Syria. A major portion of Jordan was conquered at his hands. For a period of time he was also made the governor of Jordan.

He enjoyed the title of being the scribe of Rasulullah ﷺ. He was also martyred in the plague of Amwaas. He passed away on the same day as Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ.

Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah Bin Jarraah ﷺ

We were extremely fortunate to visit the grave of this great Sahaabi of Rasulullah ﷺ. There is presently a beautiful Masjid constructed there and around the corner from the Masjid in a small room is the grave of this great Sahaabi of Rasulullah ﷺ, the conqueror of Shaam. This village is also now called *Qarya Abu Ubaydah* (town of Abu Ubaydah ﷺ).

Brief life sketch of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ﷺ

Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah ﷺ is among the closest and the greatest Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ, whose virtues and qualities are so many, that one will need a comprehensive book to encapsulate them.

He is among the very first Sahaabah to accept Islam. He accepted Islam at a time when the number of Muslims could be counted on one's fingertips.

He is among those 10 fortunate Sahaabah whom Nabi ﷺ himself had given the glad tidings of Jannah whilst they were alive. He is also among those Sahaabah who made hijrat twice for the sake of Islam. First, to Abyssinia, and then to Madinah Munawwarah.

He participated in every battle with Nabi ﷺ. Not only was he always in the front line but he also fought with great valour and strength. He placed his life in danger only for the pleasure of Allah and His Rasul ﷺ practically displaying his deep love and obedience to Allah and His Rasul ﷺ.

The Battle of Badar

In the Battle of Badar, his father joined the ranks of the kuffaar. He was extremely upset with his son for leaving the religion of his forefathers and accepting the new deen of Muhammad ﷺ. Throughout the battle he pursued his son waiting for a chance to

strike him but Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ kept on avoiding his father out of respect for him. Whenever his father appeared in front of him he would quietly slip away until he was eventually forced to come face to face with him. It was now a battle of Imaan and kufr. No relationship comes in between a man's relationship with Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul ﷺ. A fierce duel then ensued between father and son but Imaan will always overpower kufr and the father was thus slain at the hands of his son.

The Battle of Uhud

On the occasion of Uhud, when one of the enemies of Islam had struck Rasulullah ﷺ on his mubaarak face with his sword, two rings of Nabi's ﷺ helmet sunk into his mubaarak face. Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ was that fortunate Sahaabi who removed those links using his teeth. In this endeavour, he lost two of his teeth. Many people bore testimony to the fact that after losing his two teeth the beauty and splendour of his face increased.

Virtues of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ

When the people of Yemen accepted Islam, they requested that a teacher be sent to them. Nabi ﷺ held Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ by both his hands and said, "He is the Ameen (Trustworthy one) of this ummah." On another occasion, Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned, "For every ummah there is an Ameen and the Ameen of this ummah is Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ."

Once, Hadhrat Aaisha (radhiyallahu anha) was asked, "Who is the most beloved person to Rasulullah ﷺ from the Sahaabah?" She replied, "My father, Abu Bakr ؓ." "Who next?" she was asked. She replied, "Umar ؓ" "And after him?" She replied, "Then was Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ"

Hadhrt Hasan Basri (rahimahullah) narrates that once Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned to the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum), "Everyone of

you is such that I am able to rectify/correct some aspect of his akhlaaq with the exception of Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ.”

After the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ, when the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum) gathered at Saqeefa bani Saaida to discuss who should be elected as the khalifa, Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq ؓ suggested two names. One was that of Hadhrat Umar ؓ and the other was Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ. However obviously in the presence of Hadhrat Abu Bakr ؓ, there was no question about who would be the khalifa of Rasulullah ﷺ. The fact of the matter is that Abu Bakr ؓ choosing the name of Abu Ubaydah ؓ shows what a lofty rank he enjoyed among the Sahaabah.

During the khilaafat of Siddeq-e-Akbar ؓ, Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ was appointed to take control of the affairs in Shaam (Syria). Thereafter for a short period Hadhrat Khaalid ؓ was appointed as the leader. During Hadhrat Umar's ؓ khilaafat, he replaced Hadhrat Khaalid bin Waleed ؓ with Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ as the leader of the Muslim army and it was on his mubaarak hands that Jordan, Palestine, Syria, etc. were conquered. Hadhrat Khaalid ؓ then served under the leadership of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ.

His Zuhd (abstinence)

Shaam, in comparison to Hijaaz in as far as the climate, scenery, food, etc., is concerned was like paradise. The Roman Empire had fallen to their feet. The wealth, luxuries and comfort of The Byzantine Empire poured onto the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum) from all sides. However the manner in which Rasulullah ﷺ nurtured them was such that all of this had absolutely no effect on the hearts and minds of the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum). This can be more clearly understood from the following incident;

On one occasion, Hadhrat Umar ؓ was doing his rounds in Syria at the time when Abu Ubaydah ؓ was the governor. After a few days, Hadhrat Umar ؓ mentioned to Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ, “I want to visit your home.” Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ replied, “And what would you want at my home. Besides rubbing your eyes there is

nothing else there for you to see.” When Hadhrat Umar ؓ insisted, he took him into his house. When they entered, Hadhrat Umar ؓ was amazed to see that there was absolutely nothing there. The place was completely bare.

“Where are all your goods? There is nothing over here besides a mat, a cup and a leather bag. You are the leader of Shaam. Do you have anything to eat at home?” asked Umar ؓ.

“I told you that besides rubbing your eyes, you will find nothing else” replied Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ, “In reality, these items are sufficient to take a person comfortably to his real destination, (the grave).”

Hadhrt Umar ؓ turned to him saying, “Abu Ubaydah, the dunya has affected us all but it has failed to affect you in any way.”

Allahu Akbar! This is that Abu Ubaydah for whom the kingdom of Qaysar shivered, the large forts were conquered at his hands and the wealth of this world poured at his feet, yet he spent his life eating dry bread.

His Taqwa (Fear of Allah Ta’ala)

As we have read earlier, he was given the glad tidings of Jannah by none other than Rasulallah ﷺ himself, yet the level of his fear of Allah Ta’ala was such that he would constantly say, **“How I wish I was a sheep. My family would have slaughtered me and eaten my meat and relished on my gravy.”**

Hadhrt Umar ؓ held him in such high regards that he once mentioned towards the end of his khilaafat that if Abu Ubaydah (RA) was alive today, I would have definitely appointed him as my successor. I would have not even needed to make mashwarah with anyone to appoint him to this post. And if Allah Ta’ala had to question me on the day of Qiyaamah as to why I had appointed him, I would have mentioned that I heard Rasulallah ﷺ saying, Every ummat had a trustworthy person and the trustworthy one of this ummat is Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah ؓ.

An amazing incident of selflessness

When Syria was struck with the plague that had claimed the lives of many Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum), Hadhrat Umar ؓ wrote the following letter immediately to Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ.

“Assalamu alykum, I have a severe need for which I need to speak to you face to face. For this reason I emphasise that the moment you get this letter in your hand, without even placing it down leave immediately to come and see me.”

Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ was a man who lived his life in the obedience of his elders. But the moment he read this letter he smiled and understood exactly what was Hadhrat Umar’s pressing need to see him. Umar ؓ only wanted him to leave the plague stricken area and come safely home to Madinah Tayyibah. Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ turned to his companions and said, “I know what the need of our Ameer is. He wishes for someone to survive who is not going to survive.”

Immediately he wrote the following reply to Hadhrat Umar ؓ.

“I know exactly the reason for which you are calling me back. At this particular time, I am sitting among such people in the Muslim army whom I am comfortable with. Hence I do not want to desert them and return until such a time Allah Ta’ala decides our fate. I implore you to please excuse me from your command and allow me to stay with the army.”

When Hadhrat Umar ؓ read the letter, tears welled up in his eyes. The people around him noticed this and asked, “Ameerul Mu’mineen, has the news of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah’s demise reached you?” Hadhrat Umar ؓ replied, “No it hasn’t happened as yet but it seems that it will happen soon.”

Thereafter Hadhrat Umar ؓ wrote another letter,

“Assalamu alykum, The place where you have kept the people is a very low land. Take them to some higher grounds where the air is clear.”

Hadhrat Abu Musa Ashari ؓ says that when this letter reached Abu Ubaydah ؓ, he called me and read out the letter from Ameerul

Mumineen. He then asked me to go and look for a suitable place for the Muslim army. Abu Musa ؓ says before going out to look, I first went home only to find my wife affected with the plague. I came back quickly and mentioned this to Abu Ubaydah ؓ who himself mounted his camel to search for some suitable place. He had only seated himself on the saddle and placed his foot in the stirrups when he also was afflicted by the plague. It was shortly thereafter that his condition worsened and he also passed away. This incident occurred in the year 17 hijri when he was 58 years old. Hadhrat Muaaz bin Jabal ؓ performed his Janaaza Salaah.

The grave of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ is in a small room adjacent to the Masjid. As you come out of the Masjid, you will notice a large graveyard on the right hand side. The local people mentioned that in this graveyard, many Sahaabah and Shuhadaa, who were martyred in this plague, are buried.

Hadhrat Diraar ibnul Azwar ؓ

Around the corner from where Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah ؓ is buried, is the grave of Hadhrat Diraar ibnul Azwar ؓ. He is also among those brave and courageous Sahaabah who fought fearlessly for the sake of Islam. Allamah Waaqidi has extensively discussed the achievements of Diraar ؓ in his famous book, The Conquests of Syria.

He was the very special companion of Hadhrat Khaalid bin Waleed ؓ. It was famous about him that during the battle, he would not only remove his armour but would even take out his shirt and fight barechested.

Historians differ as to which battle Hadhrat Diraar ؓ was martyred in. Some say it was Yamamah. Others say it was in the battle of Ajnadain. Hadhrat Moulana Yusuf Saahib (rahmatullahi alyah) mentions in his famous book, Hayaatus Sahaabah that he was martyred in the battle of Yarmook. Allah Ta'ala knows best.

Towards Palestine

From here we moved on towards Palestine. The graves of all these Sahaabah are on the borders of Jordan and Palestine. Mufti Taqi Usmaani Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) mentions,

“These Sahaabah (RA) who are buried here on the borders of Jordan and Palestine had given their lives, blood and sweat for the sake of Allah Ta’ala. They left their homes, families, friends and beloved ones to spread the kalimah in every part of the world. They withstood the difficulties of war, faced the strongest of enemies and obliterated the super powers of the world. After accomplishing their missions, they made their graves in these lands, far away from their homes as a lesson for the ummat till the day of Qiyaamah. Unfortunately today, a few kilometres from where they are buried, amidst a number of Muslim countries lies the independent state of Israel. They have taken over the Muslim lands and have hoisted their flags high into the sky.

We, who are supposed to be the followers of these noble Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) have failed miserably in our duty towards Allah Ta’ala and this blessed land. Despite the shouts and screams of the entire world, we are so helpless that we cannot even voice our opinions or express our feelings in their lands. They do what they wish and act as they please. In such a plight, how will we face up to the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum)? What answer do we have for them? If only an effort is made to rectify our actions and bring deen in our lives. This will prove much more beneficial than making loud noises and singing empty slogans.”

Other Ziyaaraat in Jordan

There are many other places of interest to visit in Jordan. However due to time constraints we were unable to visit every place.

Hereunder are some details of the other places which we did not manage to visit.

Hadhrat Yusha' bin Noon ؑ

In Ammaan, at the summit of a mountain, stands a Masjid with the grave of Hadhrat Yusha' bin Noon ؑ. His mention is made in the Qur-aan as the special attendant of Hadhrat Moosa ؑ. He accompanied Hadhrat Moosa ؑ when he went to meet Hadhrat Khizar ؑ. After the demise of Hadhrat Moosa ؑ and Hadhrat Haroon ؑ he was blessed with prophet hood and became the vicegerent of Hadhrat Moosa ؑ.

He was also responsible for leading the Bani Israeel once again into the holy lands.

Hadhrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf ؑ

In the city of Ammaan is the grave of the great Sahaabi, Abdur Rahman bin Auf ؑ. He was among the Asharah Mubassharah and was the eighth person to accept Islam. He was an extremely wealthy Sahaabi who used all his wealth for the propagation of Deen. He passed away in the year 32 AH at the age of 72. Some are of the opinion that he passed away in Madinah and is buried in Jannatul Baqi. Allah Ta'ala knows best.

Baitul Muqaddas

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي
بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

Glory be to Allah (Ta'ala), Who took His servant for a journey by night from the sacred Masjid to the farthest Masjid, whose surroundings did We bless in order that We show him some of our signs. Verily He is all Hearing and all Seeing.

A visit to Masjidul Aqsa

We then moved on towards the Jordanian/Palestinian border. It was peak summer and the heat was intense. The excitement began building up within us as we drew closer to the holy lands.

At the border

Sheikh Hasan, a Palestinian national now living in Jordan, congratulated us saying, “Indeed you people are fortunate. Despite being born a Palestinian I am not allowed to cross the border and enter my own country. Thank Allah Ta’ala for allowing you a chance

to visit the holy lands and value every moment you have in this mubaarak place.”

This, unfortunately, is the harsh reality the world has to face upto. When the *aamaal* (actions) of man do not conform to the laws of Allah Ta’ala, the help of Allah Ta’ala is uplifted and the kuffaar then penetrate within our ranks and rule over us with harshness and oppression. When mankind opts out of the worship of his Creator, he then becomes enslaved to the creation. The enemy rules him from within.

May Allah Ta’ala forgive us, the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ. Each and every ummati should hold himself responsible for this. How far have we strayed away from the teachings of our beloved Nabi ﷺ and how much have we aped the ways of his enemies. “O Allah! Forgive us and restore the glory we enjoyed in the time of Umar ibnul Khattaab ؓ and Salaahuddeen Ayyoobi (Rahimahullah).”

Witnessing firsthand the control of the Jews caused a heaviness within our hearts. Is there no one who can stand up today and free the first qiblah of the Muslims from the hands of the enemy? Empty slogans, anger and marches are not going to solve our problem. Are we going to continue in this manner and allow them to swallow each and every Muslim country in the fashion they are doing? As an ummah, we will have to stand up and repent for our sins, turn to Allah Ta’ala and hope that the conditions around us will change.

The answer to all of this is in a poem written by Allamah Iqbal

فضائے بدر پیدا کر فرشتے تیری نصرت کو
 اتر سکتے ہیں گردوں سے قطار اندر اب بھی

Once again create the atmosphere of Badar,

The Angels will come down to assist you in large numbers

Interrogation

After loading our luggage unto the carousel, our passports were taken away from us. The authorities only allowed Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) and another brother to go through whilst the rest of the jamaat was held back. Hafiz Asghar acted on behalf of us and calmly answered whatever questions were asked. They asked us to wait in the seating area whilst they checked through our passports. We waited for approximately 5 hours before we were allowed entry into Palestine. *Al-hamdulillah*, with the grace and mercy of Allah Ta'ala, besides waiting, we experienced absolutely no difficulty.

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) encouraged us saying, "Many people all over the world including the people of Makkah and Madinah make dua and cry to Allah Ta'ala to allow them entry into these mubaarak lands but they are barred from entering. When so many restrictions have been placed on the people of the world, why then should we complain about waiting for a few hours in order to gain entry?"

Someone also mentioned that Sheikh Sudais, the Imaam of the Haram Shareef, makes special dua on the 27th night of Ramadhaan, "*O Allah! Grant us a chance to read at least one salaah in Masjidul Aqsa before we die.*"

With this frame of mind, the wait was extremely easy and we found no difficulty at all. Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) continued reciting Qur-aan Shareef throughout the wait whilst the other brothers engaged in their individual ibaadat.

We also performed our Asar Salaah with jamaat after calling out the azaan. With the grace of Allah Ta'ala, we were not harassed at all. All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala for this.

A point of caution

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib cautioned us to be very careful of our eyes. The Jewish army consists of more women than men in their workforce. One has to be extremely cautious in this regard and guard

ones nafs from sin. Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) would be extremely careful, lowering his head all the time and was continuously engaged in the *tilawat* of the Qur-aan.

In Palestine

About an hour before sunset, our passports were handed over to us and we eagerly took our luggage, boarded the bus and started our journey towards Masjidul Aqsa.

The Dead Sea

On the way to Al-Quds, we passed by the dead sea which could be seen at a distance. It is about 80km long, 18km wide and about 1300 feet deep. It is not linked to any ocean. No life exists in it because of its high salt content which is about 25% more than the ocean. It is situated about 1300 feet below sea level and is known to be the lowest portion of the earth. Scientists believe that due to the high salt content in this ocean, no fish can survive nor can anything grow in it. However, it is possible that the effects of the punishment that descended upon the people of Hadhrat Lut عليه السلام, still remain in these waters.

Many are of the opinion that this is the place where the punishment of Allah Ta'ala descended on the people of Lut عليه السلام. They were a nation that was steeped in immorality and indecency. No traveller was safe from their harm. If a visitor came into their midst, his wealth as well as his honour was in jeopardy. Hadhrat Lut عليه السلام tried his best to warn them of their evil actions and to take heed but they turned a deaf ear to whatever he said. Eventually Allah Ta'ala destroyed them all and flung them upside down into the ground. This was the end of the nation of Lut عليه السلام. Allah Ta'ala says in the Qur-aan;

وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

*And we left in it a sign for those who fear a painful punishment
[Surah 51, Verse:37]*

Unfortunately instead of this place being a place of *ibrat* (taking a lesson from), it has now become a luxury resort with holiday apartments and restaurants around it. Many Ulama are of the opinion that these places should be avoided. Any place where the divine punishment of Allah Ta'ala descends should be avoided.

Once on the way to Tabuk, when Rasulallah ﷺ came across Hijr, he prohibited the Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) from drinking or drawing water from it's well. The Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) said: "We have already pulled out water and made our dough (using this water)." Rasulallah ﷺ commanded them to dispose of the dough and throw away the water. (Saheeh Bukhaari #3378)

This was the place where the divine punishment of Allah Ta'ala descended on the people of Samood.

In another Hadith, Hadhrat Abu Zar ؓ reports that they were with Rasulallah ﷺ during the battle of Tabuk. When they reached a certain valley, Rasulallah ﷺ said to them: "You are in an accursed valley, so move on quickly." (Musnadul Bazaar – Majma'uz Zawaaid vol. 6, pg. 287).

Jerusalem

Within an hour we were already in Jerusalem and the high walls of the old city became visible to us. The bus dropped us off at the Damascus Gate and we hurriedly moved over to a small Masjid at the entrance of the old city to perform our Maghrib Salaah. After Salaah, we took our luggage and quickly checked in at the Golden Gate hotel which is approximately 10 minutes walk from the Haram Shareef. After settling down, we heard the azaan for the Esha Salaah being called out.

By now the reality had struck us. We were really there in the blessed land, the land of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) and were about to visit the third Haram of the Muslims. Up to this point in time, we had imaginary pictures of the Masjid in our hearts and this

was now going to be translated into vivid reality. The eyes would now witness firsthand what the heart had conjured for years. We quickly gathered the *saathies* (companions) and began moving towards the Haram Shareef reciting the masnoon dua when walking to the Masjid for fardh salaah¹.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ السَّائِلِينَ عَلَيْكَ وَبِحَقِّ مُمْشَايَ هَذَا فَانِي لَمْ أَخْرُجْ
أَشْرًا وَلَا بَطْرًا وَلَا رِيَاءً وَلَا سُمْعَةً خَرَجْتُ إِتْقَاءَ سَخِطِكَ وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِكَ
أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُنْقِذَنِي مِنَ النَّارِ وَأَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي ذُنُوبِي إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

The old city, with its gulleys and alleys seemed really confusing. At first we felt as if we were lost. The maze seemed unending but *al-hamdulillah* upon enquiry, we were guided to the complex of Masjidul Aqsa.

In Jerusalem, it is a requirement for every person to carry their passports along with them. Israeli guards stand outside every entrance and along the pathways and at times ask people to present their passports. *Al-hamdulillah*, we were never asked to present our passports at any time.

Entrance into the Haram Shareef

Eventually, we reached the entrance of the Haram Shareef and were dazzled by the beautiful Qubbatus Sakhraa, (Dome of the Rock) right before us. What we had seen only in pictures and book covers was in reality now before us. With our hearts bubbling with excitement, we

¹ It is mentioned in a Hadith that whomsoever recites this dua when walking towards the Masjid, Allah Ta'ala appoints 70 000 Malaikah to ask forgiveness on his behalf and Allah Ta'ala places His special tawajjuh (focus) on him until he completes his salaah. [Ahmad #11172]

moved over quickly towards the Masjid as it was already the time for Salaatul Esha.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

This is indeed the grace of Almighty Allah which He bestows upon whomsoever He wishes

How can we ever thank Allah Ta'ala for His favours and bounties upon us? Such weak sinful slaves, unworthy in every respect were being afforded the opportunity of visiting the 3rd Haram in the sacred land, the land of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam), the land of the Sahaabah (RA) in the noble companionship of our respected ustaadh and sheikh, Hadhrat Mufti Ibraaheem Salehjee Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu). May Allah Ta'ala through His infinite grace and mercy continue blessing us with such favours and bounties.

We now reached the entrance of Masjidul Aqsa, placed our shoes in the racks and for the first time in our lives placed our right foot into this beautiful Masjid reciting the masnoon dua;

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allah! Open for us the doors of Your Mercy

It really felt as if the doors of Allah's mercy had opened upon us.

By now the salaah had already commenced and we joined the jamaat for Esha Salaah. Our first salaah in Masjidul Aqsa was an unforgettable experience that will remain embedded in our memories for the rest of time, *insha Allah*. May Allah Ta'ala accept our coming to this mubaarak land and forgive all our sins.

Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام had made a special dua: “O Allah, those who come to this Masjid only to perform salaah therein, should return with all their sins forgiven like the day their mothers had given birth to them.”

A sad observation

After performing the Esha Salaah, we were surprised to notice that there were only two to three saffs in the Masjid for Salaah. This seemed quite strange to witness in the third Haram of the Muslims.

Sitting in this large Masjid with so few musallies now reminded us of something that transpired a few weeks prior to our departure. We had met two jamaats in Durban, one from Palestine and the other from Sudan. Ironically both these jamaats had mentioned the very same concern to us.

They mentioned that initially when jamaats began walking through Palestine, Jewish intelligence began investigations as to who these people were and what their objectives were. Many meetings were held among the intelligence with the focus of their discussions being the issue of jamaats working freely in Israel. Eventually, a senior Rabbi requested that a survey be conducted of Masjidul Aqsa and the number of people attending the Fajar Salaah be noted down.

Sadly it was noted that hardly a single saff was filled for the Fajar Salaah. When this report was brought back to the authorities, they mentioned that there was nothing to fear for as long as the number of musallies for Fajar Salaah does not reach the number in Jumuah Salaah, the Muslims will pose no threat to them at all.

After narrating this incident, the Sudanese Aalim added that we understand from this that the help of Allah Ta'ala comes with *aamaal* (good actions) and as long as the *aamaal* of the ummat are not in accordance to the sunnah, we cannot expect to see any change taking place.

Al-hamdulillah lagely through the effort of da'wat and tableegh, the number of musallies in Masjidul Aqsa has grown substantially. Hadhrat Moulana Ahmad Laat Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) had mentioned to us when we visited him on this trip that he had visited Masjidul Aqsa in the sixties. At that time you would find only about 15 people attending the Fajar Salaah. *Al-hamdulillah* there are now approximately three saffs for Fajar Salaah. May Allah Ta'ala give us all the *taufeeq* of establishing this great pillar of Islam.

The frame of mind when visiting Al-Aqsa

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) advised us that our frame of mind, when entering Masjidul Aqsa should be that of **Taubah (forgiveness)**. We should enter with a heavy heart hoping to gain the forgiveness of Allah Ta'ala. The fact of the matter is that when the ummat will collectively make taubah and turn to righteousness, Allah Ta'ala will once again restore the holy lands to the control of the Muslims.

The Arabs

On several occasions, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) spoke regarding the virtues of the Arabs. He repeatedly mentioned, "These are the chosen people. Do not speak against them. The Qur-aan was revealed to them. The final Nabi of Allah ﷺ had come from them. The religion of Islam had commenced with them and at the end of time it will be the Arabs that will lead the ummah forward."

He advised us to make dua for them on every leg of the journey. Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) would keep on reiterating, "Don't look down at the Arabs. They may look like they have moved far away from Deen but when they awake from their slumber and the realisation comes to them, none of us will be able to reach them. They have great potential. All they need is a small push start and they will then move with such rapid speed that none will be able to compete with them."

Dua of Haji Bhai Padia (rahmatullahi alayh)

Hadhrat Haji Bhai Padia (rahmatullahi alayh) used to often make the following duas:

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجِ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ

O Allah! Remove the Jews and the Christians from the Arab lands

He would also make this dua:

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجِ الْيَهُودِيَّةَ وَالتَّصْرَانِيَّةَ مِنْ قُلُوبِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

O Allah! Remove the ways of the Jews and the Christians from the hearts of the Muslims.

Antagonising the Jews

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) advised us not to antagonise the police or the Jews. He advised us saying that we should always respect the authority of the police and be polite and obliging to them. We being strangers in a foreign country should not invite any trouble. As much as we may be upset about the happenings in Palestine, we should be careful of our behaviour as we may become the means of others being stopped from visiting these lands.

However, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) advised us that the Hadith teaches us not to give way for the Jews when walking on the streets and in the alleys. Let them walk around you instead of you walking around them.

Masjid-e-Khalil (Hebron)

On the second day in Palestine we were favoured by Allah Ta'ala to visit the grave of Sayyiduna Ibraaheem عليه السلام, the greatest Nabi of Allah after Rasulullah ﷺ.

We proceeded to Masjidul Khalil in Hebron and parked our vehicle outside the Masjid complex. We were surprised to find armed guards all around the Masjid searching us at the entrances before allowing us through. It felt like the airport with so many guards

standing all around. It was the time of Zuhr and we first performed our Zuhr Salaah here.

Unfortunately this Masjid is now divided into two and the rear half of the Masjid is in total control of the Jews. There are four Ambiyaa (Alayhimus Salaam) buried in this Masjid; Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام, Hadhrat Ishaq عليه السلام, Hadhrat Ya'qoob عليه السلام and Hadhrat Yusuf عليه السلام. Four generations of Ambiyaa! (Some are of the opinion that Yusuf عليه السلام is not buried here.)

The graves of Hadhrat Ya'qoob عليه السلام and Hadhrat Yusuf عليه السلام are now in the Jewish section of the Masjid. The graves of Hadhrat Ishaq عليه السلام and his wife, Rifqah are in the Muslim section whilst the graves of Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام and his wife Hadhrat Sarah (radiyallahu anha) are half in the Muslim section and half in the Jewish section.

At the grave of Khalilullah (The friend of Allah)

Whilst walking towards the Masjid, one of our companions mentioned very beautifully, “We are going to the grave of Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام, the friend of Allah with Mufti Ibraheem, who is also the friend of Allah.”

To stand at the grave of this great Nabi of Allah was indeed a great favour from our Rabb. The peace and tranquillity at his graveside was perceived by one and all.

Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام is that Nabi of Allah who is very close to the ummat of Hadhrat Muhammad ﷺ. After all, we were given the name ‘Muslims’ by none other than Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام. Our Haj and Qurbaani is also in accordance to the sunnah of Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام.

The theme in the life of this great Nabi of Allah was submission. Standing at his grave side once again brought back to memory the marvellous incidents that took place in his life. The difficulties and hardships he underwent for the sake of Allah Ta’ala. In the first juz of the Qur-aan, Allah Ta’ala says regarding him:

وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
 أَسْلِمْ ۗ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ ۗ يٰبَنِيَّ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ ۚ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

We have chosen him (Ibraaheem ؑ) in this world and verily he is also amongst the righteous ones in the hereafter. When his Rabb had asked him to submit, he replied, I submit to the Rabb of the worlds.

He advised his children with this and Hadhrat Ya'qoob (Alayhis Salaam) also advised his children, "O my children, Allah Ta'ala has chosen the pure Deen for you, please ensure that you die upon this Deen."

The lesson of submission

As a young boy he grew up in the house of an idol maker and his father refused to listen to his message. He was then forced to leave home. Namrood, the tyrant of the time also threatened him and threw him into a blazing fire which was cooled by Allah Ta'ala. When he was blessed with a son in his old age, Allah Ta'ala commanded him to leave his wife and son in the desert land of Makkah Mukarramah. The climax of his tests was when Allah Ta'ala commanded him to slaughter his son. This was the "ultimate sacrifice". Hadhrat Ibraaheem (alayhis salaam) passed all the tests. Allah Ta'ala praises him in the Qur-aan and announces that He is pleased with him.

All those visiting the grave of this great Nabi of Allah should also be inspired to develop this quality of submission within themselves. May Allah Ta'ala bless us with the *taufeeq* of submitting to His command and will. *Aameen*.

Durood-e-Ibraaheem

Whilst standing at his grave, we felt inspired to recite the Durood-e-Ibraaheem which is the most virtuous of duroods. Every Muslim

recites this durood several times in a day in the last sitting of every salaah.

Ikhlāas

Special mention is made in the Qur-aan on two occasions about the sincerity and *lillahiyat* of Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام which is an important lesson for every one of us to learn.

Two of his duas are recorded in the Qur-aan Majeed. They are as follows:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Verily I have turned my face firmly and truly towards Him Who has created the sky and the earth and never shall I ascribe partners with Him.

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ
بِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Verily my salaah, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are all for Allah Ta'ala, The Cherisher of the worlds. There is no partner for Him. With that I have been commanded and I am the first of the Muslims.

At the grave of Ishaaq عليه السلام

Thereafter we visited the grave of Hadhrat Ishaaq عليه السلام which is also in the same Masjid. His wife, Rifqah is also buried next to him. Hadhrat Ya'qoob عليه السلام is also buried in the same Masjid but unfortunately this section of the Masjid has been taken over by the Jews. We were not able to go into that section. The place is blocked off with armed guards and no one is allowed to enter. We stood a little distance away from there and made salaam to this great Nabi as well.

May Allah Ta'ala accept our *ziyaarat* and allow the rays of nubuwat to shine upon us as well.

Mount Olives

From Masjid-e-Khalil we proceeded to have lunch and then went to visit the grave of Hadhrat Salmaan Faarsi ؑ which is situated on Mount Olives.

Mount Olives according to some narrations is the mountain upon which Allah Ta'ala has taken an oath upon in the Qur-aan in Surah Teen. From the top of Mount Olives, one is able to enjoy a panoramic view of the entire Al-Aqsa complex.

Hadhrt Salmaan Faarsi ؑ

On Mount Olives, according to some narrations, is the grave of Hadhrt Salmaan Faarsi ؑ.

Hadhrt Salmaan Faarsi ؑ was born in a home of fire worshippers. As he aged, the fire of finding the truth that burnt in his heart drove him away from worshipping the fire and as a result of this yearning, he ran away from home and lived with several priests hoping to find the truth. One priest who was extremely good natured and honest, indicated to him to go to Madinah Tayyibah and meet the final prophet of Allah as mentioned in the Christian scriptures.

He thus made his way to Arabia only to be captured by an aggressive master and taken away as a slave. His Jewish master took him to Madinah Munawwarah where he lived and this was where Hadhrt Salamaan Faarsi ؑ met Rasulullah ﷺ.

He was regarded as part of the household of Rasulullah ﷺ. The Muhaajireen would say that "Salmaan ؑ is not a resident of Madinah. He made hijrat and came to Madinah hence he is amongst the Muhaajireen" whilst the Ansaar would argue that "He is amongst

us because he was already living in Madinah when Nabi ﷺ and the other Sahaabah made hijrat.”

Due to him being a slave, he was unable to participate in the Battle of Badar and Uhud. However, in the Battle of the Trench he was among the key players in preparing for this battle. Nabi ﷺ accepted his suggestion to dig the trench around Madinah Tayyibah.

He passed away at the age of 250 in the year 35 AH during the khilaafat of Hadhrat Usmaan ؓ. Some scholars are of the opinion that he passed away in Iraq and is buried there. Allah Ta'ala knows best.

Back to the Haram Shareef

After visiting the grave of Hadhrat Salmaan Faarsi ؓ, we returned to the Haram Shareef. It was about 45 degrees and the heat was intense. We performed our Asar Salaah with jamaat in Masjidul Aqsa and thereafter some of the South Africans that were there requested Hadhrat Mufti Saahib to conduct a small majlis. Hadhrat Mufti Saahib spoke for a few minutes highlighting the following aspects;

1. Keeping the company of the pious
2. Understanding the *zawq* (spirit) of our elders
3. Watching our behaviour in these mubaarak lands

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) mentioned that this land is blessed because of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) that are buried here. The presence of these Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) make this land blessed. Hence being in the company of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam), we should be very careful of our behaviour. It must not reach them that we have come to these lands and failed to respect and honour it.

Ramadhaan

That night, the *hilaal* (crescent) for Ramadhaan was sighted and the announcement for Taraaweeh Salaah was made. After Maghrib

Salaah, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) as well as the other brothers engaged in their individual ibaadat until the time of Esha Salaah. *Al-hamdulillah* 20 rakaats Taraweeh Salaah is performed in Masjidul Aqsa and the entire Qur-aan Shareef is completed at the end of Ramadhaan.

There were four Qurraa who led the Taraaweeh Salaah in Masjidul Aqsa. One of them was the son of Sheikh Ally Abbassi (daamat barakaatuhu), the resident Imaam of the Masjid. *Al-hamdullillah*, his recitation was extremely captivating and he resembled Sheikh Maahir Al-Muayqali, the Imaam of Makkah Mukarramah, substantially in his tilaawat.

The Taraweeh Salaah finished off at about 11:30pm that night. At the time we were there, the fasts were quite long. Sehri was at about 3:30am and Iftaar was at about 8:10pm. (Approximately 17 hours of fasting).

Jumuah

The next day was Jumuah. *Al-hamdulillah*, we managed to get into the Masjid early that morning and secured a place in the third saff. The entire Masjidul Aqsa complex is full for Jumuah and thousands of people gather to perform the Salaatul Jumuah. It was an incredible experience to be present for Jumuah for which we are extremely thankful to Allah Ta'ala. No matter how much shukar we make, it will never be enough for having blessed us with this great opportunity of performing the Jumuah Salaah in Masjidul Aqsa in the month of Ramadhaan.

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَلَكَ الشُّكْرُ

All praise and thanks is to Allah Ta'ala alone

We rested for a while after the Jumuah Salaah and came back to perform the Asar Salaah at about 4:15pm. Thereafter, Hadhrat Mufti

Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) remained in the Masjid until the end of the Taraaweeh Salaah.

Performing the Taraaweeh Salaah in Masjidul Aqsa was another astounding experience. Tilaawat of the first two paras were made in these two nights and all the aayaat regarding the Bani Israaeel and the Ambiyaa that are buried here in these lands were recited.

The incident of the changing of the qiblah from Masjidul Aqsa to Masjidul Haraam was also recited in the Taraaweeh. Standing in the Masjid and listening to these verses being recited felt as if these verses were being revealed at that very moment. Everything seemed so alive in front of us.

Qubbatus Sakhrah (Dome of the Rock)

That same afternoon, we visited the Dome of the Rock which is constructed on the Masjidul Aqsa compound. This is a very beautiful structure with a golden dome above it.

The construction of the Dome of the Rock began in the year 66 AH by the Umayyad Khaliph, Abdul Malik bin Marwaan and his son Waleed ibn Abdul Malik. The building was supervised by two master architects, Rajah bin Haywah, a Palestinian and Yazid bin Salaam, a resident of Al Quds. Surah Yaseen and parts of Surah Israa is inscribed on the outer part of the dome in beautiful calligraphy.

This elaborate construction is built above the Sakhrah (Rock). This rock is believed to have been the rock from which Rasulullah ﷺ ascended to the skies on the occasion of Me'raaj. The rock is chest high, 56 feet long, 42 feet wide and in the shape of a semi circle.

Below the rock is a cave that can accommodate about 70 people at a time. The cave is carpeted and many people offer nafal salaah therein.

In one Hadith, Rasulullah ﷺ has mentioned, "The Sakhrah is a stone from Jannah." [Ibnu Majah #3456]. Some commentators of

Hadith are of the opinion that this refers to the Sakhras of Baitul Maqdis.

The Dome of the Rock is not a Masjid but rather it is a building containing the *sakhras* (rock). Although people do perform salaah here but the virtue is in performing one's salaah in Masjidul Aqsa itself.

When Hadhrat Umar رضي الله عنه conquered Baitul Muqaddas, he asked Ka'b Ahbaar (rahimahullah) who was previously a Jewish Rabbi where to perform his salaah. Ka'b (rahimahullah) replied, "Perform it behind the Sakhras (rock). In this way the entire Quds will be in front of you." When Umar رضي الله عنه heard this he replied, "It seems that you still have some inclination towards Judaism in you. I will offer my salaah where Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم offered his salaah." He then went in the front section and performed his salaah. [Musnad e Ahmad]

The mubaarak hair of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم

In the Dome of the Rock is a cabinet containing the mubaarak hair of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم. If you stand nearby, you will immediately smell the beautiful fragrance emanating from this cabinet.

Hadhrat Anas رضي الله عنه used to say;

مَا مَسَسْتُ دِيْبَا جَا وَلَا حَرِيْرًا اَلَيْنَ مِنْ كَفِّ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

وَمَا شَمَمْتُ رَاِءَ حَاةٍ قَطُّ اَطْيَبَ مِنْ رَاِءَ حَاةٍ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

*I have never touched any silk softer than the palms of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم
and I have never smelt any fragrance better than the fragrance of
Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم*

Maqbaratur Rahmah (Graveyard of Rahmah)

On the western side of the Haram Shareef is the ancient graveyard of Rahmah wherein the Noble Sahaabah (radhiyallahu anhum) lie buried. Two famous Sahaabah of Rasulullah ﷺ, Hadhrat Shaddaad bin Aus ؓ and Hadhrat Ubaadah bin Saamit ؓ are buried here.

Hadhrt Shaddaad bin Aus ؓ

His name was Shaddaad and he was well known as Abu Abdur Rahmaan. His entire family had accepted Islam. He was an extremely tolerant person and would speak very little.

Once he complained to Rasulullah ﷺ about his straitened condition. Nabi ﷺ made dua for him and said, “Poverty will never become your lot. Shaam will be conquered and you will acquire booty in abundance. Your children will become the Imaams of Baitul Muqaddas.”

At the conquest of Shaam, the booty was collected and an army of 500 men were delegated to transfer the goods to Madinah Tayyibah so that Hadhrt Abu Bakr ؓ could see it with his own eyes. Hadhrt Shaddaad bin Aus ؓ was appointed the leader of this group.

Hadhrt Shaddaad ؓ says, “As I reached Madinah Munawwarah with the spoils of war, the people saw us from a distance and noticed the large caravan of people coming in. Hadhrt Abu Bakr ؓ enquired what the fuss was all about and he was informed that the Muslims were victorious and that Hadhrt Shaddaad ؓ had arrived with the booty.”

Hadhrt Shaddaad ؓ first entered the Masjid and performed two rakaats salaah and thereafter made his way to the Raudha Mubaarak (pure grave) of Rasulullah ﷺ to offer salaam.

Perhaps at that particular time Hadhrt Shaddaad ؓ thought of how he had once complained to Rasulullah ﷺ regarding his poverty

and today the prophecy of our beloved Nabi ﷺ materialised before his eyes.

After the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ, he moved to Palestine. He passed away in Palestine in the year 58 AH at the age of 55.

Hadhrat Abu Darda ؓ used to say that many people attain knowledge but do not have tolerance, Abu Ya'la (i.e. Hadhrat Shaddaad ؓ) possessed both *ilm* (knowledge) and *hilm* (tolerance).

Hadhrat Ubaadah bin Saamit ؓ

He was amongst the Ansaar and one of the twelve elite Sahaabah (radiyallahu anhum) who accepted Islam at Aqabah. He participated in the Battle of Badar and thereafter fought in every battle with Rasulullah ﷺ. He was amongst the 5 Ansaari Sahaabah who had gained mastery over the Qur-aan Shareef in the time of Rasulullah ﷺ.

He was tall, well built and very handsome. He was extremely bold and openly engaged in *nahiy anil Munkar* (forbade the evil). Hadhrat Umar ؓ sent him to Palestine as a judge. He passed away in Palestine in the year 34 AH at the age of 72.

Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar

Amazingly enough, in the Aqsa compound on the eastern side of the Masjid is the grave of Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar of India, an aalim who fought for the Muslims of his country and worked to get the British out of India.

Maulana Muhammad Ali Johar was born in Rampur in the year 1878, in a wealthy family of Pathans. His father passed away when he was only two years old. He and his family suffered financial problems after the death of his father. Due to the efforts, determination and sacrifices of his mother, he and his brothers were able to receive good education. He studied at Darul Uloom Deoband as well as the Aligarh University.

Moulana Muhammad Ali was a brilliant and impressive writer, a fiery orator and a farsighted political leader. During the khilaafat Movement, Moulana led a delegation to England in 1919 to present the views of the Muslims. Although the delegation was not successful in its aim, he still kept on working for the benefit of the Muslims.

In 1921, when the British refused to honour their promise in regard to Turkey, he toured the whole of India to gather the support of the masses. At the end of the movement, he was arrested and jailed for two years.

Despite his ill health, he attended the First Round Table Conference in 1930, where he effectively argued the case of the Indian Muslims. He delivered a memorable and fiery speech against the domination of India and in favour of immediate independence. Soon after the first session was over, he collapsed and passed away in London on January 4, 1931. His body was then flown to Jerusalem where he was buried according to his wish.

The last day at Masjidul Aqsa

The next morning after the Fajar Salaah we intended to wear our ihraam for umrah and attain the great virtue mentioned in the Hadith for putting on ihraam in Baitul Muqaddas and then proceeding for Umrah. After performing our Ishraaq Salaah in the Haram Shareef, Sheikh Ally Abbaasi,¹ the resident Imaam at Masjidul Aqsa noticed Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) in the crowd and came forward to meet him. They spoke for some time and then Sheikh Ally took us around the Haram Shareef explaining to us the virtues and the history of each place in the Haram.

¹ Sheikh Ally Abbaasi had just visited Madrasah Taleemuddeen in Isipingo Beach a week prior to this and had delivered a very fiery and inspiring lecture at the Madrasah Jalsah.

Putting on Ihraam

Sheikh Ally suggested that Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) come back to the Haram Shareef to make niyyat of Ihraam as he would like to make arrangements to open up the bottom section of the Masjid which in fact is the actual Masjid built by Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام. This section stays locked most of the time but through the grace of Allah Ta'ala, Sheikh Ally phoned a few people and had the bottom section of the Masjid opened for us. He also mentioned that this is the actual place where all the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) had gathered on the occasion of Mi'raaj.

We quickly went to the hotel, wore our ihraam cloths and came back to the Haram Shareef. Sheikh Ally was waiting for us at the Dome of the Rock. By now the sun had risen considerably and the entire Masjidul Aqsa compound was radiant with the rays of the sun. How beautiful this picture was before us. The entire Haram Shareef was empty and for a long time we stood in silence admiring this fabulous sight before us.

A lengthy discussion with Sheikh Ally Abbaasi

Whilst waiting for the authorities to open up the basement of the Haram Shareef, Sheikh Ally complained to Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) about the pathetic condition of Palestine. He complained that in a recent protest against Israel, none of the Muslim countries supported them. Although they are surrounded by Muslims, the conditions only worsen day by day with no support at all from our Muslim brothers.

After mentioning all of this, he awaited some response from Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) who paused for some time and then responded to Sheikh Ally's complaint. Below is the crux of Hadhrat Mufti Saahib's reply which is in actual fact the solution to the problems of the Muslims around the globe.

Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) mentioned:

“I once read in the *tafseer* (commentary) of Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi (rahmatullahi alayh) that Allah Ta’ala has kept different systems for Masjidul Haraam in Makkah and Masjidul Aqsa in Palestine. The system that Allah Ta’ala has kept for Masjidul Haraam is that it will always be under divine protection no matter what the condition of the Muslims maybe. Allah Ta’ala will never allow the kuffaar to take control of the Ka’bah Shareef. That is why, when Abraha and his army of elephants went to attack the Ka’bah, Allah Ta’ala protected His house using small birds which destroyed Abraha and his powerful army.

However, the system of Masjidul Aqsa is very much different. The condition of Masjidul Aqsa is based on the condition of the Muslim Ummah. If Muslims live in the obedience of Allah Ta’ala then Allah Ta’ala will bless them with the control of the Masjid. But Allah forbid, if the Muslims move away from the obedience of Allah Ta’ala, He will take away the control of the blessed lands and hand it over to our enemies.

In the first few verses of Surah Bani Israaeel, Allah Ta’ala mentions:

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا
كَبِيرًا ﴿١﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَنَا أُولَىٰ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ
فَجَاسُوا خِلَلِ الدِّيَارِ ۗ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ﴿٢﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَمَدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ أَحْسَنْتَ مَا أَحْسَنْتُمْ
لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا ۗ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
وَيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرًا

And We warned the Bani Israaeel in the Book, that they would do mischief twice on the earth and would be very proud and arrogant about it. When the first warning came, We sent against you Our

servants who had strong aggressive power and they entered the very inmost parts of your homes and it was a warning [completely] fulfilled.

Then We granted you the Return against them: We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you more in man-power.

If you did well, you did well for yourselves and if you did evil, you did it against yourselves. So when the second warning came to pass, [We permitted your enemies] to disfigure your faces, and to enter your Temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power.

The Bani Israeel were the believers of that time and we are the believers of this time hence the same warning applies to us as well. After reciting this verse, Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) explained, that from this verse, we clearly understand that we as an ummah have to work towards our self reformation and increase our connection with Allah Ta'ala. Then we will once again see Islam restored to the glory it enjoyed during the era of Hadhrat Umar ؓ and Salaahuddeen Ayoobi (Rahimahullah).”

Sheikh Ali Abbaasi was elated when he heard this reply. He hugged Hadhrat Mufti Saahib and mentioned to him, “Why is it that the works of the Ulama-e-Deoband are not translated into Arabic so that the Arab World may also benefit from their knowledge?”

He then asked Hadhrat Mufti Saahib (daamat barakaatuhu) what he felt was the way forward, to which Hadhrat Mufti Saahib replied, “The effort of da'wat and tableegh, the efforts of the makaatib and madaaris and the effort of the khaanqahs will have to increase. With these three efforts working parallel to one another, there is great hope that we, as an ummah, will reform ourselves and increase our connection with Allah Ta'ala.”

Conclusion

Visiting “The Blessed Lands” was indeed a great favour of Allah Ta'ala upon us. It opened up many chapters of Islamic History which

we had never previously explored. At the same time it brought tears to ones eyes to witness this Masjid in the control of our enemy. Israeli soldiers walk about freely with their boots in the Aqsa compound with no one to even bat an eye lid. O Muslim awake! Understand your responsibility to your Creator. Turn back, turn back to Allah Ta'ala and your glory will be restored. Islam never progressed with numbers or technology. Islam progressed when man understood his Creator and the purpose for which he was created.

Every Muslim should feel responsible for the happenings in Palestine. This forgotten Haram stands out calling out for help from the ummah. If it had a voice, it would have probably cried out to us to change our ways so that it could be freed from the clutches of the enemy. How unfortunate, that from a population of two billion Muslims we have become so weak that we cannot free the third Haram of the Muslims from the hands of the enemy.

May Allah Ta'ala forgive us, guide us, protect us and show us that day when Masjidul Aqsa will once again be freed from the hands of the disbelievers and restored into the control of the Muslims.
Aameen.

Brief History of Masjidul Aqsa

Abu Zar رضي الله عنه narrates that once I asked Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم, “Which was the first Masjid that was built on the face of this earth?” Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, “Masjidul Haraam”. Thereafter I asked, “O Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم and then.....” Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, then was Masjidul Aqsa.” I then asked, “What was the period between these two masaajid?” He replied, “Forty years.” [Saheeh Bukhaari #3366]

Adam عليه السلام builds Masjidul Aqsa

Commentators differ as to which construction this refers to (i.e. in the abovementioned Hadith). Some say that this refers to the first foundation of the Ka’bah which was built by Hadhrat Aadam عليه السلام. Forty years later he built the Masjidul Aqsa in Jerusalem.

Other commentators say that this Hadith refers to the second construction of the Ka’bah which was built by Hadhrat Ibraaheem عليه السلام. 40 years after he built the Ka’bah Shareef, Hadhrat Ya’qoob عليه السلام built Masjidul Aqsa. [Mirqaat Vol. 2 Pg 461]

However, the initial building of the Masjid was a very small and basic structure. Later on, Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام rebuilt the Masjid. It is for this reason that Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام is famously known

as the one who built Masjidul Aqsa just as Hadhrat Ebraaheem ؑ is famously known as the one who built the Ka'bah.

Hadhrat Sulaymaan ؑ builds the Masjid

Hadhrat Dawood ؑ, the father of Hadhrat Sulaymaan ؑ commanded the rebuilding and the expansion of Masjidul Aqsa but Allah Ta'ala informed him that, "I will allow the completion to take place at the hands of your son." [Fathul Baari Vol. 6 Pg 504]

After the demise of Hadhrat Dawood ؑ, Hadhrat Sulaymaan ؑ had taken up the reigns of the kingdom. He was 13 years old at that time and ran the kingdom for a period of 40 years. He passed away at the age of 53. He commenced building Masjidul Aqsa in the fourth year of his rule. At the completion of the Masjid, Hadhrat Sulaymaan ؑ prepared a large feast and invited many people to participate in the meal. He slaughtered 12 000 cattle and 20 000 goats. Thereafter he stood on the *sakhrāh* (Rock) and made dua to Allah Ta'ala,

"O Allah! You have blessed me with the strength and means to build Baitul Muqaddas. O Allah! You also bless me with the ability to show appreciation to you for this great favour. Allow me to die upon Your Deen and do not misguide me after You have blessed me with guidance."

"O Allah! I beseech You to bless whoever enters this Masjid with 5 things.

- 1. Any sinner who enters this Masjid and repents, forgive his sins.**
- 2. Any person who enters this Masjid to save himself from some harm, then grant him peace and safety and protect him from any harm.**
- 3. O Allah! Grant cure to any sick person that will enter this Masjid.**
- 4. Any poor person that enters this Masjid, bless him with wealth.**

- 5. O Allah! That person who enters this Masjid, bless him with Your special mercy and grace except for that person who is an oppressor or who is engaged in some worldly occupation.”**

[The building of the Baitul Muqaddas was completed during the era of Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام. However some of the construction work remained unfinished for which Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام recommenced the construction work. [Maariful Qur-aan Vol. 7 Pg 276]

A strange incident of how Sulaymaan عليه السلام passed away

Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام used the jinnaat under his control for the purpose of renovating Masjidul Aqsa. Whilst overseeing the construction, he realized that the angel of death had come to claim his life. Thus he enclosed himself in a glass chamber as if he was engaged in salaah. It was normally his habit to remain secluded in ibaadat for many months on end. In this condition, the angel of death arrived, snatched away his soul and left him resting on his stick. The jinnaat who were very much scared of Sulaymaan عليه السلام continued working thinking him to be alive. No one even perceived that he had passed away. The jinnaat continued the building work until the Masjid was completed.

Termites were appointed by Allah Ta'ala to slowly eat up the stick on which he was leaning until eventually the stick fell away after the completion of the Masjid. Then only did the jinnaat realise that Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام had passed away.

It became clear from this incident that the jinnaat do not have complete knowledge of the unseen. Had they possessed complete knowledge of the unseen, they would have immediately realised that Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام had passed away.

Ibn Abbaas رضي الله عنه says that Sulaymaan عليه السلام inclined on this stick for a period of one year. In one narration it is mentioned that when the jinnaat came to know that Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام had passed away without their knowledge, they took a stick and placed it near a

termite to work out how much it would eat in one day. When they measured it accordingly with the stick of Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام, they realized that he had passed away and stood leaning on the stick for a period of one complete year.

Hadhrat Umar رضي الله عنه conquers Baitul Muqaddas

After the passing away of Rasulullah ﷺ, the affairs of the Muslims were administrated by the first khaliph, Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddeeq رضي الله عنه. After him Hadhrat Umar رضي الله عنه had taken the reigns of khilaafat and had dispatched many armies in different directions to invite the people of the world to worship Allah Ta'ala.

Amongst the groups that were dispatched was a group which had been sent to Shaam under the leadership of Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah رضي الله عنه. He had taken the Muslim army and camped outside the old city whilst the residents of Baitul Muqaddas had closed the doors upon the Muslims. They refused to engage in battle and demanded that the Muslims bring along their leader as his description was clearly mentioned in their books. They were prepared to hand over the keys of Baitul Muqaddas without a fight if the leader of the Muslims presented himself.

When Hadhrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه heard of this, he took his slave and left. The slave held the reigns of the camel and walked in front whilst Hadhrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه rode. After one manzil (distance of about 25 km), Hadhrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه dismounted, took the reins and made the slave ride whilst he walked. In this manner they walked towards Baitul Muqaddas. The Muslim armies were awaiting their arrival. They suggested that Ameerul Mu-mineen change his clothes and remove his patched kurta before entering Jerusalem.

Hadhrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه very angrily replied, "Had it been anyone else besides you people who had suggested this I would have punished them severely. We have gained honour through Islam. Will we get additional honour by wearing a new kurta?"

It was now the slave's turn to ride. They again suggested that Hadhrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه should ride and allow the slave to walk.

“How can this ever happen?” shouted ‘Umar ﷺ “Is it not now the slave’s turn to ride?” They then told him that they will make arrangements for another camel for the slave. Hadhrat ‘Umar ﷺ replied, “When I was riding, the slave was walking. Now he will ride and I will walk.”

He thus entered the city in this condition. The leader of the Muslims was walking and holding the reigns of the camel whilst his slave rode. His kurta had seventeen patches. When the residents of Baitul Muqaddas saw him, they immediately recognized him and handed the keys over to him.

It was written in their divine scriptures that the leader of the Muslims will be wearing a kurta with seventeen patches. His slave will be mounted on an animal and he will be holding the reigns. He will enter Baitul Muqaddas in this condition.

Thus Hadhrat Umar ﷺ became the first conqueror of Baitul Muqaddas in the history of Islam.

Salaahuddeen Ayyoobi

In the year 1095, Pope Urban II proclaimed that the Christians should take up a holy war against the Muslims to invade and reclaim the Holy Land of Jerusalem. More than 150 000 Crusaders took up arms and responded to the call of war.

By this time in history, the Muslim world was declining. The Abbasid dynasty had lost all its power and it was amidst this chaos that the Pope took up his call for war. The crusaders conquered Antioch which immediately became a Christian city. The Crusaders then made their way towards Jerusalem.

In June 1099, they laid siege on the city for a complete month. When the Christians finally entered Jerusalem they massacred thousands of innocent civilians. History is filled with the brutality of this event. Upto 10 000 Muslims were killed near Al Quds. Baldwin then became the king of Jerusalem in December 1099. After the first Crusade, many more crusades followed and the Christians established their kingdom in Jerusalem.

Salaahuddeen Ayyoobi (rahimahullah) rose to prominence during the third Crusade. Jerusalem was now in chaos. In 1187, approximately 88 years later, Salaahuddeen Ayoobi (rahimahullah) raised the call of jihaad and marched to Jerusalem. He fought the battle of Hittin where 20 000 Christians were killed. The Muslims recaptured Jerusalem after an 88 year Christian rule. An intense battle was fought outside Jerusalem and the Christians were defeated. Salaahuddeen Ayoobi (rahimahullah) entered Masjidul Aqsa, broke down all the crosses that were inside and for the first time in 90 years called out the azaan in the Masjid for salaah.

Thereafter, the peace treaty of Ramla was signed in 1192.

It is mentioned about Salaahuddeen Ayoobi (rahimahullah) that he was a man who was never seen smiling. When he was asked why he never smiled, he replied, “How can I smile when Masjidul Aqsa, the third Haram of the Muslims is in the control of the Christians.”

Those that were present say, the day the Christians were defeated, Salaahuddeen looked at his army with a broad smile on his face. He immediately went down into sajdah expressing gratitude to Allah Ta’ala for restoring the sacred Haram to the Muslims. He passed away in Damascus on the 27 Safar 589 AH (1194 CE) at the age of 55. He ruled for a period of 23 years. He is considered one of the greatest men of the twelfth century.

Some Virtues of Baitul Muqaddas

The blessed land

Allah Ta'ala has referred to this mubaarak place in the Qur-aan as;

الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ

the land whose surroundings we have blessed

As far as resources are concerned, there is an abundance of rivers, springs, fruit, vegetables, grain, etc. However, together with that, numerous Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) are buried in this land whose barkat flows through this land upto this day.

Once one of the scholars of the recent past had advised some brothers who were leaving for Baitul Muqaddas as follows, “This land on which you will walk is such that either some Nabi, Sahaabi or Wali (friend of Allah) shed his blood, made sajdah or shed his tears upon it.”

Travelling to Masjidul Aqsa

Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, “One should not take the trouble of travelling to any masjid with the expectation of receiving reward except to three masaajid. Masjidul Haraam, this Masjid of mine (Masjidun Nabawi), and Masjidul Aqsa.” [Saheeh Bukhaari #1189]

Reward equal to 50 000 salaah

Rasulullah ﷺ has said, “A single salaah in Masjidul Aqsa is equal to 50 000 salaah.” [Ibnu Majah #1413]

The second Masjid to be built on the face of the earth

Abu Zar رضي الله عنه narrates that once he asked Rasulullah ﷺ, “Which was the first Masjid that was built on the face of this earth?” Rasulullah ﷺ replied, “Masjidul Haraam” Thereafter I asked, “O Rasulullah ﷺ and then.....” Rasulullah ﷺ replied, “then was Masjidul Aqsa.” I then asked, “What was the period between the two masaajid?” He replied, “forty years.” [Saheeh Bukhaari #3366]

The dua of Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام

Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Amr رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, “When Hadhrat Sulaymaan عليه السلام built Baitul Muqaddas, he asked Allah Ta’ala for three things.

He asked for the ability of fair judgement that will be in conformity to the judgement of Allah Ta’ala and a kingdom that none after him would have. Thereafter he made dua to Allah Ta’ala when he completed the building of the Masjid, ‘Anyone who comes to this Masjid and nothing prompted him to come except the performance of salaah therein should be freed from sins like the day his mother had given birth to him.’ [Nasai #694]

Virtue of making Umrah or Haj from Baitul Muqaddas

It is mentioned in a Hadith that one who dons the ihram for umrah or haj from Masjidul Aqsa has all his past sins forgiven. [Ahmad #26558]

In another Hadith it is mentioned that the person who makes haj or umrah from Masjidul Aqsa to Masjidul Haraam will have all his sins forgiven or Jannah will become necessary for him. [Abu Dawood]

Donating towards Masjidul Aqsa

Maymunah Bint Sa'd (radiyallahu anha) relates that she asked Rasulullah ﷺ “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, inform us about Baytul Maqdis (Jerusalem).” Rasulullah ﷺ said, “It is the place of resurrection. Visit it to perform salaah in it since one salaah in it equals 1000 salaah in any other place.” She further asked, “If I cannot visit it, what should I do?” He said, “If you cannot go, then send some oil to be used for its lamps, which will be as if you have visited it.” [Ibnu Majah #1407]

The First Qiblah of the Muslims

Baraa ibn Aazib ؓ narrates, “We performed salaah along with Rasulullah ﷺ facing Baitul Muqaddas for 16 or 17 months. Then Allah Ta’ala ordered Nabi ﷺ to turn his face towards the qiblah (Ka'bah).” [Saheeh Bukhaari #4492]

The Station of Mi'raaj

Jabir Ibn Abdullah ؓ relates that the Rasulullah ﷺ said, "When the people of Quraysh did not believe me (i.e. my Miraculous Night Journey), I stood up in the hateem and Allah Ta’ala displayed Baitul Muqaddas in front of me, and I began describing the details of it to them while I was looking at it". (Bukhaari)

Anas ؓ relates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, “The Buraaq was brought to me, a tall white beast which was bigger than a donkey and smaller than a mule. It would place its hooves at the farthest boundary of its gaze. I mounted it until I arrived at Baitul Muqaddas. I tied it at the ring where the other Prophets tied their mounts. I entered Masjidul Aqsa and performed two rakaats salaah therein. Then Jibraeel ؑ brought me a cup containing wine and another containing milk. I took the cup of milk. Jibraeel ؑ said, “You have been guided to Al Fitrah (the right path).” Thereafter I was taken up to the sky.” (Muslim #411)

Presently there is a masjid that is built on the eastern side of the Al-Aqsa complex that is called Masjidul Burraaq. Historians say that this is the place where Nabi ﷺ had tied the Buraaq.

The Place for Major Events

Rasulullah ﷺ said regarding Dajjaal: “He will stay on this earth for forty days. He will enter every place on earth except the Ka'bah, the Prophet's Masjid, Al-Aqsa Sanctuary and Mount Sinai.” (Ahmad #230901).

Another narration explains that most of the Muslims will be in Baitul Muqaddas when Dajjaal will be causing corruption on earth. [Ibnu Majah #4077]

Imaamul Ambiyaa

On the occasion of Mi'raaj, all the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) had gathered in Masjidul Aqsa. Nabi ﷺ performed two rakaats salaah and thereafter the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) formed the rows for salaah. The Iqaamah was called out and everyone was waiting to see who would lead the salaah. Jibraeel ؑ then indicated to Nabi ﷺ to step forward and lead the salaah. Thus Nabi ﷺ went forward and in Masjidul Aqsa led all the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) in salaah thereby attaining the title of Imaamul Ambiyaa.

Why is Baitul Muqaddas important to the Muslims?

- Baitul Muqaddas is described in the Holy Qur-aan as “The Holy Land” and also as “The Blessed Land”, hence it is sacred for Muslims for all time to come.
- Masjidul Aqsa is Islam’s second oldest Masjid. It was initially built by Sayyidina Aadam ﷺ forty years after he built the Ka’bah Shareef in Makkah.
- Baitul Muqaddas is the land of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) who were sent with the message of Islam. Many prophets were born in Baitul Muqaddas, lived on that land, struggled for the sake of Islam there, died in that land and are buried there.
- Masjidul Aqsa is the first Qiblah, chosen by Allah Ta’ala. Muslims performed salaah in the direction of Baitul Muqaddas for sixteen months before the Divine command came to change the direction to Makkah.
- Another unique feature of Baitul Muqaddas is that it is the land of Israa and Miraaj. Israa refers to the miraculous night journey made by Rasulullah ﷺ from Makkah to Jerusalem, and Miraaj refers to the journey from Jerusalem to the skies into the direct presence of Allah Ta’ala. The ascension of Rasulullah ﷺ to the heavens to witness the signs of Allah Ta’ala, took place from Baitul Muqaddas.
- Baitul Muqaddas is the place of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam ﷺ. After the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ, many Sahaabah ﷺ migrated to Baitul Muqaddas to spread Islam there.
- Many Muslim scholars also migrated and settled in Jerusalem, and Al Aqsa became a great seat of learning. Thousands of pious people and scholars willed to be buried in Jerusalem.
- It is the only place on earth where all the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) gathered together at one place and performed salaah in congregation led by none other than our beloved Nabi Muhammad ﷺ.

Significant Dates in the History of Masjidul Aqsa

- **10th year of Nubuwat:** Isra and Meeraj - Night journey of Rasulullah ﷺ.
- **638 CE:** Jerusalem was conquered by Sayyidina Umar bin al Khattab ؓ.
- **685 CE:** The Umayyad khaliph Abdul Malik bin Marwaan began to build the Dome of the Rock. He completed it in the year 691 CE.
- **693 CE:** Abdul Malik bin Marwaan began extending Masjidul Aqsa which was completed by his son Waleed in the year 705 CE.
- **15 July 1099:** The Crusaders invaded Jerusalem and changed the Dome of the Rock to a church and Masjidul Aqsa into a stable and they hoisted a cross over them.
- **02 October 1187:** Salaahuddeen Ayoobi (rahimahullah) liberated the city and cleaned the dirt and filth off The Haram Shareef.
- **09 February 1924:** The British General, Allenby occupied the city and the Haram Shareef was now ruled by the British.
- **16 July 1948:** The Israeli fighters raided the Haram Shareef by dropping 65 bombs and hitting the Dome of the Rock and Masjidul Aqsa.
- **11 June 1967:** The Israeli forces occupied the city of Jerusalem and it has been under Israeli occupation ever since.

Keeping the company of the pious

Spending time in the company of the pious is indeed a great bounty of Allah Ta'ala. One is able to understand Deen by keeping in their company.

Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (rahmihahullah), a renowned scholar and an authority in Hadith once mentioned, "Allah Ta'ala had shown me all the *awliyaa* (saints) of my time in the circle of my palm and I could not find anyone on the face of the earth who had reached the status of Mirza Mazhar Jaane Jaana (rahmihahullah)."

Once, Mirza Saahib (rahmihahullah) was sitting with a few of his acquaintances when a discussion ensued as to what dua one would make if he was sure that his dua would be answered. Some mentioned that they would ask for Jannah, others mentioned ma'rifat (recognition of Allah Ta'ala), etc. Hadhrat Mirza Saahib (rahmihahullah) remained silent. After sometime someone asked him, "Hadhrat, what is your opinion in this regard and what would you ask for?" After a few moments he replied, **"If I was sure that a dua of mines would be answered, I would ask Allah Ta'ala to bless me with pious company."**

In the company of the pious, one learns how to please Allah Ta'ala and live his life in accordance to the sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ. Without pious company, a person will not be able to gain a true understanding of Deen no matter how much he may try. His mind

and reasoning will lead him onto something far from what Deen really is.

After all, there must be some reason why most of the Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) begged Allah Ta'ala to bless them with righteous company. Allah Ta'ala has recorded the duas of numerous Ambiyaa (alayhimus salaam) in the Qur-aan.

Hadhrat Yusuf's ﷺ last dua was *“Allow me to die as a Muslim and join me in the company of the righteous.”* Sulaymaan ﷺ made a similar dua, *“O Allah, bless me with kingship and join me in the ranks of the pious.”* The last dua that Nabi-e-Kareem ﷺ made was also a dua for companionship, *“O Allah, forgive me and join me to the highest companion.”*

Keeping the company of the pious and righteous also allows you to benefit from the special *tajalli* (effulgence) and *rahmat* (mercy) of Allah Ta'ala that descends upon them all the time. A part of that *rahmat* and mercy also descends upon those that are close to them.

أَحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ

لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُنِي صَالِحًا

*I love the Saaliheen (pious) but I am not from amongst them
Perhaps Allah Ta'ala will also bless me with piety*