

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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GEOGRAPHY INTRODUCTION

Geography (lit. earth description) is a field of science dedicated to the study of the lands, the features, the inhabitants, and the phenomena of Earth. A literal translation would be "to describe or picture or write about the earth". Geography is divided into two main branches: human geography and physical geography. The former largely focuses on the built environment and how humans create, view, manage, and influence space. The latter examines the natural environment, and how organisms, climate, soil, water, and landforms produce and interact. The difference between these approaches led to a third field, environmental geography, which combines the physical and the human geography, and looks at the interactions between the environment and humans.

Physical geography (or physiography) focuses on geography as an Earth science. It aims to understand physical problems. Physical geography can be divided into many broad categories, including: biogeography, climatology, meteorology, coastal geography, environmental management, oceanography, etc.

Human geography is a branch of geography that focuses on the study of patterns and processes that shape the human society. It encompasses the human, political, cultural, social and economic aspects. Human geography can be divided into many broad categories, such as: Cultural geography, Development geography Economic geography, Religion geography, historical and time geography.

In this book, only three aspects of geography have been discussed:

- a.) Muslim populations in the world as well as important information regarding those countries as a whole.
- b.) Important facts regarding Makkah Mukarramah, Madinah Munawwarah, Masjidul Aqsâ, which are necessary for a student to know.
- c.) Places where the Ambiyâ ﷺ resided, especially those mentioned in the Qurân Sharif.

Amongst the objects of studying geography is to create within ourselves concern for Muslims of other parts of the world. We are one ummah and cannot be divided by geographical boundaries, which the enemies have imposed over us. We should always keep in mind the fact that we are Muslims and one ummah.

May Allâh ﷻ overlook and forgive our errors and make the book beneficial for all. Âmîn.

SECTION ONE

ISLAM BY COUNTRY

Islam is the world's second largest religion. According to a 2010 study and released January 2011, Islam has 1.57 billion adherents, making up over 23% of the world population.

Islam is the dominant religion in the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and some parts of Asia. Large communities of Muslims are also found in China, the Balkans, India and Russia. Other parts of the world host large Muslim immigrant communities; in Western Europe, for instance, Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity, where it represents 6% of the total population.

According to the Pew Research Centre in 2010 there were 49 Muslim-majority countries. Around 62% of the world's Muslims live in South and Southeast Asia, with over 1 billion adherents. The largest Muslim population in a country is in Indonesia, a nation home to 12.7% of the world's Muslims, followed by Pakistan (11.0%), India (10.9%), and Bangladesh (9.2%). About 20% of Muslims live in Arab countries. In the Middle East, the non-Arab countries of Turkey and Iran are the largest Muslim-majority countries; in Africa, Egypt and Nigeria have the most populous Muslim communities. The study found more Muslims in the United Kingdom than in Lebanon and more in China than in Syria.

COUNTRIES

Figures indicated in the columns below are based on the demographic study by the Pew Research Centre report of *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, as of 27 January 2011.

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Afghanistan	29,047,000	99.8
Albania	2,601,000	82.1
Algeria	34,780,000	98.2
American Samoa	< 1,000	< 0.1
Andorra	1,000	1.1
Angola	195,000	1.0
Anguilla	< 1,000	0.3
Antigua and Barbuda	< 1,000	0.6
Argentina	1,000,000	2.5
Armenia	1,000	< 0.1
Aruba	< 1,000	0.4
Australia	399,000	1.9
Austria	475,000	5.7
Azerbaijan	8,795,000	98.4
Bahamas	< 1,000	0.1
Bahrain	655,000	81.2
Bangladesh	148,607,000	90.4
Barbados	2,000	0.9
Belarus	19,000	0.2

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Belgium	638,000	6.0
Belize	< 1,000	0.1
Benin	2,259,000	24.5
Bermuda	< 1,000	0.8
Bhutan	7,000	1.0
Bolivia	2,000	< 0.1
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,564,000	41.6
Botswana	8,000	0.4
Brazil	204,000	0.1
British Virgin Islands	< 1,000	1.2
Brunei	211,000	51.9
Bulgaria	1,002,000	13.4
Burkina Faso	9,600,000	58.9
Burma (Myanmar)	1,900,000	3.8
Burundi	184,000	2.2
Cambodia	240,000	1.6
Cameroon	3,598,000	18.0
Canada	940,000	2.8
Cape Verde	< 1,000	0.1
Cayman Islands	< 1,000	0.2
Central African Republic	403,000	8.9
Chad	6,404,000	55.7
Chile	4,000	< 0.1
China	23,308,000	1.8

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Colombia	14,000	< 0.1
Comoros	679,000	98.3
Congo	969,000	1.4
Cook Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Costa Rica	< 1,000	< 0.1
Croatia	56,000	1.3
Cuba	10,000	0.1
Cyprus	200,000	22.7
Czech Republic	4,000	< 0.1
Denmark	226,000	4.1
Djibouti	853,000	97.0
Dominica	< 1,000	0.2
Dominican Republic	2,000	< 0.1
Ecuador	2,000	< 0.1
Egypt	80,024,000	94.7
El Salvador	2,000	< 0.1
Equatorial Guinea	28,000	4.1
Eritrea	1,909,000	36.5
Estonia	2,000	0.1
Ethiopia	28,721,000	33.8
Faeroe Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Falkland Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Federated States of Micronesia	< 1,000	< 0.1
Fiji	54,000	6.3

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Finland	42,000	0.8
France	4,704,000	7.5
French Guiana	2,000	0.9
French Polynesia	< 1,000	< 0.1
Gabon	145,000	9.7
Gambia	1,669,000	95.3
Georgia	442,000	10.5
Germany	4,119,000	5.0
Ghana	3,906,000	16.1
Gibraltar	1,000	4.0
Greece	527,000	4.7
Greenland	< 1,000	< 0.1
Grenada	< 1,000	0.3
Guadeloupe	2,000	0.4
Guam	< 1,000	< 0.1
Guatemala	1,000	< 0.1
Guinea	8,693,000	84.2
Guinea Bissau	705,000	42.8
Guyana	55,000	7.2
Haiti	2,000	< 0.1
Honduras	11,000	0.1
Hong Kong	91,000	1.3
Hungary	25,000	0.3
Iceland	< 1,000	0.1

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
India	177,286,000	14.6
Indonesia	204,847,000	88.1
Iran	74,819,000	99.7
Iraq	31,108,000	98.9
Ireland	43,000	0.9
Isle of Man	< 1,000	0.2
Israel	1,287,000	17.7
Italy	1,583,000	2.6
Ivory Coast	7,960,000	36.9
Jamaica	1,000	< 0.1
Japan	185,000	0.1
Jordan	6,397,000	98.8
Kazakhstan	8,887,000	56.4
Kenya	2,868,000	7.0
Kiribati	< 1,000	< 0.1
Kosovo	2,104,000	91.7
Kuwait	2,636,000	86.4
Kyrgyzstan	4,927,000	88.8
Laos	1,000	< 0.1
Latvia	2,000	0.1
Lebanon	2,542,000	59.7
Lesotho	1,000	< 0.1
Liberia	523,000	12.8
Libya	6,325,000	96.6

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Liechtenstein	2,000	4.8
Lithuania	3,000	0.1
Luxembourg	11,000	2.3
Macau	< 1,000	< 0.1
Macedonia	713,000	34.9
Madagascar	220,000	1.1
Malawi	2,011,000	12.8
Malaysia	17,139,000	61.4
Maldives	309,000	98.4
Mali	12,316,000	92.4
Malta	1,000	0.3
Marshall Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Martinique	< 1,000	0.2
Mauritania	3,338,000	99.2
Mauritius	216,000	16.6
Mayotte	197,000	98.8
Mexico	111,000	0.1
Moldova	15,000	0.4
Monaco	< 1,000	0.5
Mongolia	120,000	4.4
Montenegro	116,000	18.5
Montserrat	< 1,000	0.1
Morocco	32,381,000	99.9
Mozambique	5,340,000	22.8

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Namibia	9,000	0.4
Nauru	< 1,000	< 0.1
Nepal	1,253,000	4.2
Netherlands	914,000	5.5
Netherlands Antilles	< 1,000	0.2
New Caledonia	7,000	2.8
New Zealand	41,000	0.9
Nicaragua	1,000	< 0.1
Niger	15,627,000	98.3
Nigeria	75,728,000	47.9
Niue	< 1,000	< 0.1
North Korea	3,000	< 0.1
Northern Mariana Islands	< 1,000	0.7
Norway	144,000	3.0
Oman	2,547,000	87.7
Pakistan	178,097,000	96.4
Palau	< 1,000	< 0.1
Palestine	4,298,000	97.5
Panama	25,000	0.7
Papua New Guinea	2,000	< 0.1
Paraguay	1,000	< 0.1
Peru	< 1,000	< 0.1
Philippines	4,737,000	5.1
Pitcairn Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Poland	20,000	0.1
Portugal	65,000	0.6
Puerto Rico	1,000	< 0.1
Qatar	1,168,000	77.5
Republic of Congo	60,000	1.6
Reunion	35,000	4.2
Romania	73,000	0.3
Russia	16,379,000	11.7
Rwanda	188,000	1.8
St. Helena	< 1,000	< 0.1
St. Kitts and Nevis	< 1,000	0.3
St. Lucia	< 1,000	0.1
St. Pierre and Miquelon	< 1,000	0.2
St. Vincent and the	2,000	1.7
Samoa	< 1,000	< 0.1
San Marino	< 1,000	< 0.1
São Tomé and Príncipe	< 1,000	< 0.1
Saudi Arabia	25,493,000	97.1
Senegal	12,333,000	95.9
Serbia	280,000	3.7
Seychelles	< 1,000	1.1
Sierra Leone	4,171,000	71.5
Singapore	721,000	14.9
Slovakia	4,000	0.1

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Slovenia	49,000	2.4
Solomon Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Somalia	9,231,000	98.6
South Africa	737,000	1.5
South Korea	75,000	0.2
South Sudan		
Spain	1,021,000	2.3
Sri Lanka	1,725,000	8.5
Sudan	30,855,000	71.4
Suriname	84,000	15.9
Swaziland	2,000	0.2
Sweden	451,000	4.9
Switzerland	433,000	5.7
Syria	20,895,000	92.8
Taiwan	23,000	0.1
Tajikistan	7,006,000	99.0
Tanzania	13,450,000	29.9
Thailand	3,952,000	5.8
Timor-Leste	1,000	0.1
Togo	827,000	12.2
Tokelau	< 1,000	< 0.1
Tonga	< 1,000	< 0.1
Trinidad and Tobago	78,000	5.8
Tunisia	10,349,000	99.8

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Turkey	74,660,000	98.6
Turkmenistan	4,830,000	93.3
Turks and Caicos Islands	< 1,000	< 0.1
Tuvalu	< 1,000	0.1
Uganda	4,060,000	12.0
Ukraine	393,000	0.9
United Arab Emirates	3,577,000	76.0
United Kingdom	2,869,000	4.6
United States	2,595,000	0.8
U.S. Virgin Islands	< 1,000	0.1
Uruguay	< 1,000	< 0.1
Uzbekistan	26,833,000	96.5
Vanuatu	< 1,000	< 0.1
Vatican City	0	0
Venezuela	95,000	0.3
Vietnam	160,000	0.2
Wallis and Futuna	< 1,000	< 0.1
Western Sahara	528,000	99.6
Yemen	24,023,000	99.0
Zambia	59,000	0.4
Zimbabwe	109,000	0.9
South & Southeast Asia	1,005,507,000	24.8
Middle East-North Africa	321,869,000	91.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	242,544,000	29.6

Country/Region	Muslim population	(%) of total
Europe	44,138,000	6.0
Americas	5,256,000	0.6
World Total	1,619,314,000	23.4

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COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST MUSLIM POPULATIONS (2010)

Except India, Nigeria, Ethiopia, China and Russia, the majority of the population in the following countries are Muslim.

- Indonesia 204,847,000 (88.1%)
- Pakistan 178,097,000 (96.4%)
- India 177,286,000 (14.6%)
- Bangladesh 145,312,000 (90.4%)
- Nigeria 75,728,000 (47.9%)
- Iran 74,819,000 (99.6%)
- Turkey 74,660,000 (98.6%)
- Egypt 73,746,000 (90%)
- Algeria 34,780,000 (98.2%)
- Morocco 32,381,000 (99.9%)
- Iraq 31,108,000 (98.9%)
- Sudan 30,855,000 (97%)^[83]
- Afghanistan 29,047,000 (99.8%)
- Ethiopia 28,721,000 (33.8%)

- Uzbekistan 26,833,000 (96.5%)
- Saudi Arabia 25,493,000 (97.1%)
- Yemen 24,023,000 (99.0%)
- China 23,308,000 (1.8%)
- Syria 20,895,000 (92.8%)
- Malaysia 17,139,000 (61.4%)
- Russia 16,379,000 (11.7%)
- Niger 15,627,000 (98.3%)

Muslims live in, but also have an official status in the following regions:

- Africa: North African countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan; North east African countries like Somalia, Somaliland (*de facto* state), Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti; and West African countries like Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Niger and Nigeria.
- Asia: Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Xinjiang, (China)
- Southwest Asia: Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and non-Arab nations such as Turkey and Northern Cyprus.
- South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India, Bangladesh and the Maldives
- Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia
- East Asia: parts of China (Ningxia)
- Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, Russia (North Caucasus and Volga region) and Ukraine (especially in the Crimea)
- The countries of Southwest Asia, and some in Northern and Northeastern Africa are considered part of the Greater

Middle East. In Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay, Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Tartastan, Bashkortostan in Russia, Muslims are in the majority.

Some definitions would also include the Muslim minorities in:

- several countries of Europe, of which the Muslim population in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Germany, Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Russia and Switzerland make up at least 5% of the total population of each of those countries, and with more than half of European Muslims, 28,071,000, living in Russia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Cyprus, France, Georgia, Germany, Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Russia and Switzerland make up at least 5% of the total population of each of those countries, and with more than half of European Muslims, 28,071,000, living in Russia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom,
- Several regions of Russia, other than ethnic republics above (Adygea, North Ossetia–Alania, etc.)
- some parts of India (India has the third-largest population of Muslims of any country)
- Singapore, Burma(Myanmar), Pattani (Thailand), and Mindanao (Philippines)
- Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Malawi, South Africa, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Uganda, Ethiopia

RELIGION

The two main denominations of Islam are the Sunni and Shia sects. The overwhelming majority of Muslims in the world, between 87–90%, are Sunni.

Shias and other (Ibadiyyas-Ismailis) make up the rest, about 10–13% of overall Muslim population. The top 10 countries with the most Shia populations are: Iran—93%, Azerbaijan—61%, Iraq—55%, Yemen—36%, Lebanon—27%, Pakistan—25%, Syria—17%, Turkey—15%, Afghanistan—15%, and India—2.7%.

The Kharijite Muslims, who are less known, have their own stronghold in the country of Oman holding about 75% of the population. See map 2 for the distribution of the different madhâib in the world.

REFUGEES

According to the UNHCR, Muslim countries hosted 18 million refugees by the end of 2010. Since then Muslim nations have absorbed refugees from recent conflicts, including the uprising in Syria. In July 2013, the UN stated that the number of Syrian refugees had exceeded 1.8 million.

LITERACY

Literacy rate in the Muslim world varies. Some members such as Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have over 97% literacy rates, whereas literacy rates are the lowest in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mali and a few other countries.

ECONOMY

The major economies of the Muslim world are composed of some economic systems of Western Asia, South Asia, Southeast

Asia; most of the Middle East, most of North Africa (and the Horn of Africa), and most of West Africa.

Islamic economics bans interest or *Riba* (Usury) but in the vast majority of Muslim countries, Western banking is used.

ARCHITECTURE

Encompasses both secular and religious styles, the design and style made by Muslims and their construction of buildings and structures in Islamic culture included the architectural types: the Masjid, the Tomb, the Palace and the Fort. Perhaps the most important expression of Islamic art is architecture, particularly that of the mosque. Through Islamic architecture, effects of varying cultures within Islamic civilization can be illustrated. Generally, the use of Islamic geometric patterns and foliage based arabesques were striking. There was also the use of decorative calligraphy instead of pictures which were haram (forbidden) in masjid architecture. Note that in secular architecture, human and animal representation was indeed present.

The North African and Iberian Islamic architecture, for example, has Roman-Byzantine elements, as seen in the Great Masjid of Kairouan which contains marble columns from Roman and Byzantine buildings, in the Alhambra palace at Granada, or in the Great Masjid of Cordoba.

Persian-style masjids are characterized by their tapered brick pillars, large arcades, and arches supported each by several pillars. In South Asia, elements of Hindu architecture were employed but were later superseded by Persian designs. The most numerous and largest of masjid exist in Turkey, which obtained influence from Byzantine, Persian and Syrian designs,

although Turkish architects managed to implement their own style of cupola domes.

ANICONISM

No Islamic visual images or depictions of God are meant to exist because it is believed that such artistic depictions may lead to idolatry. Moreover, Muslims believe that God is incorporeal, making any two- or three- dimensional depictions impossible. Instead, Muslims describe God by the names and attributes that, according to Islam, He revealed to His creation. All but one surah of the Quran begins with the phrase "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful". Images of Mohammed ﷺ are likewise prohibited. Such aniconism and iconoclasm can also be found in Jewish and some Christian theology.

RELIGION AND STATE IN MUSLIM MAJORITY COUNTRIES

As the Muslim world came into contact with secular ideals, societies responded in different ways. Some Muslim countries are secular. Azerbaijan became the first secular republic in the Muslim world, between 1918 and 1920, when it was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Turkey has been governed as a secular state since the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. By contrast, the 1979 Iranian Revolution replaced a mostly secular regime with a so-called 'Islamic republic led by the Ayatollah, Ruhollah Khomeini.

Some countries have declared Islam as the official state religion. In those countries the legal code is largely secular. Only personal status matters pertaining to inheritance and marriage are governed by Sharia law.

ISLAMIC STATES

Islamic states have adopted Islam as the ideological foundation of state and constitution: Afghanistan, Iran, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen.

SECULAR STATES

Secular states in Muslim world have declared separation between civil/government affairs and religion: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Northern Cyprus, Nigeria, Senegal, State of Palestine - West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Tunisia, Uzbekistan.

STATE RELIGION

The following Muslim-majority nation-states have endorsed Islam as their State religion: Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, Brunei Darussalam.

Although Lebanon recognizes Islam as a state-religion it also recognizes 18 others making it the most religiously diverse country in the Middle East.

NO DECLARATION

These are neutral states without any constitutional or official announcement regarding status of religion or secularism: Indonesia, Sudan, Niger, Djibouti, Sierra Leone

LAW AND ETHICS

In some nations, Muslim ethnic groups enjoy considerable independence.

In some places, Muslims implement Islamic law, called sharia in Arabic. The Islamic law exists in a number of variations, but the main forms are the five (four Sunni and one Shia) and Salafi and Ibadi schools of jurisprudence (fiqh).

- Hanafi school in Pakistan, North India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, other Balkan States, Lower Egypt, Spain, Canada, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Russia, Caucasus Republics, China, Central Asian Republics, European Union, other countries of North and South America.
- Maliki in North Africa, West Africa, Sahel, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.
- Shafi'i in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Eritrea, Somalia, Yemen, Maldives, Sri Lanka and South India
- Hanbali in Saudi Arabia,
- Jaferi in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. These four are the only "Muslim states" where the majority is Shia population. In Yemen, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, and Syria, are countries with Shia populations. In Lebanon, the majority Muslims (54%) were about equally divided between Sunni and Shia in 2010.
- Ibadi in Oman and small regions in North Africa

In a small minority of Muslim countries, the law requires women to cover either just legs, shoulders and head or the whole body apart from the face. In strictest forms, the face as well must be covered leaving just a mesh to see through. These rules for dressing cause tensions, concerning particularly Muslims living in Western countries, where restrictions are considered both sexist and oppressive. Some Muslims oppose

this charge, and instead declare that the media in these countries presses on women to reveal too much in order to be deemed attractive, and that this is itself sexist and oppressive.

POLITICS

During much of the 20th century, the Islamic identity and the dominance of Islam on political issues have arguably increased during the early 21st century. The fast-growing interests of the Western world in Islamic regions, international conflicts and globalization have changed the influence of Islam on the world in contemporary history.

RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

Some people in Muslim countries also see Islam manifested politically as Islamism. Political Islam is powerful in some Muslim-majority countries. Islamic parties in Turkey, Pakistan and Algeria have taken power at the provincial level. Some in these movements call themselves Islamists, which also sometimes describes more militant Islamic groups. The relationships between these groups (in democratic countries there is usually at least one Islamic party) and their views of democracy are complex.

Some of these groups are accused of practicing Islamic terrorism.

LIST OF CONFLICTS IN MUSLIM WORLD

Some of the events pivotal in the Muslim world's relationship with the outside world in the post-Soviet era were:

- The Arab-Israel War 1967 Palestine
- The Nagorno-Karabakh War
- The civil war in Somalia
- The Iran–Iraq War
- The 1991 Gulf War
- The Bosnian War
- The Kosovo War
- The South Lebanon conflict (1982–2000)
- The Kashmir conflict
- The Kargil War (1999)
- The War in Afghanistan (2001–present)
- The 2003 invasion of Iraq
- The War on Terror
- The Syrian occupation of Lebanon
- The Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy of 2005
- The Second Sudanese Civil War
- The 2006 Lebanon War
- The 2006 controversy over remarks quoted by Pope Benedict XVI
- The 2007 Lebanon conflict
- The ongoing war in Darfur
- The ongoing standoff with Iran over its nuclear program
- The ongoing Second Chechen War
- The ongoing War in North-West Pakistan
- The ongoing Islamic insurgency in the Philippines
- The War in Somalia (2009–)
- The 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence
- The Arab Spring
- The 2011 military intervention in Libya

- The Syrian Civil War
- The Northern Mali conflict
- The Central African Republic conflict (2012–present)
- The 2013 Burma anti-Muslim riots
- The ongoing Xinjiang conflict
- The ongoing Islamist insurgency in Nigeria
- The 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict
- The 2014 Northern Iraq campaign

The key findings of the Pew research are:

- If current trends continue, Muslims will make up 26.4% of the world's total projected population of 8.3bn in 2030, up from 23.4% of the estimated 2010 world population of 6.9bn
- From 1990 to 2010, the global Muslim population increased at an average annual rate of 2.2%, compared with the projected rate of 1.5% for the period from 2010 to 2030
- 79 countries will have a million or more Muslim inhabitants in 2030, up from 72 countries today
- In the US the population projections show the number of Muslims more than doubling over the next two decades, rising from 2.6m in 2010 to 6.2m in 2030
- In Europe, the Muslim share of the population is expected to grow by nearly one-third over the next 20 years, rising from 6% of the region's inhabitants in 2010 to 8% in 2030
- The UK's Muslim population is set to rise from 2.9m now to 5.6m in 2030 - up from 2% of the UK population to 4.6%

SECTION TWO

MAKKAH MUKARRAMAH

Makkah Mukarramah is located in the West of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is situated at the foot of a valley completely surrounded by mountains. The area that is low-lying and level is called Bathâ, and the area to the east of the Masjid is called Ma'lâ (higher ground). The area to the west and south is called Misfala (lower ground). Rasulullâh ﷺ was born and lived in the Ma'la area, until he migrated.

It is 300 meters above sea level and is situated at the centre of the globe.

A few virtues of this blessed city:

- 1.) Allah ﷻ selected this city to be the location of His House.
- 2.) Allah ﷻ's greatest nabi was born here and announced his message from here.
- 3.) The place is blessed with safety and sanctity.
- 4.) It is the only place where people have been commanded to journey to if they have the means.
- 5.) Allah ﷻ has taken an oath on this city twice.
- 6.) A salâh performed in Masjid Haram is multiplied one hundred thousand times.
- 7.) It is the location of the qiblah. Every person performing salah must face there. No person should relieve himself facing that direction or with his back towards it.
- 8.) It is that place which attracts hearts like a magnet. The more

a person visits it, the more he yearns to go again.

9.) Duâs are readily accepted here, and sins are forgiven.

10.) Dajjal will not be allowed to enter here as angels are protecting it. (Bukhârî)

Rasulullah ﷺ said, “By Allâh! You are the best of all Allâh’s lands and the most beloved. Had I not been forced to leave you, I would have never done so.” (Tirmidhi) When Makkah Mukarramah was conquered, Rasulullâh ﷺ announced, “Allah ﷻ has made this city sacred the day He created the heavens and the earth, and its sanctity shall remain till the Day of Qiyamah. Its thorns cannot be broken, its animals cannot be harmed, and things fallen on its ground cannot be picked up unless with the intention of returning to its owner or making public announcements (to locate the owner). It is forbidden to cut the grass that (naturally) grows there.” (Muslim)

Makkah has several names, as mentioned in the Quran:-

1.) Makkah (to eradicate) – Sins are eradicated here. It may also have this name because it destroys those who commit oppression therein.

2.) Bakkah 3.) Ummul Qurâ (mother of all cities) 4.) Al-Balad

5.) Al Baladul Amîn (city of peace and safety) 6.) Al-Baladah

7.) Haram Âmin 8.) Ma’ad 9.) Qaryah 10.) Wadi’ ghayr dhi zar

(uncultivated land) 11.) Masjid Haram – this can refer to a.) the

Kabah b.) the ka’bah and the masjid c.) the entire city of Makkah

d.) the entire Haram

The Haram – The area around Makkah Mukarramah is also

sacred. Jibrâîl ﷺ made Ibrâhîm ﷺ stand at the boundary points of the Haram and affix a stone there to mark them. When the Muslims conquered Makkah Mukarramah, Rasulullâh ﷺ instructed Tamim ibn Asad Khuzâi ﷺ to renew the markings. In different eras, leaders had the markings renewed until the number of markings totalled 943. However, most have since been erased, and only those maintained have survived. The area of the Haram is 550km².

The distance between Masjid Harâm and the various boundaries of the Haram:

a.) Tan'îm (7.5 km) – closest of all boundary points. There is a masjid (Masjid Aishah) built on the spot where Aishah ﷺ wore ihram for umrah after the Farewell Hajj. About 200 metres south of the masjid is the area where Khubayb ibn Adi was martyred. There was a tower there which was demolished in 1377 A.H.

b.) Nakhlah (13 km) – This place lies between Makkah Mukarramah and Tâif. Rasullah ﷺ stayed here whilst returning from Taif. A group of jinn heard him ﷺ reciting Quran and accepted Islam here. It was also at this place that the famous idol, Uzza was kept. Rasulullâh ﷺ sent Khalid ibn Walid to destroy it.

c.) Adhatul Laban (known today as Uqayshiyah) (16 km) – This is a low-lying area. Because of the presence of a whitish

mountain nearby, the area received the name laban which means milk. The Banu Khuzâ'ah tribe lived here who were the allies of Rasulullâh ﷺ.

d.) Ji'irranah (22 km) – Named after a mentally deranged woman who would spend the entire day knitting cloth and then tearing it to shreds. In the 8 A.H. Rasulullâh ﷺ camped here and distributed the booty after the Battle of Hunayn. He ﷺ also praised the Ansar here and told them that others were taking wealth home, whilst they were taking him with them.

e.) Hdaybiyah (22 km) – It was here that the famous incident of Ba'ite-Ridwan and the treaty of Hdaybiyah took place in 6 A.H. A miracle which was manifested here is the gushing of water from the fingers of Rasulullâh ﷺ which was sufficient for 1500 people.

f.) Arafât – 13 km (more details to follow)

Whoever stays within these boundaries are referred to people of the Haram. If they intend performing Hajj, they may put on ihram from their homes. If they want to perform umrah, they have to go to the boundaries to do so.

Those people who live between the Haram boundaries and the Miqat are called people of the Hil. They may enter into ihram from their homes when intending Hajj or umrah.

Âfaqi are those outside the miqât. They have to wear ihram at their respective miqât.

MIQÂT

These are the boundaries where a person who lives out of the Hil has to wear ihram from. Rasulullâh ﷺ himself specified the various miqât.

1.) Qarnul Manazil is a mountain 45km east of Makkah on the road to Najd. This is the mîqât for the people of Najd. It was here where Nabî ﷺ met Jibrail ﷺ after returning from Taif and asked him ﷺ if he wanted the mountains to crush the people of Taif.

2.) Yalamlam is a small mountain 45km south of Makkah. It is the mîqât for the people of Yemen and all those who come from this direction.

3.) Zatu'Irq is 90 km northeast of Makkah on the way to Iraq. It is the mîqat of the Iraqis.

4.) Juhfah is 182 km north-west of Makkah. It is the mîqat of the people of Syria, Egypt, and others coming from that direction.

5.) Dhul Hulayfah (or Abyâr Ali) is 410 km north of Makkah Mukarramah. It is the miqât of those coming from Madinah Munawwarah.

THE KA'BAH

In the centre of the city lies the Haram Sharîf. The most sacred shrine, the Ka'bah, stands in the inner courtyard.

Names of the Kabah as mentioned in the Quran: 1) Al-Ka'bah

2.) Al Baytul Haram 3.) Baytullah 4.) Al Baytul Atîq 5.) Qiblah

Builders of the Ka'bah: Historical reports show that the Ka'bah has been rebuilt at least 12 times during various periods of history: 1.) The angels 2.) Adam ﷺ 3.) Sheeth ﷺ 4.) Ibrâhim ﷺ and Ismaîl ﷺ 5.) The Amaliqah 6.) The Jurhum tribe 7.) Qusay ibn Kilâb 8.) The Quraysh 9.) Abdullah ibn Zubair ﷺ (65A.H) 10.) Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (74 A.H.) 11.) Turkish Sultân Murâd (1040 A.H.) 12.) King Fahd ibn Abdul Azîz (1417 A.H.)

When the floods came during the era of Nûh ﷺ, the House was raised to the heavens. All the Ambiya ﷺ continued performing Hajj, even though they were unaware of the precise location where the house had been. Allâh ﷻ then commanded Ibrahîm ﷺ to reconstruct it, which he did using rocks from five mountains: Hira, Thubayr (mountain betewwn Makkah and Mîna), Labnân (pair of mountains close to Makkah), Tûr (eastern desert of Egypt) and Jabalul Khayr. In 141 A.H, when diggings were done to a depth of 1.4 meters, it was found that the rocks forming the Kabah's foundation were firmly attached to each other without any cement. They were found to resemble camel humps.

18 years before Hijri, the Quraish decided to rebuild the Kabah. They resolved to utilize only halal money. For this reason, an area of 3 metres could not be included in the walls. They demarcated the area by building a low wall called the Hatîm. Remember that only three metres of the Hatîm is part of the Kabah and the rest is not. Aishah ﷺ said, "It makes no difference to me whether I perform salah within the Hatîm or inside the Baytullah." (Majmauz Zawâid)

The Quraish also made other modifications to the original:

- 1.) Raising the doors high above the Matâf so none could enter at will. They then sealed off the door on the opposite side.
- 2.) They added a roof, whereas there was no roof before.
- 3.) They added a water outlet from the roof (Mîzâbe-Rahmah.)
- 4.) They raised the height to 8.46 m whereas it was 4.32m.

Rasulullâh ﷺ himself participated in this construction and had the honour of placing the Hajr Aswad in place.

At present, the height of the Kabah is 14m. The width of all four sides are ±12m. the four sides are:

1. Rukne Irâqi (northern side)
2. Rukne Shâmi (western side)
3. Rukne Yamâni (southern side)
4. Rukne Hajre Aswad (eastern side)

The Ka'bah contains the Hajre Aswad or Black Stone which is to the left of the door of the Ka'bah. It came from Jannah and was whiter than milk. The sins of mankind blackened it. (Tirmidhi) It will testify to the îman of all those who kissed it on the Day of Judgement. (Tirmidhi)

The area between the door of the Kabah and the Hajre Aswad is called the Multazam. This is an area where duâs are accepted. It is sunnah to hold the wall of the Kabah in such a manner that the cheek, chest and hands are against the wall.

The area around the Ka'bah is called the Matâf (place of Tawâf). Abdullah ibn Zubair was the first to cement it, it was then

approximately 5m in width. It has then expanded from time to time. In 1375 A.H. it was extended from 40m to 50 m in a circular shape. The pulpit, platform for adhân, the entrance for the Zamzam well, buildings in the matâf, the dome of the Maqâm Ibrâhîm and some pathways were removed for easiness in tawaf.

In the direction of the door of the Ka'bah is the well of Zam Zam and the Maqâme Ibrâhîm.

MAQÂM IBRÂHÎM - This refers to the blessed stone upon which Ibrâhîm ﷺ stood on to build the walls of the Ka'bah. As he ﷺ continued placing the stones, the Maqam Ibrâhim continued to rise. The Maqâm Ibrâhîm is from amongst the jewels of Jannah. (Sunan Kubra) We have been commanded to perform salah near it. According to many scholars like Hasan Basrî, duas are readily accepted behind it. It is a clear miracle in the following ways: 1.) The footprint still remains intact till today. The imprints of the toes are however not visible. 2.) This stone has been preserved for thousands of years. 3.) It is only 20 cm. It is a manifestation of Allah ﷻ's power that it lifted him up to build the Ka'bah. 4.) No person even in the Days of Ignorance worshipped it, even though they revered it.

ZAMZAM – Through the sacrifice of Hajar ﷻ, the well of Zamzam came into existence. The Jurhum tribe from Yemen settled down there and Ismaîl ﷺ married in their family. After he passed away, the Jurhum tribe assumed responsibility.

When they violated the sanctity of the place, the Zamzam well dried up as a punishment. For centuries, no one knew where it was located. Allah ﷻ decreed that it should be Abdul Muttalib who had the honour of uncovering and restoring the well. In a dream, he was informed exactly where the well was. He assumed responsibility, and after his death, this duty was assumed by his son Abbâs ﷺ.

Water was drawn by bucket till 1373 A.H. (1953), when electric pumps were installed to pump the water into tanks.

The blessed well is located 21 meters from the Kabah. New research has revealed that water gushes from several springs around the well, delivering 11 to 18.5 litres per second. This amounts to 660 litres per minute and 39600 litres per hour. The mouth of one of these springs opens in the direction of the Hajr Aswad. It delivers the most water. The mouth of another opens in front of the place where adhân is called out. Besides this, there are several other smaller springs in the direction of Safa and Marwa.

Virtues: It is a spring from Jannah, a means for the habitation of Makkah, a living sign of Allah ﷻ's power right in the Haram. It appeases the thirst of every visitor to the Haram and is the finest water on earth. It was with this water that the heart of Rasulullâh ﷺ was washed on several occasions. The blessed saliva of Rasulullâh ﷺ is also mixed with this water.

It satiates the hunger of a hungry person, cures the ill, and is especially effective against headaches. It improves eyesight and

Allâh ﷻ will fulfil any intention with which it is drunk. Drinking it to one's fill is a sign of îman and freedom of hypocrisy. It lends tremendous vitality to body and soul.

MAS'Â (Place of Sa'î), SAFA AND MARWA

The Mas'â is the area between Safa and Marwah. Sa'î is a fundamental part of Hajj and Umrah and is an emulation of the practice of Sayyidatuna Hajar ﷺ.

Safâ is to the southeast of the Ka'bah at a distance of 130 metres, opposite Mount Abû Qubais. Several historical events in history took place here:

- 1.) When Rasulullâh ﷺ was commanded to call his family to Islam openly, he climbed on this mountain and addressed them.
- 2.) Abu Jahal once hurt Rasulullâh ﷺ here. It was because of this that Hamzah ﷺ accepted Islam.
- 3.) The disbelievers asked Nabî ﷺ to change the mountain into gold for them.
- 4.) When Makkah Mukarramah was conquered, Rasulullah ﷺ went there after his tawâf, praised Allah ﷻ and made duâ. From here, he ﷺ announced, "Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan will be safe." Hinda and other women took the pledge of allegiance on this mountain.
- 5.) Close to Qiyâmah, a human-like talking creature will appear in the earth. According to one view, it will emerge from Safâ.

Marwah is a little hill which derives its name from its rock which

is whitish and extremely hard. It is 300m from Rukn Shamî. The Saî ends here.

The distance between them is approximately 400m.

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT THE KA'BAH

It has been reconstructed several times -The Kaaba that we see today is not exactly the same Kaaba that was constructed by Ibrahim ؑ and Ismail ؑ. From time to time, it has needed rebuilding after natural and man-made disasters.

Of course, we all know of the major reconstruction that took place during the life of Rasulullâh ﷺ before he became a nabî. This is the occasion when Rasulullâh ﷺ averted major bloodshed by his quick thinking on how to place the Black Stone using a cloth that every tribe could lift up.

Since then, there has been an average of one major reconstruction every few centuries. The last renovation took place in 1996 and was extremely thorough, leading to the replacement of many of the stones and re-strengthening the foundations and a new roof. This is likely to be the last reconstruction for many centuries (insha'Allah) as modern techniques mean that the building is more secure and stable than ever before.

It used to have two doors ... and a window - The original Kaaba used to have a door for entrance and another for exit. For a

considerable period of time it also had a window situated to one side. The current Kaaba only has one door and no window.

It used to be multi-coloured - We are so used to the Kaaba being covered in the trademark black Kiswah with gold banding that we can't imagine it being any other colour. However, this tradition seems to have started at the time of the Abbasids (whose household colour was black) and before this the Kaaba was covered in multiple colours including green, red and even white. It was either Ismâ'il  who first shrouded the Kabah or As'ad Himyari Tubba. For many centuries, it was made in Egypt. In 1397 A.H., a factory was opened in Saudi Arabia in which the ghilaf is made. It is changed yearly on the 9th Zul-Hijjah.

The keys are in the hands of one family - At the time of Rasulullâh , each aspect to do with the rites of Hajj was in the hands of different sub-groups of the Quraish. Every one of these would eventually lose control of their guardianship of a particular rite except one. On the conquest of Mecca, Rasulullâh  was given the keys to the Kaaba and instead of keeping it in his own possession; he returned them back to the Osman ibn Talha of the Bani Shaiba family. They had been the traditional key keepers of the Kaaba for centuries; and Rasulullâh  confirmed them in that role till the end of time by these words, "Take it, O Bani Talha, eternally up to the Day of Resurrection, and it will not be taken from you unless by an unjust, oppressive tyrant." Whether Caliph, Sultan or King – the most powerful men in the world have all had to bow to the

words of Rasulullâh ﷺ and ask permission from this small Makkan family before they can enter the Kaaba.

It used to be open to everyone - Until recently, the Kaaba was opened twice a week for anyone to enter and pray. However, due to the rapid expansion in the number of pilgrims and other factors, the Kaaba is now opened only twice a year for dignitaries and exclusive guests only.

You used to be able to swim around it - One of the problems with having the Kaaba situated at the bottom of a valley is that when it rains – valleys tend to flood. This was not an uncommon occurrence in Mecca and the cause of a lot of trouble before the days of flood control systems and sewage. For days on end the Kaaba would be half submerged in water. Did that stop Muslims from performing the Tawaf? Of course not. Muslims just started swimming around the Kaaba.

The inside contains plaques commemorating the rulers who renovated it - The interior of the Kaaba is now lined with marble and a green cloth covering the upper walls. Fixed into the walls are plaques each commemorating the refurbishment or rebuilding of the House of Allah by the ruler of the day.

There are two kaabas! - Directly above the Kaaba in heaven is an exact replica. This Kaaba was mentioned in the Qur'an and by Rasulullâh ﷺ, who whilst narrating about the journey of Miraaj said, "Then I was shown Al-Bait-al-Ma'mur (i.e. Allah's House). I asked Jibrâîl ﷺ about it and he said, "This is Al Bait-ul-

Ma'mur where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily and when they leave they never return to it.”

The Black Stone is broken - The Black Stone is in a silver casing that surrounds it. Some say it was broken by a stone fired by the Umayyad army laying siege to Mecca whilst it was under the control of Abdullah ibn Zubair ﷺ. However, most agree that it was most damaged in the middle ages by an extreme heretical Ismaili group from Bahrain called the Qarmatians who had declared that the Hajj was an act of superstition. They decided to make their point by killing tens of thousands of hujjaj and dumping their bodies in the well of Zamzam. As if this act of treachery was not enough, these devils took the Black Stone to the East of Arabia and then Kufa in Iraq where they held it ransom until they were forced to return it by the Abassid Caliph. When they returned it, it was in pieces and the only way to keep them together was by encasing them in a silver casing. Some historians narrate that there are still some missing pieces of the stone floating around.

It is not supposed to be a cube shape- The most famous cube in the world actually started out shaped as a rectangle. The original dimensions of The House included the semi-circular area known as the Hijr Ismail. When the Kaaba was rebuilt just a few years before Rasulullâh ﷺ received his first revelation, the Quraish agreed to only use income from pure sources to complete the rebuild. That meant no money from gambling, looting, prostitution, interest etc. In the ultimate sign of how

deeply mired in wrongdoing the Jahili Quraish were, there was not enough untainted money in this very wealthy trading city to rebuild the Kaaba to its original size and shape!

They settled for a smaller version of the Kaaba and put a mud brick wall (called “Hijr Ismail” although it has no connection to Ismail ﷺ himself) to indicate the original dimensions. Towards the end of his life, Rasulullâh ﷺ intended to rebuild the Kaaba on its original foundations, but passed away before he could fulfil his wish. Apart from a brief interlude of a few years during the reign of Abdullah ibn Zubair ﷺ, the Kaaba has remained the same shape that Rasulullâh ﷺ saw it in.

MINÂ - Minâ is approximately 6.4 kilometres from Makkah. The three Jamarâts, which the Hâjîs pelt during Hajj, are situated in Minâ. The pilgrims slaughter their animals of Hajj in Minâ. Therefore it is called Minâ (which means to shed). Minâ is part of the Haram area, it is the site where Ibrâhîm ﷺ pelted the Shaytân, and where a ram was sent from Jannah to be sacrificed in place of Ibrahîm ﷺ. Rasulullâh ﷺ also pelted stones and sacrificed an animal there, which is now practised by all performing Hajj.

In Minâ is a mountain besides which the Ansâr took the Pledge of Aqabah.

The most important place in Minâ is Masjid Khaif. Rasulullâh ﷺ as well as many other Ambiyâ performed salâh at this spot where the masjid was built.

Between Minâ and Muzdalifah is a place called Wadi Muhassar, where Allah ﷻ destroyed Abraha and his elephants. Rasulullâh ﷺ walked briskly past this place. Even though it is part of the Haram, it is not to be honoured.

MUZDALIFAH -Muzdalifah is the area between Minâ and Arafât. It is so named because the Hujjaj reach here in the darkness of the night. It is also called Mash'are Harâm. It is four kilometres long, covering an area of 12,5km², stretching from Wadi Muhassar to Ma'zamayn (two mountains that face each other.) During Hajj time, after leaving Arafat the hâjis proceed to Muzdalifah where they spend the night. Maghrib and Isha salâh are performed together. After Fajr, the hâjis leave for Mina. A masjid has been built at the spot where Nabî ﷺ stayed during his hajj.

ARAFÂT – arafah means to know. After being separated, it was here that Adam ﷻ and Hawa ﷻ met and recognized one another. Arafât is an expansive field 13 km from Makkah. It is uninhabited and surrounded on three sides by mountains. To the north is Jabalur Rahmat. It was here where Nabî ﷺ camped and made special duas in his farewell hajj. The masjid located in Arafât is called Masjid Namirah. Beyond it, is the valley of Urnah which is regarded as the boundary of Arafât. It was here that Nabî ﷺ gave his historical sermon.

One's presence at Arafât is the fundamental pillar of Hajj. The hâjis gather here on the 9th Zul-Hijjah, perform Zuhr and Asr

salâh, and spend the whole afternoon in duâ and begging forgiveness from Allâh ﷻ.

BIRTHPLACE OF RASULULLAH ﷺ – The house where Rasulullâh ﷺ was born is located opposite Marwah and close to the valley of Abu Talib. It was in the vicinity of this valley that the Banu Hashim lived. Hârûn Rashid had a masjid built on this site, which Sheikh Abbaas Qataan demolished in 1370 A.H. (1950) to build a library. It is adjacent to the eastern courtyard of Masjid Harâm.

JABAL-UN- NÛR AND HIRÂ - Jabal-un-Nûr is the mountain containing the cave of Hira where Rasulullâh ﷺ used to spend his time in meditation before receiving nabuwwah. The first revelation took place here. It is 2.4 kilometres north of Makkah on the road to Tâif. The length of the cave is 3m, the height is 2m and the width at the widest point is 1.3m. The cave is 281m above the ground. It takes approximately one hour to walk to the cave on top.

DARUL ARQAM – This house belonged to a Sahabi called Arqam ibn Abu Arqam ؓ. This house was the secret centre of propagation. It was here that the Muslims gathered to perform salâh and learn about Islâm. Umar ؓ accepted Islam here. There was a masjid built on this site. When the mas'â was extended, the masjid was made part of it. There is a door close to where this place existed called Door of Darul Arqam.

VALLEY OF ABU TALIB – The homes of Rasulullâh ﷺ's families were situated in the vicinity of this valley. It is 300 m from Masjid Harâm, between Mount Qubays and Mount Khanadim. It was here that Rasulullâh ﷺ and his family were ostracised and boycotted for three years.

DÂRUN NADWAH – This was built by Qusay ibn Kilab 150 years before the birth of Rasulullâh ﷺ. The house was used for public meetings and served as a house of parliament for the Quraish. It was here that the enemies gathered to scheme against Islam and where they decided to assassinate Rasulullâh ﷺ. This area is now included in the masjid, north-west of the Kabah.

JABAL ATH-THOUR - Jabal Ath-Thour is the famous mountain where Rasulullâh ﷺ spent three nights in one of its caves, when he migrated. It is 4km southeast of Masjid Haram and is one of the highest mountains of the area. The above-mentioned cave is at the summit of this mountain. It takes about an hour and a half to climb. The interior of the cave is 1.25m high with a length of 3.5m and a width of 3.5m as well. The cave has two entrances, the western entrance being the one from which Rasulullâh ﷺ entered. This entrance could only be accessed lying down. Now it has been enlarged.

MA'LA GRAVEYARD – Khadija ؓ is buried in this graveyard as well as many sahâbah, tabiîn and saints. It is east of Masjid Harâm.

SARIF – This is the place where Rasulullâh ﷺ married Maymûna  in the 7 A.H. and then stayed over for a few days. Maymûnah  passed away here in 51 A.H. this place is about 20 km before entering Makkah Mukarramah.

TÂIF – It is about 72 km southeast of Makkah. It is situated on Jabalus Sarât which is 5000 feet above sea level. The city is in a valley called Wâdî Waj. Water is abundant and the fruits of this area are famous throughout the Peninsula. Taif is also called the garden of Makkah because all the fruits in Makkah are brought from Tâif. The largest Musjid viz. Musjid-e-Abbas lies in the centre of the city. To the left of the Musjid lies a room which contains the grave of Abdullâh Ibn Abbâs . To the southwest are the graves of those martyrs that passed away in the Battle of Tâif. There are two small Musjids in Mathnât, a suburb of Tâif. One is called Masjid Ali, and the other is called Masjid - al - Habshî. .

MADINAH MUNAWWARA

Madinah is approximately 450km north of Makkah. About 209 kilometres to the west is the sea where the famous port of Yanbu' (ينبع) lies. Madinah is situated on the same longitude as Makkah i.e. 39.5°. However its latitude is 24° north, whereas Makkah is 21° north. Rasulullâh ﷺ made this city a Haram, and it became one of the three holiest cities of Islam. In contrast to Makkah, Madinah is fertile with lush land surrounded by orchards of dates, pomegranates, apples and vineyards. Its climate is different to that of Makkah, in that the summers are extremely hot, and the winters are cold. Madinah is 916m above sea level. Madīnah is a sanctuary from Mount Ayr (8.5 km from Masjid Nabawī) to Mount Thawr. These two mountains constitute the northern and southern boundaries of Madīnah corresponding to a distance of 15 kilometres.

Names of Madinah:

Historians have traced about one hundred names given to Madinah. The most famous are:

a.) Yathrib - Originally, it was called Yathrib. Rasulullâh ﷺ disapproved of this name as it is derived from tharb (corruption) or tathrib (reprehension).

b.) Al-Madinah

c/d.) Taiba (drives away impurity as fire removes impurity of silver) and Taba – both these words are derived from taib meaning pure and pleasant.

e/f.) Ad Dar and Al-Imân (derived from the Qurân.)

Some other names are Al-Mahbûbah (The Beloved), Al-Qasimah (The Divider), Dârul-Hijrah (Abode of Migration), Darus-Salam (Abode of Peace), Al-Munawwarah (Illuminated), Al-Mubâarakah (Blessed), etc.

Special virtues of Madinah Munawwarah: Rasulullâh ﷺ said,

- 1.) "...and Madinah is better for them; if they but knew. He who spitefully leaves Madinah, Allâh ﷻ will replace him with one who is better than him. And he who stays steadfast here despite hardships and hunger, I shall bear witness and intercede for him on the Day of Resurrection. He who harbours an evil intention towards the dwellers of Madinah, Allah ﷻ will dissolve him like lead or lie salt in water." (Muslim)
- 2.) "Madinah is like a furnace, for it expels out impurities (evil people) and selects the good ones and makes them perfect." (Bukhâri)
- 3.) "Verily imân returns to Madinah as a snake returns to its hole." (Bukhâri)
- 4.) "He who can die in Madinah, let him do so, for I will intercede for those who die in Madinah." (Tirmidhi)
- 5.) "There are angels guarding the entrances of Madinah, neither plague, nor Dajjâl will be able to enter it." (Bukhâri)

AL-MUSJIDUN-NABAWI

Situated in the centre of the city is the grand mosque of Rasulullâh ﷺ. In the southeastern corner of the Masjid is the Rowḍah i.e. the pure garden which is the grave of Rasulullâh



Virtue: Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “One salâh in my masjid is better than 1000 salahs in any other masjid except Masjidul-Harâm.” (Bukhârî)

As soon as Nabî ﷺ migrated to Madinah Munawwarah, he built this masjid. It has undergone many extensions in history, the most significant being:

- 1.) By Rasulullâh ﷺ (7 A.H.): After this extension, the area of the masjid was 50m x 50m and the height of the ceiling was 3.5m.
- 2.) Umar ؓ (17 A.H.): Extended 5m to the south, 10m to the west and 15m to the north. Two doors were added: Bâbus-Salâm, Babun-Nisâ. Height of the ceiling was raised to 5.5m.
- 3.) Uthmân ؓ (29 A.H.): Extended 5m to the east, west and north. He personally took part in this extension.
- 4.) Umayyids (91 A.H.): Extended 10m to the west and 15m to the east and some portion to the north. A double ceiling was constructed. A mihrab and four minarets were added. The masjid now had twenty doors. The rooms of the azwâj-mutahharât were annexed to the Masjid.
- 5.) Abbasis (165 A.H.): Extension made in the northern direction. Shade constructed over first row.
- 6.) Qaytabai (888 A.H.): Extended 1,21m east of the Rawdah, replaced double ceiling with one, and raised height to 11m. Two domes were constructed over the sacred chamber and wire mesh was placed around it.

7.) Turkish (1288 A.H.): Extension of 2.62m to the east of the sacred chamber, and lead coated domes made of stone were placed on ceiling of masjid.

8.) King Abdul Aziz (1370 A.H.): He extended to the east, west and north. Area of extension was 6024m². The ceiling was 12.55m high.

9.) King Fahd (1405 A.H.): Extended 82000 m², increasing capacity by nine-fold.

At the present moment, the masjid can accommodate 535000 musallis. According to another report, it can accommodate a million people.

MINARETS: There were no minarets in the times of Rasulullah ﷺ. The first person to build them was Umar ibn Abdul Aziz in 93 A.H., when he placed four minarets, one on each corner. Qaitabai built a fifth minaret at Babur-Rahmah. Recently, a few more as been added, making it a total of ten.

THE SACRED CHAMBER (HUJRAH): The unique feature of the Masjid-Nabawī is that it has the sacred chamber where Rasulullāh ﷺ and the first two caliphs are buried. When the Masjid-Nabawī was being constructed, chambers were made for the wives of Rasulullāh ﷺ. He ﷺ passed away in the chamber of 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and was buried there. The first two caliphs, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and 'Umar رضي الله عنه had made a wish to be buried in the same chamber. So, they were also buried there. This chamber is referred as the sacred chamber.

There is a place for a fourth grave. This is for Isâ ﷺ in his second coming. (Tirmidhi)

Contrary to the common belief, the graves cannot be seen. The original chamber of 'Ā'ishah ؓ was made from the branches of the palm tree. 'Umar ؓ replaced these with brick walls during his caliphate. Later, these walls were raised, and the chamber was sealed completely and covered with a cloth. In 91 A.H. the original four walled chamber was surrounded by a five cornered structure to avoid any possible resemblance to the Ka'bah. These days it is this outer structure which is called as the sacred chamber. In 881 AH, the walls of the five cornered structure were found to be cracking so they were removed for reconstruction. The walls of the inner chamber were also found to have cracks and were also opened. This is the last time the sacred chamber became open and visible.

There have been many treacherous plots to steal the bodies of Rasulullâh ﷺ and his companions especially during the fifth and sixth centuries AH. Of course all of them failed.

RAWDAH (SACRED GARDEN): The area between the sacred chamber and the pulpit (Mimbar) is known as Rawdatul Jannah (Garden of Paradise.) Rasulullâh ﷺ said, "Between my house and my pulpit lays a garden from the gardens of Paradise, and my pulpit is upon my fountain (Kawthar)." (Bukharî) The area of the Rawdah is $\pm 330\text{m}^2$, the western wall of the Hujrah taking some part within it.

MIHRÂB: there are currently five mihrâbs in the masjid.

1.) The Mihrâb of Rasulullâh ﷺ, which is in the Rawdah. It was erected by Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ؒ at the place where Rasulullâh led salâh after the changing of the Qiblah.

2.) The mihrab of Uthmân ؓ, located in the forefront, where Uthmân ؓ led the people after expanding the masjid. Constructed by Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ؒ, it is still the location of the imam till today.

3.) Tahajjud mihrâb is located in the northern wall of the Hujrah. Nabî ﷺ used to perform salâh here at night.

4.) Mihrab of Fâtimah Zahrâ ؑ, located inside the barrier where her room was.

5.) Sulaimâni mihrâb or Hanafi mihrâb, located at the third column to the west of and adjacent to the Mimbar. Erected in 860 A.H, by Toughan Sheikh, who appointed an imam from the Hanafi school to lead salâh from there. It was refurbished by the Ottoman Sultan Sulaiman Al-Qânûnî in 938 A.H.

PULPIT (MIMBAR): Rasulullâh ﷺ used to deliver lectures supporting his back against a palm-tree trunk. In the 7th or 8th Hijri, the pulpit was erected with three steps at the western side of his musallâ. The pulpit continued till 654 A.H. when the fire in the masjid destroyed it. The current pulpit goes back to 998 A.H. during the rule of Sultan Murâd.

Rasulullâh ﷺ said: (a.) “My pulpit is upon a river from the rivers of Jannah.” (Majmauz Zawâid) (b.) “The steps of my pulpit shall be the steps to Jannah in the hereafter.” (Nasaî) (c.) “My pulpit

lies over my basin (on the Day of Judgement).” (Bukhâri, Muslim)

PILLARS

The following are the important pillars of Al-Musjidun Nabawî:

1. Ustuwânah Âishah – It was named after her as she informed the Sahâbah about its location. Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “If the people knew of the blessings of a particular area in the masjid, they would flock towards it in such numbers that in order to pray there, they would have to cast lots.” (Majmauz Zawâid)
2. Ustuwânah Hannânah/ Mukhallaqah (The Weeping Pillar) – This column is adjoining to the Mihrâb. Rasulullâh ﷺ used to lean on this pillar before the mimbar was made. When the mimbar was constructed, Rasulullâh ﷺ left it. Upon this, a bitter sound of weeping was heard from the pillar. Rasulullâh ﷺ then placed his hands on it and it ceased to sob. He ﷺ would often perform salâh thereafter near this tree. (Ibn Majah/Bukhârî)
3. Ustuwânah Abî Lubâbah - This is the pillar to which Abû Lubâbah tied himself, and upon acceptance of his taubah, released himself. He had earlier committed a mistake by revealing a secret and became so grieved at his indiscretion that he tied himself to this pillar. Accordingly, this pillar is also called Ustuwânah Taubah.
4. Ustuwânah Sarîr - Rasulullâh ﷺ used to make l'tikâf and lie down near this pillar.

5. Ustuwânah Ali / Hars - Some of the Sahâbah  used to sit near this pillar when keeping watch. Haḍrat Alî  used to do this most often.
6. Ustuwânah Wufûd - Whenever deputations arrived to meet Rasullullah  on behalf of their tribes, they were seated at this pillar where they were met and taught the Dîn.
7. Ustuwânah Tahajjud - This is where Rasullullah  used to perform tahajjud and according to some reports, this is also where he performed the Tarâwih Salâh.
8. Ustuwânah Jibrîl - This was the usual place where Jibrâil  used to enter to visit Rasullullah . Today it cannot be seen because it lies inside the room of Rasullullah .

JANNATUL BAQÎ' (جنة البقيع)

Jannatul Baqî' is the graveyard of Madînah. It was on the outskirts of Madinah Munawwarah on the eastern part of the masjid, surrounded by some houses and farmlands. The original name was Baqî-ul-Gharqad, since there were many trees with big thorns called Gharqad there. The first person to be buried there amongst the Ansâr was As'ad ibn Zurarah  (9 months after Hijri) and the first muhâjir to be buried there was Uthmân ibn Mazûn  (2 A.H.).

Uthmân  could not be buried in Baqî because of the turbulence here. He was therefore buried in the eastern part of it known as Hush Kawkab.

When Muâwiyah  became khalifah, he included that garden in Baqî. It remained like that until the era of King Faisal in 133 A.H. who added Baqî – Al Ammat (in which the two paternal ants of Rasulullah  - Sayyidah Safiyya and Atikah  are buried) to Baqî as well as another piece of land. In 1403 A.H., the graveyard was expanded further east and west. The area covered by the graveyard is 174962 m². It is surrounded by a fortress of about 4 meters high and 1742 meters long.

The following virtues are narrated for passing away in Madinah Munawwarah:

- 1.) Gaining the intercession of Rasulullâh  (Tirmidhi)
- 2.) Receiving the duâ of forgiveness by Rasulullâh  for the inhabitants of Baqî. (Muslim)
- 3.) Raised safe and secure on the Day of Reckoning. (Bayhaqi)
- 4.) Raised along with Rasulullâh , Abu Bakr  and Umar  (Tirmidhi)
- 5.) Admitted into Jannah without reckoning (Hakim)

Approximately 10 000 Sahâbah  are buried here. There are no marked and distinct graves in Baqî showing names of those buried in the graveyard. The four daughters of Rasulullah , are buried in front of the major entrance of Baqî. Nine of the azwaj-mutahharat (pure wives of Rasulullâh ) are buried left of one standing opposite the graves of the daughters of Rasulullâh .

JABAL UHUD (جبل أحد)

To the north of the city is the mountain of Uhud where the battle of Uhud took place. The graves of Hadrat Hamzah  and several other Sahabah are situated at Uhud. It is at a distance of approximately 2.4 kilometres from the city. Regarding Mount Uhud, Rasulullâh  said, "Uhud is a mountain that loves us, and we love it, and it is at the door of Jannat."

ZUL HULAIFAH (ذو الحليفة)

Zul Hulaifah is a village 9.6 km out of Madinah. Now it is called Abyâre Alî (أبيار على). Those travelling south of Madînah, make this their first stop here as Rasulullâh  did on many occasions. It is also the Mîqat for those Hâjîs travelling from Madînah to Makkah.

SOME MUSJIDS OF MADINAH MUNAWWARAH

1.) Qubâ is a fertile suburb southwest of Madînah. It is about 3km. from Masjid Nabawi. The Masjid of Qubâ was the first masjid built by Rasulullâh  in Madinah Munawwarah. There are great virtues of performing salât at Qubâ. It is also mentioned in the Quran: "The masjid which was built on piety." (Tawbah) Rasulullâh  said, "He who purifies himself at his home and comes to Masjid Quba and performs two rak'ats therein, will be granted the reward of an umrah." (Ibn Majah) Rasulullâh  used to go on Saturday morning after Fajr and perform salâh there. The masjid can accommodate about 20000 musallis at present.

Before hijrat, the sahabah used to perform Jumuah at the house of Sa'd ibn Khaithamah ﷺ. Rasulullâh ﷺ would often visit his home. A masjid was built there. Now it is part of Masjid Qubâ.

2.) Masjid Jumuah / Masjid Banû Salim- When Rasulullâh ﷺ left from Qubâ to Madinah Munawwarah, the Banu Sâlim requested him to honour them. Nabî ﷺ dismounted and performed his first Jumuah in their locality. A masjid was built there. This masjid is approximately 800 m north of Qubâ and 2.5 km from Masjid Nabawî.

3) Al Qiblatain – Whilst performing salah in this masjid, Rasulullâh ﷺ was commanded to face Kabah instead of Masjid Aqsâ. It is situated near Wadi Aqîq on Khalid ibn Waleed Road.

The tribe of Banu Salamah lived near the valley of Aqîq, west of Mount Sal'a, about 3.5 km from Masjid Nabawî. They wanted to move closer to Masjid Nabawi, but Rasulullâh ﷺ realised that the evacuation of their locality would be an economic and strategic disadvantage to the security of Madinah. He therefore asked them to contemplate over the reward of attending the masjid on foot.

4.) Masjid Abî Zar (Masid Sajdah) – It is situated 900m from Masjid Nabawi. It was here that Rasulullâh ﷺ went into a lengthy sajdah when the virtues of salawat (durud sharif) were conveyed to him by Jibrâîl ﷺ. (Ahmad, Hâkim)

5.) Masjid Ijâbah (Masjid Banu Muâwiyah) – It is 583m north of Baqî. Rasulullâh ﷺ made three duâs at that masjid. Two were accepted: the ummah will not be destroyed by famine and drowning. The one dua that there should be no bloodshed in the ummah was not accepted. (Muslim)

6.) Masjid Al Fateh (Seven masjids) – At the western end of Mount Sala', existed a group of six masjids close to one another, the most famous being Al-Fateh, where Rasulullâh ﷺ made duâ for three days for the confederates to be defeated and the duâ was accepted. Together with Al-Fateh masjid is Masjid Salman, Masjid Abu Bakr, Masjid Umar, Masjid Alî and Masjid Fâtimah. Some of these masjids have been removed and a large masjid has been built close by called Masjid Al-Khandaq.

7.) Al-Musallâ – It is a ground located southwest of Masjid Nabawî. At different places on this ground, Nabî ﷺ performed the Id salah, the janazah salah of Najâshi and salatul-istisqâ. The Jews of Madinah had their own market. Rasullâh ﷺ declared this ground the business place of Muslims. It was to establish a Muslim economy. Trade caravans of camels would stop here. This place was known also as 'manakhah.'

8.) Masjid Itbân - Itbân ﷺ asked Rasulullâh ﷺ to come and perform salâh in his house, so that they could designate that spot for salah. (Bukhârî) Later, the house was converted into a masjid. Now it has been demolished. Its location is north of Masjid Jumuah within a closed enclosure.

9.) Masjid Bani Unaif – It is located southwest of Masjid Qubâ. When Talha al Barâ ﷺ fell ill, Rasulullâh ﷺ would visit him and perform salâh at this place. The Banu Unaif then built a masjid here.

During the era of Umar ibn Abdul Aziz and later on, various masjids were built at these places to preserve their history:

- 1.) Masjid Ghamamah (Masjid Musalla) – 305m south-west from Masjid Nabawî
- 2.) Masjid Abi Bakr – 40m from Ghamamah and 335m from Masjid Nabawi.
- 3.) Masjid Umar – 255m from Masjid Nabawi and 133m from Masjid Ghamamah
- 4.) Masjid Ali – 290m from Masjid Nabawi and 122m from Masjid Ghamâmah.

SOME FAMOUS WELLS

There are several wells in Madînah of which some are historical e.g.

- 1.) Rawmah – This well is 3,5 km from Masjid Nabawi and 1 km from Masjid Qiblatain on the banks of the valley of Aqîq. When Nabî ﷺ migrated, there was no drinking water available, except from a Jew who sold the water at an expensive price. Uthman ﷺ bought it at a high price and made it freely available to all.
- 2.) Arees – This well was located to the east of Masjid Quba. Now it has been buried. It was at this well that Rasulullâh ﷺ

once gave glad tidings of Jannah for Abu Bakr , Umar  and Uthmân , together with warning him of a future calamity. (Muslim) It was in this well that the ring of Rasullâh  was lost during the era of Uthmân . (Muslim)

3.) Hâ – North of Masjid Nabawi was the orchard of Abu Talha Ansari  in which the well of Hâ was present. He  gave away the garden in charity after the following verses were revealed, “You will never attain righteousness until you spend from that which you love.” In 1994, it was included in the Masjid. Its position is a few meters to the left upon entering the masjid from door no. 21.

4.) Budha’ah – This well was north of Saqifah Banu Saidah. It was used by Nabî  for wudhu. It has been removed.

5.) Ghars – This well is 1 km to the north of Masjid Qubâ (next to Al Shawi school.) Nabî  drank from its water and requested that he be bathed with its water after his demise.

6.) Urwâ – Urwa ibn Zbair ibn Awâm  had this well dug and it still exists today. It is approximately 3,5 km. from Masjid Nabawî. It is located on the left-hand side of the road near the bridge of the Aqîq valley. Historians say that its water was the lightest and sweetest of the waters of Madinah.

Besides these, there are other wells also. Madinah also has 22 springs.

VALLEYS

1.) Aqîq – This valley starts at Taif, passes through Madinah and comes to an end at Ghabah, where it merges with the valleys of Buthân and Qanât. Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “A messenger came to me tonight from my Lord, while I was in Aqîq, and said to me, “Offer salâh in this blessed valley.” (Bukhârî, Muslim)

SOME INTERESTING FACTS OF MASJID NABAWI

The first place in the Arabian Peninsula to have electricity -

When the Ottomans introduced electricity to the Arabian Peninsula, the first place to be lit up was Masjid Nabawî. By some accounts, it would be a few more years before the Sultan himself had full electricity in his own palace in Istanbul.

The current masjid is larger than the old city -

The current masjid is more than 100 times the size of the original building. This means that the current masjid covers almost the entire area of the old city itself. This is evident from the fact that whereas Jannat Al-Baqi cemetery was on the outskirts of the city during the time of Nabî ﷺ, it now borders the precincts of the current masjid grounds.

It was destroyed by fire -

The majority of the old masjid, including the original mimbar of Nabî ﷺ, was destroyed in a fire that swept through the masjid centuries after Nabî ﷺ passed away. The fire was so extensive that the roof and even some of

the walls of the room of Rasulullâh ﷺ collapsed, revealing his resting place for the first time in 600 years.

There was no dome before, now there are two - For more than 650 years after Rasulullâh ﷺ passed away, there was no dome over his ﷺ grave. The first one was built in 1279 by a Mamluk sultan and was made of wood. The green dome that we see today is actually the outer dome over the room of Rasulullâh ﷺ. There is an inner dome that is much smaller and has the name of Rasulullâh ﷺ, Abu Bakr ؓ and Umar ؓ inscribed on the inside. The dome used to be purple! The dome has been through various colours and renovations before it reached its current form and colour about 150 years ago. At one point it used to be white and for the longest period it was a purple-blue colour that the Arabs of Hijaz were particularly fond of.

The masjid is FULL of secret signs - Each pillar, each dome, each window carries a story and indicates the location of events that carry historical and spiritual significance. The people who constructed the masjid realized that it would be impossible to put up signs everywhere as it would distract from the main purpose of prayers. Therefore, they came up with an ingenious way of indicating a location of importance through minor changes in the design of surrounding objects.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT PLACES

YANBU' - West of Madînah, on the coast, at a distance of 220 km is a famous town that is separated into two areas viz. Yanbû-ul-Bahr and Yanbû-un- Nakhl. The speciality of the latter is the date orchards and to the east is a mountain called Radwâ. Yanbû-ul-Bahr is also called the port of Madînah because it is the only port in that area.

KHAIBAR - Khaibar is a town 96 km north of Madînah. Dates grow in abundance in Khaibar.

TABÛK - Tabûk is situated on the road between Madinah and Damascus. It is 748 km from Madînah. It is now an important area of northern Arabia. Al-Hajr is 6.4 km from Tabuk where the villages of Thamûd are situated.

BADR - Badr is a town having extreme significance in Islamic History. It was here that the first battle of Islam took place. It is 148 km southwest of Madînah.

ABWÂ - Abwâ is adjacent to Waddân, 12.8 km east of Mastûrah. The grave of Rasulullâh's ﷺ mother is at Abwâ. She passed away in Abwâ on her return from Madînah and was therefore buried there.

MASJID AQSA

MASJID UL AQSA

- The first Qiblah of the Muslims
- The station of Isra and Miraj
- The second house of Allah ﷻ built on earth
- The place where hundreds of Messengers of Allah ﷻ are buried
- The place where many Companions ﷺ are buried
- The place where miracles were shown by Allah ﷻ's Will
- A place which Allah ﷻ himself calls a 'blessed place'
- Referred to directly and indirectly, 70 times in the Noble Quran
- The place where angels have descended with Allah ﷻ' s message
- The only place on earth where all the Messengers of Allah prayed at the same time, led by Rasulullâh ﷺ
- The only Masjid mentioned by name in the Noble Quran, apart from the Kabah

MUSJID UL AQSA- THE SECOND HOUSE OF ALLAH ﷻ

Abu Dhar ؓ reported that he asked Rasulullâh ﷺ, "O Rasul of Allah ﷻ, which Masjid was built 1st on earth?" Rasulullâh ﷺ replied, "The Sacred Masjid of Makkah."

Abu Dhar ؓ again asked, "Which was next?"

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, "Masjid Aqsa."

Abu Dharr ؓ further asked "How long was the period between the building of two Masajid?"

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “40 years. Apart from these, offer your salâh anywhere when it is time to pray, although excellence is in praying in these Masajid.” (Bukhari)

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISITING MASJID AL-AQSA

Abu Hurairah ؓ relates that Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “You should not undertake a special journey to visit any place other than the following three Masajid, with the expectation of getting greater reward : the Sacred Masjid of Makkah, this Musjid of mine, and Masjid al-Aqsa (of Jerusalem) .” (Bukhari, Muslim)

GREATER VIRTUE OF PRAYING IN MASJID AL-AQSA

Anas ibn Malik ؓ relates that Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “The salâh of a person in his house is a single salâh; his salâh in the masjid of his tribe has the reward of 25 salâh; his salâh in the Masjid in which the Friday salâh is observed has the reward of 500; his salâh in Masjid al-Aqsa (i.e. al-Aqsa Sanctuary) has a reward of 5,000 salâh; his salâh in my Masjid has a reward of 50,000 salâh; and the salâh in the Sacred Masjid (Ka'bah) at Makkah has a reward of 100,000 salâh.” (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

THE IMPORTANCE OF DONATING TO MASJID AL-AQSA

Abdullah ibn Umar ؓ relates, I asked Rasulullâh ﷺ, “O Messenger of Allâh, tell us the legal injunction about (visiting) Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem).”

Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “Go and perform salâh there. If you cannot visit it and perform salâh there, then send some oil to be used in the lamps.” (Bukhari)

THE VIRTUES OF WEARING IHRAM FROM MASJID AL-AQSA

Umm al-Mu'minin, Umm Salmah رضي الله عنها, relates that Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “If anyone puts ihram for Haj or Umrah from Masjid al-Aqsa and then proceeds to the sacred Masjid, his former and latter sins will be forgiven, or he will be guaranteed Paradise.” (Abu Dâwûd) (doubt of narrator)

THE BLESSED LAND OF MASJID AL-AQSA

Zaid ibn Thabit رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullâh ﷺ said, “How blessed is Sham!”

The Sahâbah رضي الله عنهم around asked: “Why is that”?

Rasulullâh ﷺ replied, “I see the angels of Allah ﷻ spreading their wings over Sham.” Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه added, “And the Messengers of Allah ﷻ lived there. There is not a single inch in al-Quds (Jerusalem) where a nabi has not performed salâh or an angel has not stood”. (Tirmidhi, Ahmed)

MASJID AL-AQSA – THE 1ST QIBLA

Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, “We performed salâh with Rasulullâh ﷺ facing al-Quds (Jerusalem) for 16 or 17 months.

Then Allah ﷻ ordered him to turn his face towards the Ka'bah.”
(Bukhari)

AL-AQSA – THE PLACE FOR MAJOR EVENTS NEAR QIYAMAH

Rasulullâh ﷺ said,

1. “Ibn Maryam (Isa) ﷺ will kill Dajjal (the Anti-Christ) at the door of Ludd (a town in Palestine).” (Tirmidhi)
2. “You will fight the Pagans until the remnant of you fights on the River Jordan, you to the east of it (present day Jordan) and they to the west of it (occupied Palestine).” ()
- 3.) “It is the land were they (mankind) will be raised (Hashar) and gathered (Mahshar)”. (Ahmed and Tabarani)
- 4.) “They (the inhabitants of Al-Quds) and their wives, children, and slaves (men and women) are in Ribat (guardians, literally a fort) in the cause of Allah ﷻ.” (Tabrani)

MASJID AL-AQSA – THE PLACE OF MUJAHIDIN

Rasulullâh ﷺ said,

- 1.) “A group of my community will remain on truth, they will vanquish their enemy and those with them will not be able to harm them until Allah ﷻ commands.”

“Where are these people”? The companions ﷺ asked.

Rasulullâh ﷺ replied, “In and around al-Quds (Jerusalem).”
(Ahmed)

- 2.) “A group of my community will not cease to fight at the gates of Damascus and at the gates of al-Quds (Jerusalem) and its surroundings. The betrayal of whoever deserts them will not

harm them in the least. They will remain victorious, standing for truth, until the Final Hour rises.” (Tabrani)

MASJID AL-AQSA – THE BEST PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Abdullah ibn Umar  reports that Rasulullâh  said, “There will be migration upon migration. The best of the inhabitants of the earth will reside where Ibrahim  migrated (i.e. Jerusalem).” (Abu Dawud)

FEW INTERESTING FACTS

It isn't just one masjid - Yes – there are multiple masjids on the site that we know as masjid Al Aqsa. We think of masjid Al-Aqsa as the building at the southernmost corner of the Masjid. In actual fact, that is the Qibly masjid – so called because it is the closest to the Qibla. The whole mount is masjid Al Aqsa and is sometimes referred to the Haram Al-Sharif to prevent confusion. But there are other masjid present on the site which are usually connected to historical incidents e.g. the Buraq masjid, the Marwani masjid and more.

It is a burial ground - There is no record of how many ambiyâ and companions of Rasulullâh  are buried there, but there are certainly many. For instance, Sulaiman  is possibly buried there since we know that a Nabi is always buried where he died, and he  passed away whilst supervising the construction of the previous building in some traditions.

It was a garbage dump - In the period of time when no Jews were allowed to live in the city, the mainly Roman inhabitants used the area of the masjid as a garbage dump. When Umar ﷺ liberated the city, he cleared the trash with his bare hands. He also ended the centuries-old exile of the Jews and invited 70 families of a nearby refugee village back into Jerusalem giving them the right to return after centuries in exile.

Al Ghazali lived and wrote his magnum opus there - One of the most famous books in Islamic literature is *Ihya' Ulum Aldin* by the great scholar of Islam, Imâm Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali. He is a man that is revered by all schools of thought for his ability to plunge into the depths of the human soul whilst remaining anchored to the Quran and ahadith teachings. What most people don't know is that Al-Ghazali, for a time, lived in masjid Al-Aqsa and wrote the book whilst there. A building in the masjid marks the site of his old room.

It was used as a stable, palace, and execution chamber - When the first Crusaders took Jerusalem, they found the majority of the Muslim population locked up in masjid Al Aqsa. They slaughtered roughly 70,000 of them and then converted the Qibly masjid into a palace, the Dome of the Rock into a chapel, and the underground chambers into a stable. Muslims who survived the initial massacre were later crucified on a large cross placed near the centre of the masjid. This was the only

cross that was broken by the Salahuddin. The base of the cross can still be seen there today.

It had a legendary mimbar - Nooruddin Zengi, one of the greatest heroes in the history of Islam, had a special mimbar (pulpit) built to be installed in masjid Al Aqsa when it would be eventually retaken from the Crusaders. This mimbar was not only beautiful, but it was made without using a single nail or lick of glue. Sadly Nooruddin did not live to see victory, but his disciple, Salahuddin fulfilled the wish of his teacher, and after liberating Jerusalem for the 2nd time in the history of Islam, installed the mimbar. It is still a work of legend amongst artisans and craftsmen. Unfortunately, this mimbar has not survived till today.

The Dome of the Rock used to look very different - The dome of the Rock – what is likely to be the first dome ever built in the history of Islam – was built by the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan. It was wooden originally with either a brass, lead or ceramic cover, but almost a thousand years later during the reign of the Ottoman Caliph Suleiman the Magnificent, the distinctive gold layer was added to the dome along with the Ottoman tiles to the facade of the building.

It has been burnt down - Ever wonder what would happen if masjid Al Aqsa was violated, a conquering army flag flown from

the dome of the rock and the masjid itself burnt down? Surely the Muslim world wouldn't let that happen?

In 1967, Jerusalem left Muslim hands for the 3rd time and came under the control of Israel. The conquering Israeli soldiers flew their flag from the dome. The Israeli leadership realised that overt control of masjid Al-Aqsa would serve as a constant provocation to the Muslim world. They used the fig leaf of a Waqf in order to placate the Muslims into complacency. It worked.

In 1969, an Australian Zionist set fire to the mimbar of Nuruddin and the Qibly mosque itself. The resulting inferno enveloped the entire Qibly mosque. The Muslim world awoke to scenes from the worst of nightmares. Desperate Palestinians tried to put out the flames in any way they could. An entire Ummah hung their head in shame.

Since then, the mosque has been rebuilt and refurbished, but the assaults against the 3rd holiest site in Islam continue to this day. Excavations undermining the foundations of the entire Mosque, unauthorised visits, and daily threats to rebuild the old temple are all currently under way.

SECTION THREE

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL PLACES

Adam ﷺ

Where did Adam ﷺ descend? There are different views regarding this.

1.) Adam ﷺ, Hawwa ﷺ, Iblis and the snake landed in a place called Dajnah, a place between Makkah and Taif. Another narration states that Adam ﷺ landed in Safâ and Hawwa ﷺ landed in Marwah. (Durrul-Manthûr from Ibn Abbâs ﷺ)

2.) Adam ﷺ landed in Indiâ while Hawwa ﷺ landed in Jeddah. Adam ﷺ then searched for her until he reached Muzdalifah. This is derived from the word izdalafah (to approach). Some believe Muzdalifah was given its name because it was there that Hawwa approached Adam ﷺ and met up with him. Nabî ﷺ said, "Adam ﷺ descended in India." (Tabrani, Abu Nuaym, Ibn Asâkir) From these and other narrations, we learn that Adam ﷺ descended on earth in India, on a mountain called Adam's Peak (also Jabal-Adam, Sri Pada, or Butterfly Mountain). It is a 2,243 m tall conical mountain located in central Sri Lanka. It is well known for the Sri Pada, i.e., "sacred footprint", a 1.8 m rock formation near the summit, which in Buddhist tradition is held to be the footprint of the Buddha, in Hindu tradition that of Shiva, in Christian tradition that of Adam, or that of St.

Thomas. Some Muslims are also of the view that this is the footprint of Adam ﷺ.

As for his grave, the stronger narrations seem to indicate that he was buried at the foot of Mount Qubais. Another view is that he was buried on the same mount, where he descended.

Mount Qubais: The first ever Mountain created by Allah ﷻ. This mountain is directly opposite the Ka'aba close to Mount Safa. Adam ﷺ took rocks from this mountain when he built the Ka'aba the very first time on earth. After building the Ka'aba, Ibrahim ﷺ stood on this mountain and called mankind to come and worship Allah. When Nuhﷺ's flood came, the Hajre Aswad [The Black Stone] was placed over this mountain. When Nabî ﷺ first started preaching Islam publicly, he stood on Jabal Abu Qubais and called mankind to submit to Allah. It was whilst he was on this mountain that Nabî ﷺ split the moon in two. After the conquest of Makkah, Bilal Habashi ﷺ gave adhan over this mountain. This mountain had a small Mosque on it called Bilal Masjid. This masjid is no more here. A palace of king has been built here and this spot has come in the palace. Today this mountain is better recognized by the large tunnels carved through it.

Habil and Qabil: Most likely, the events of the incident of both brothers took place in Makkah Mukarramah. One narration mentions that after killing his brother, Qabil fled to Yemen.

Some common folk of Syria believe that the murder took place at Mount Qasioun, which overlooks the northern part of Damascus. At one of the entrances of that mountain, there is a cave which the people call The Cave of Blood, which they say is where the murder took place. In a mountain situated in the area called At-Takiyyah, there is a grave which measures 15 m long; some believe that it is the grave of Habil.

Idris  - Idris  was born in Egypt, in the city of Memphis. According to another report, he was born in Babylon, and then migrated to Egypt. Some scholars believe that Idris  and Sheeth  have been buried in the two largest pyramids on the Giza plateau near Cairo. It is also said that Sabaians from Harran made pilgrimage to Giza and offered sacrifices there because they believed the pyramids were the tombs of these two messengers.

Nûh  - The people of Nûh  lived in Southern Iraq, not too far from Kufah. Al-Judi is a mountain facing Ibn Umar island at the junction of the Syrian and Turkish borders, on the eastern bank of the Tigris river. Muslim scholars say that the Ark came to rest on Mount Judi and that Noah was buried nearby. Some claim that Nûh founded a city called al-Thamanin (i.e. "the Eighty) because there were 80 people on the Ark. Many scholars say that the first city founded by Nûh, and where he was buried, was called "Karak." Till today, there is no exact knowledge of

the whereabouts of the Ark, even though some have claimed to have found it.

Hûd  - The people of Ad lived in an area of curved sand hills (Ahqâf. While the Quran makes no reference to the location of 'Ād, it is believed to have been in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, possibly in eastern Yemen and/or western Oman. In the 1980s, a settlement was discovered and thought to be Ubar, mentioned in the Qur'an as Iram, the capital of 'Ād.

The people of Hadramaut say that after Ad was destroyed, Hûd  lived in the western part of their land, not too far from the city of Taryam, which is near the valley of Barhut. Around the tomb and neighbourhood, various ancient ruins and inscriptions have been found. However, as is often the case with the graves of prophets, other locations have been listed. It is said, for instance, that a possible location for his grave is said to be near the Zamzam Well or in the south wall of the mosque in Damascus. Some scholars have added that the mosque in Damascus has an inscription stating: "This is the tomb of Hud" others, however, suggest that this belief is a local tradition spewing from the reverence the locals have for Hud. There is also a grave in Palestine which is erroneously said to be his.

Sâlih  - The dwellings places of Sâlih 's people, Thamud, are situated somewhere between Hijaz and Sham, in the south-

eastern part of Midian, which is situated east of the Gulf of Aqabah. Chiselled out of stone, their dwellings are still preserved.

After Sâlih ﷺ's people were destroyed, there are several views where he thereafter went:

- a.) They moved to Ramlah in Palestine.
- b.) The people of Hadramaut say that Salih ﷺ and his followers went and settled there, because that is where they were originally from. There is a grave there which they say belongs to Salih ﷺ.
- c.) Some say they remained in their dwellings after their people were destroyed.
- d.) Some say that they travelled to Makkah and remained there until they died. Their graves are situated west of the Kabah.

Ibrâhim ﷺ and Ishâq ﷺ - Ibrâhim ﷺ was born in southern Iraq and lived in the city of Ur Al-Kaldâniyyah. Azar was from the people of Kutha, a village on the outskirts of Kufah. This is the place the people tried to burn Ibrahim ﷺ. After this attempt was made, Ibrahim ﷺ travelled to Harran (situated in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula.) he then travelled to Palestine. Due to droughts, he went to Egypt. He ﷺ later returned with Lut ﷺ to Southern Palestine. Ibrahim ﷺ settled down in Bi'r Sheva (As-Sabâ), while Lût ﷺ settled down south of the Dead Sea. Ibrahim ﷺ passed away in Palestine and is buried in a cave in the city of Khalil (Hebron) in Palestine. Ibn

Kathir reports that the tomb of Ibrâhimؑ, the tomb of his son Ishâqؑ, and the tomb of his grandson Yâqubؑ are in the part of the ancient city of Khalil which Suleimanؑ built.

Ismâîl ؑ - He lived from a small age in Makkah Mukarramah, and it is believed that both he and his mother were buried near the Ka'bah.

Lût ؑ - Lût ؑ was the nephew of Ibrahîm ؑ. He settled down south of the Dead Sea, where Sodom and Gomorrah were situated. Allah ؑ destroyed these places. The nearby town of Sughar was left untouched, and that is where Lût ؑ then took refuge. The cave of Lût m is located just above the eastern edge of the Dead Sea. Some traditions refer to this cave as the burial place of Lût ؑ.

Yâqûb ؑ and **Yusuf** ؑ - Yaqûb ؑ lived in Palestine. As is mentioned in Surah Yusuf, he travelled to Egypt, where he lived with his son, Yusuf ؑ. He lived there until his death. In accordance to his instructions, his body was preserved and transported to Palestine, where he was buried in the cave of Al-Makfilah, in the city of Hebron (Al-Khalil). Yusuf ؑ was also transported and buried here after his demise. A monument was built for him in Nablus (Shakim), and another was built near An-Nabk in Al-Qilmun, Syria.

Shuaib ﷺ - Shuaib ﷺ was sent to the people of Madyan ibn Ibrahim; they lived in the lands of Hijâz, adjacent to Sham and east of the Gulf of Aqabah. Near to Madyan is a land full of softwood trees, and according to one opinion, that land is actually the site of the city of Tabûk.

Mûsâ ﷺ - Musâ ﷺ was born in Egypt. He ran away from there. Travelling through Sinai, he headed towards the lands of Madyan (Midian). On his return to Egypt, Allâh ﷻ spoke to him at Mount Tûr. This is in fact Mount Horeb in Sinai. Thereafter he returned to Egypt.

The famous crossing took place north of the Gulf of As-Suweis or in the Great Bitter Lakes which is where Firawn drowned.

Many Muslims believe that the grave of Moses is located at Maqam El-Nabi Musa which lies 11 km south of Jericho and 20 km east of Jerusalem in the Judean wilderness. A side road to the right of the main Jerusalem-Jericho road, about 2 km. beyond the sign indicating sea level, leads to the site. In contrast, the biblical book of Deuteronomy records that Moses was buried "in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor" (east of the Jordan River) and that "no one knows the place of his burial to this day". Muslim tradition holds that Salahuddin had a dream in which it had been revealed to him the site where Mûsâ ﷺ was venerated and subsequently he built a monument and on top of it a masjid.

The main body of the present shrine, mosque, minaret and some rooms were built during the reign of Al-Dhaher Baybers, a Mamluk Sultan, in 1269 AD. Pilgrimage started at that time bringing thousands of people from Jerusalem to El-Nabi Musa in a procession after which they camped at the site for a whole week. In 1410 a hospice for the pilgrims was built and a minaret. Due to the growth in the number of pilgrims every year, the hospice had to be extended to its present spacious dimensions.

In 1820, the Turks restored the building and encouraged the 7-day pilgrimage, which started from Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and hosted a full day until the arrival in El-Nabi Musa. The rest of the days were spent in prayers, feasting and games. Pilgrims marched in grand procession singing religious songs, dancing and playing flutes until they reached the Maqam. Prayers, celebrations and games continued for five days around the shrine.

Some are of the view that Musâ ﷺ was buried in Mount Nibu, which is situated east of the Dead Sea.

Hârûn ﷺ - He passed away before Mûsâ ﷺ, and is buried in Mount Haur, one of the mountains of Sinai.

Ilyâs ﷺ and **Al-Yasa'** ﷺ - They lived and passed away in the land of Ba'labak (Heliopolis: The City of the Sun.)

Dawûd ﷺ - Dawûd ﷺ fought against the dwellers of Palestine at Asdod, near Gaza. His grave is situated on top of a mountain that lies somewhere between Jerusalem and Ramlah, after Abu Ghush.

Some say that this is not his grave, but merely a sign to indicate that he lived there. Sulaiman ﷺ passed away in Jerusalem and is buried there.

The valley of ants is situated in front of Asqalan, between Ashdod and Gaza.

Ayyub ﷺ - Ayyub ﷺ either lived in the land of As, besides Mount Sa'ir, in the lands of Adoum, southwest of the Dead Sea, or in Al-Bathaniyyah, between Damascus and Adhruât. His resting place is said to be located on the hills overlooking the coastal city of Salalah in the Dhofar region of eastern Oman. The building containing the tomb is surrounded by gardens, and the room itself is roughly 6 meters long.

Yunus ﷺ - Yunus ﷺ was sent to the people of Ninawa (Nineveh) - an ancient Mesopotamian city on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, near Mosul and capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. When Yunus ﷺ left his people, he proceeded to Tirshish (where Tunisia is located today). He stayed at Yafâ (Jaffa). After being swallowed by the fish, he returned to Ninawa in Iraq and is buried there.

Zakariyya ﷺ and Yahyâ ﷺ - According to one view, Zakariyya ﷺ passed away a natural death, whilst others say that he was killed with his son Yahyâ ﷺ in Jerusalem. There is a large monument for him in Aleppo's (Haleb) central gathering place. Some maintain that Yahyâ ﷺ was killed in Damascus, where there is a monument for him in the Umawi masjid. . Some scholars report that it is only the head of Yahya ﷺ that was found when the mosque was being refurbished during the Umayyad period. Others claim that the head of Yahya ﷺ, is housed in the crypt below a mosque in the old city of Sebastiya near Nablus, and still others claim the head was buried at Muwakir, site near the Jordan river.

Îsâ ﷺ - Isâ ﷺ was born in Bethlehem in Palestine. There was the famous date tree in the area as well as the small river mentioned regarding his birth. His roots trace back to An-Nasirah (Nazareth) in Northern Palestine where he lived with his mother.

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