

**History of Masjid al-Aqsa**

**Khutbah Series:**

# **01. The Masjid of the Prophets**

## MASJID AL-AQSA – The Masjid of the Prophets (Peace be upon them)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Beneficent.

Only two places on this entire Earth have the distinction of being “Houses of Allah” from the time of the first man, Adam (AS) till today. The first is the Ka’bah in Makkah. The second is Masjid al-Aqsa.

The Companion, Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) once asked the Prophet (ﷺ):

“O Messenger of Allāh, which mosque was built on Earth first?” He said, “Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (in Mecca).” I said, “Then which [mosque]?” He said, “Al-Masjid al-Aqsa.” I said, “How much time was there between them?” He said, “Forty years.” (Bukhari)

According to many scholars, both of these were built by Adam (AS) after he was sent down to this world from heaven. (Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Jawzi)

Yet of these two holy places, only one has the distinction of being the Masjid of many Prophets. That is Masjid al-Aqsa. In fact, every single part of it has had a Prophet or angel pray on it, and every single Prophet has prayed there (in a salaah led by our Prophet (SAW))

Ibn Abbās (RA) mentions:

“Bait al-Maqdis was built by the Prophets and inhabited by the Prophets. There is not the area of a single hand span except that a Prophet prayed in it or an angel stood on it.” (Tirmidhi)

The famous commentator of the Qur’an, Ibn Kathir (Allah have mercy on him) telling the story of our Prophet’s “Night Journey” narrates:

‘The Prophet (SAW) said: “...Then I left and it was not more than a little while when a lot of people gathered, and someone called for the prayer and the prayer was established.” He (the Prophet SAW) continued, “As we stood in lines waiting for someone to come and lead us, Jibril took my hand and had me lead the prayer, which I did. Upon completing the prayer, Jibril asked me, ‘O Muhammad, do you know who prayed behind you?’ I said, ‘No’. He said, ‘Every Prophet sent by Allah prayed behind you.’ Then Jibra’il took my hand and we ascended to heaven.”’

The story of Adam (AS) is hugely important to us, because it shows us the importance of our purpose and that if we fall from our purpose, Allah has allowed us to be redeemed through tawbah.

After creating Adam (AS), Allah had entered him and Hawwa into heaven. Because they did not heed Allah's orders, they were demoted down to Earth. Only after extensive Tawbah did Allah forgive them. After Allah forgave them, they travelled together and Adam (AS) was instructed to build the Ka'bah, then Masjid al-Aqsa.

After Adam (AS) a number of early Prophets came and called their people to Allah. Sadly, there are very few details about their lives and missions. However, the next major Prophet of Allah was Nuh (AS). It was during his mission that the great flood took place and all that which was built on the Earth was destroyed. This included both holy mosques.

The story of Nuh (AS) and his people is also significant, because it teaches us that Allah has the power to punish those who disobey him. And this punishment is not limited to the hereafter. May Allah protect us from our own misdeeds, and make us all steadfast in obeying His commands.

After the great flood, Allah ordered his beloved servant, the father of Prophets, Ibrahim (AS) to rebuild the Ka'bah with his son Isma'il (AS). After its completion, Ibrahim (AS) went to his second son, Ishaq (AS) in Palestine. There, it is believed that he rebuild Masjid al-Aqsa.

Ibrahim (AS) was a remarkable person. Without anyone to guide him, he – as a child – found Allah through reasoning. Allah blessed him by having him be the father of so many amazing Prophets, including our own beloved Prophet, Muhammad (SAW).

We can see the significance of Masjid al-Aqsa just from the fact that both great Prophets, Adam (AS) and Ibrahim (AS), built, not just the Ka'bah in Makkah, but also Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Their legacy is something that we need to protect.

After Ibrahim (AS) rebuilt Masjid al-Aqsa, this area was where his son, Ishaq (AS) and his progeny lived and worshipped Allah. His son Yaqub (AS) and his children – including Yusuf (AS) lived around the area of Masjid al-Aqsa.

As a child, Yusuf (AS) was sold to slavery and was taken to Egypt. After many trials and injustices, Yusuf (AS) proved his trustworthiness and was raised by the king to the positions of an Aziz (Vizier). He was entrusted to manage the crops and rations through the long years of drought. It was during the time of drought, that his father Yaqub (AS) and family all moved to Egypt to join him there.

The story of the Prophets Yaqub (AS) – who only “complained of his anguish and sorrow to Allah,” – and Yusuf (AS) who was falsely accused and spent many years imprisoned despite being innocent, is a lesson in the importance of patience in trials and hardships, and that Allah is hearing our prayers, and that He will respond, even if after a while.

Our Prophet (SAW) has warned:

“Beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for it is carried above the clouds. Allah Almighty says: By My glory, I will help you, even if after a while.”

(Tirmidhi)

In the current situation of Palestine, we can clearly see who the oppressed people are, and we must do our part to help them in whatever way we can. How lamentable would it be, if we were questioned by Allah on the Day of Judgement if we didn't help them in some way or another.

After these two Prophets (AS) and their family moved to Egypt, their family flourished there until the situation changed so much that they became persecuted. And it was in this difficult time during the reign of Firawn (Pharaoh), that Moosa (AS) and his brother Haroon (AS) were born.

Moosa (AS) and Harun (AS) led their people to escape from Firawn's persecution. Because of Firawn's tyranny, he and his soldiers received Allah's punishment. May Allah protect the people of Palestine, who, today, are suffering in the same way.

Moosa (AS) led his people through the desert and attempted to lead them back to the home of our shared ancestor in faith, Ibrahim (AS). But, due to his followers being ungrateful to Allah (who saved them from the Pharaoh) and for being sinful (in choosing to bow to an idol of a cow instead), they all passed away on the lengthy journey to Jerusalem – They were not given the honour of even seeing the holy land. Only their children, who were innocent of these crimes, were permitted to enter the holy lands.

Moosa (AS) suffered many hardships in trying to lead his people. Despite their disobedience to Allah, Moosa (AS) patiently continued to lead them, while continuing to make du'a that he and his people would reach the holy land of Masjid al-Aqsa. Allah fulfilled Moosa's prayer, by blessing him with the sight of the holy land of Masjid al-Aqsa just before he passed away. Moosa (AS) had fulfilled his duty.

We too should pray and make the effort to visit Masjid al-Aqsa. We should strive to get the honour of seeing it and worshipping in it – as this honour is not given to everyone.

During the time that the Bani Isra'il (Children of Yaqub (AS)) were in Egypt, Masjid al-Aqsa had fallen into disrepair. So, when Moosa (AS) had led them back, they came back to see an empty site.

It was at this time that Dawud (AS) was born. Dawud was one who Allah favoured to become both the Prophet, and the king of his people. Dawud (AS) defended his people from their enemy; and on Allah's orders commenced the reconstruction of Masjid al-Aqsa. However, he passed away before it was completed.

Dawud (AS) was succeeded both as a Prophet and as king, by his son, Sulayman (AS). It was during the amazing reign of Sulayman (AS) that Masjid al-Aqsa was completed.

Dawud (AS) and Sulayman (AS) both teach us an important lesson – that of the responsibility of not only leaders, but also the responsibility of those who Allah has blessed with the means and ability to help.

Moosa (AS) was someone who had to leave behind everything, and in poverty, he led his impoverished people to venerate Masjid al-Aqsa. Dawud and Sulayman (AS) were both kings – who had power and wealth – also venerated Masjid al-Aqsa. Whatever our means and ability, we also need to follow their example and – for the pleasure of Allah – venerate, visit and/or support Masjid al-Aqsa.

After Sulayman (AS) many other Prophets lived around Masjid al-Aqsa and would regularly worship within its blessed lands. Glorious Prophets like Zakariyya (AS), Yahya (AS), and Isa (AS) as well as his mother, Maryam (AS) – whose excellence is mentioned in the Qur'an – all lived around and worshiped in the holy land of Masjid al-Aqsa.

Of course, our beloved Prophet (SAW) – the final Prophet – is included in the illustrious list of Prophets who have performed prayer in Masjid al-Aqsa. His relationship with Masjid al-Aqsa is worthy of a separate talk, so for now just as a reminder, the following Hadith is enough to explain Masjid al-Aqsa's importance to him and to us.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not undertake a journey to visit any mosque but three: this mosque of mine, the Mosque of al-Ḥarām, and the Mosque of Aqsa.”  
(Bukhari and Muslim)

May Allah put in our hearts true love and appreciation for Masjid al-Aqsa and its people. And may Allah make us all and reward us all for being among those who seek to protect Masjid al-Aqsa and its people, using every means available to us.

Lastly, please remember three points that we all need to adopt in order to be counted among those who truly want to help Masjid al-Aqsa and its people.

1. Remember Masjid al-Aqsa and the people of Palestine in your prayers – as often as you can.
2. Try to visit Masjid al-Aqsa with your family. Your going there helps defend the Masjid, and gives hope and support to its people.
3. Keep up-to-date with what is happening there, and take part in whatever way you can to get as many people involved in speaking/emailing about the situation in Al-Aqsa.

Remember, no matter how small or insignificant you think such actions are, for you and me, they may be an act which Allah rewards us His mercy, and forgiveness.

اللهم احفظ فلسطين وأهل فلسطين،

والقدس وأهل القدس،

والأقصى وأهل الأقصى،

واربط على قلوبهم وثبتهم،

يا رب العالمين.

O Allah! Protect Palestine and the people of Palestine,  
and (protect) Quds and the people of Quds,  
and (protect) Masjid al-Aqsa and the people of Masjid al-Aqsa,  
and strengthen their hearts and keep them steadfast,  
O Lord of the Worlds.