

## The Origins and Construction of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Islamic Tradition

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### Abstract

*This study addresses the subject of the founding and history of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and seeks to shed light on the historical circumstances that led to its establishment by basing the research on diverse and detailed Islamic, biblical, and historical sources. The study demonstrates the importance of the subject of the founding of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Islamic texts, and how it was referred to directly or indirectly. It highlights the challenges facing the study of this subject due to the diversity of its specializations, which include architecture, Sharia studies, history, and archaeology. The study raises questions about the status of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the place of its establishment, its founders, the date of its founding, and how it obtained its Qur'an name “Al-Aqsa Mosque.” In conclusion, the study indicates the necessity of conducting accurate and comprehensive scientific research to clarify the facts related to Al-Aqsa Mosque, alerts to the seriousness of the allegations that aim to question its status, and stresses the importance of cooperation between various disciplines to understand and refute these allegations and contribute to enhancing the correct cultural understanding of this important site.*

**Keywords:** Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israelites, Levant.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the issues of interest to scholars of Israelites in general, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in particular, is a review of the historical circumstances under which the mosque was founded. Although some topics have been raised that concern this, this research discusses them by referring to the sources it presents, including Islamic, biblical, and historical texts combined, and by further investigation.

The issues of establishing Al-Aqsa Mosque are not among the issues that can be ignored, as the Islamic texts in the Qur'an and the Hadith have paid attention to them, and have drawn attention to them directly at times, or by linking it to the Sacred Mosque at times, or indirectly at times.

One of the obstacles to delving deeper into the topics of the mosque is the diversity of its specializations, some of which are related to architecture, some of which are related to Sharia studies, and some of them are considered to be in the specialization of history and archaeology. For this reason, the research looks at this topic through the study of architecture, Sharia sciences, and the reading of the Torah, so that the study of the period of the founding of Al-Aqsa Mosque and its architecture is more accurate and detailed.

This study raises questions all related to the founding of the mosque: What is the status that called for the establishment of this noble mosque? Where was it founded? Who founded it and when? How did it acquire its Qur'an name (Al-Aqsa Mosque)?

## Establishment of Al-Aqsa Mosque

### Characteristics of the Al-Aqsa Mosque site

The establishment of Al-Aqsa Mosque was not possible without religious motives in the first place. Anyone who contemplates the geography of the mosque's location will not find it on a major transportation route, commercial caravans on the most active axis (Egypt - the Levant) must change their route to reach Jerusalem

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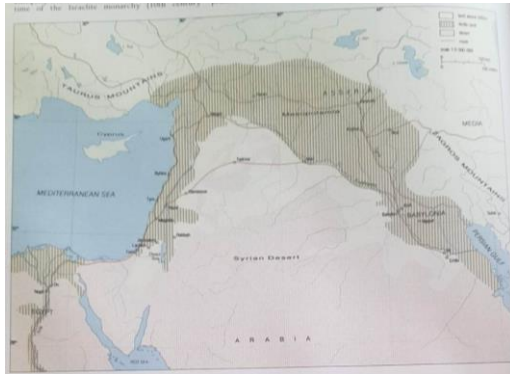
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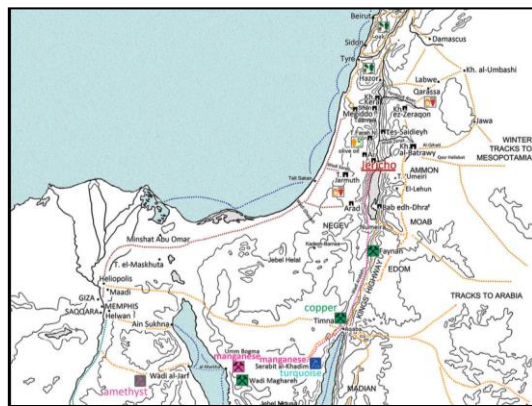
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(Fig. 1) (Nigro et al. 2018, Rogerson 2003: 24), for that the holy city is located within a mountain range that descends steeply lowest point on the ruggedly in a west via Wadi al- after the entrances the shore. importance of the when compared to of this is that when center in Palestine, open to the beach Jaffa and Lod. It is the Levant and Iraq to Egypt, and the plains are surrounded by a diverse fertile food reservoir, including olives, citrus fruits, and field crops (The Palestinian Encyclopedia).



and ruggedly towards the east towards the surface of the earth. It also descends unique way towards the coastal plain in the Sarar, where it receives Lod and Ramla to Latrun and Bab al-Wad, then Jaffa on Therefore, the commercial and political location of the city of Jerusalem declines the locations of other cities. An example the Umayyad state searched for a political it later chose the site of Ramla. Ramla is and the mountains, interconnected with an important transportation node between

The political and commercial conditions are certainly not in favor of establishing a city on the site of Jerusalem. The land surfaces of the city of Jerusalem are so narrow in their terrain that they do not allow for the expansion of a large city. The flat areas within 100 meters in height around the walled city do not exceed 2 km x 4 km. Their inhabitants were hill tribes, and their gods were called mountain gods. The nature of the Jerusalem Mountains shifts sharply between ranges of forests at higher levels in the west and north and dry nature in the east, with a scattered vegetation consisting of wild trees such as pine, oak and poplar, fruit trees such as almonds, figs and olives, shrubs and wild plants such as cactus and a variety of thorns and seasonal herbs. As for the rocky formations the topography of the place did not allow the spread of the cultivation of field crops such as wheat and barley (Alexander 1986: 14-17). When man settled in the region in the pre-pottery Stone Age (B), his choice fell on lands west of present-day Jerusalem, about eighteen kilometers near Abu Ghosh, and when he settled two thousand years later in the Chalcolithic Age, his choice fell on lands north of present-day Jerusalem, about four kilometers in Shuafat. (Gibson et al. 2006, Bar-Yosef Mayer 1997)



**Fig. 1:** Trade routes through Palestine during the Early Bronze Age II, ca. 3000-2800 (Nigro et al. 2018)

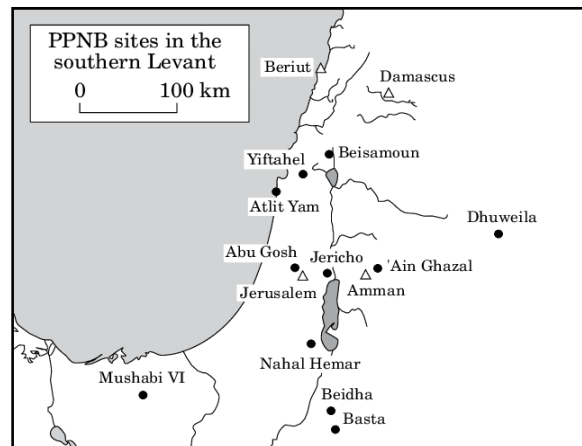


Fig. 2: Lines of movement in the Fertile Crescent and to Egypt during the biblical periods (Rogerson 2003, 24)

Fig. 3: Pre-Pottery Stone Age sites in Palestine (the triangles represent major contemporary cities) (Bar-Yosef Mayer, 1997)

### The Religious Motivation for Establishing Al-Aqsa Mosque

The reason for establishing the city of Jerusalem is highly religious, according to the Islamic conception. The confirmed urban archaeological evidence in the city dates back to the Middle Bronze Age (Kenyon 1974: 78), which was most likely the period of the city's emergence. Some historical studies indicate that that era was the era of Abraham, peace be upon him, and his journey through the regions.

We mentioned above that the location of Jerusalem does not bear the factors of a distinctive strategic or economic status, settlement there was not ancient among the cities of Palestine, such as Jericho, for example, and Bronze Age settlement there was not at the level of its contemporary city-states, such as Megiddo, Beisan, and Lachish (Kenyon 1974: 39). This continued until Abraham, peace be upon him, became interested in Jerusalem, forty years after the establishment of the Kaaba, as confirmed by Islamic sources (Al-Bukhari 3366). In the Old Testament, when he established an "altar" on the Moriah Plateau (by which the biblical sources mean the current site of Al-Aqsa), he then met the chief of a nearby village called Salem, and the biblical sources called him Melchizedek.

It seems that the founding of Al-Aqsa Mosque around the time of Abraham, peace be upon him, was an event that added a religious drive to the site to make it attractive for settlement.

The cities at that time had a heightened prestige due to divine care for them, to the point that they were attributed to the names of pagan deities to confirm that care, an example of this is Beisan (Beit Sin), where the sayings are mixed between Sin being an idol related to the sun or the moon, the syllable (house) means the home or headquarters of a group, service, or idol, whether what is meant is a temple. There are a number of sites in Palestine and elsewhere whose name begins with the syllable (beit), of which more than thirty are mentioned in the Jewish Encyclopedia, and after which it is sometimes attributed to one of the idols (Adler 2009).

Thus, a similar name was mentioned for Jerusalem in more than one place in the Old Testament, which is (Bethel). It enjoys the care and attention of Il, and Ibn Kathir believes in his book that it means the House of God (Ibn Kathir/Al-Turki 2003: 1/454), which means that it promoted to the monotheism from its early days. We now bear witness that God Almighty's care for this site was real. He permitted the construction of Al-Aqsa Mosque there, and the continuation of worship there until this day, while idol temples were removed.

The establishment of Al-Aqsa is a continuation of the establishment of the Holy Kaaba, the two are in the same way and meet common long-term goals, but in both cases it is a call to monotheism. The Holy Kaaba, God Almighty placed in it a non-material bounty, defined a sanctuary for it, and surrounded it with the believers

from the children of Ishmael, so that it would be a center for the call to monotheism, and perhaps a preparation for the final Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. Likewise, Al-Aqsa, forty years later (Al-Bukhari 3366), when the Kaaba had established its status, was a center for the call to monotheism. It was geographically close to the empires of the ancient world, as it was known for its non-material virtues as well, the most prominent of which is the blessing in the text of the revelation (Al-Isra 1/17), and the believers from the Children of Israel and their prophets, peace be upon them, surrounded it, so that they would mingle with the nations and the call of monotheism would not be isolated in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula.

From Al-Aqsa, the call for truth began in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then Moses sought to gain possession of it until Joshua ibn Nun took possession of it, and launched propaganda campaigns from it that sometimes required fighting or a truce. From his land, Talut was installed as king, and then he was succeeded by David and Solomon, who took its vicinity as the capital of their state, and a number of people began from it. Prophets of the Children of Israel, and in it Zechariah hosted Mary and they received their badges, and that blessed chain continued with Yahya and Jesus, peace be upon them all, until God Almighty completed it with the Isra of Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, for that mosque with an important function.

### **The Status of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Islamic Sources**

The verses of revelation draw the Muslim's attention to the non-material merit of that location in more than twenty places, one of which explicitly mentions the mosque by name in the Almighty's saying: "Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed" (Al-Isra 1/17).

As for references to its status and a few of its details, it is widespread in the revelation books, ranging from definitions, stories of the prophets, events of nations, and prophecies of the end of time. It is the second of the two mosques, and its blessing has spread all around it, as the previous verse reads: "From the Sacred Mosque to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which We have blessed around it" (Al-Isra 1/17).

It is the first of the two Qiblahs, as the verse indicates: "And We did not make the Qibla that you used to face except that We might distinguish who follows the Messenger from those who turn on his heels" (Al-Baqarah 143/2), so Qibla that the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, was facing is **Bayt al-Maqdis**. As Al-Tabari said, detailing the agreement of the people of science on that.

From that is the saying of the revelation on the tongue of Moses, peace be upon him, to his people: "O my people, enter the Holy Land which God has ordained for you" (Al-Ma'idah 21/5), and the Holy Land is the outskirts of Bayt al-Maqdis. Al-Tabari cited the consensus of the majority of scholars on that.

There is a description of the revelation of a historical event: "The Romans were defeated (2) in the lowest part of the land, and they will be defeated after their win" (Al-Rum 2-3/30). The lowest part of the land here is the site of the Byzantine defeats of the Romans at the hands of the Sassanian Persians in the early seventh century AD, which is in the Levant, as reported by Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir.

You will also find in the description of the events of the end of time the saying of the revelation: "And listen on the Day when the herald calls from a nearby place" (Q. 41/50), and Al-Qurtubi said: "The nearby place is the rock of Bayt al-Maqdis."

On the virtue of this blessed verse, the Prophet's hadith was detailed in great detail.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, said: "I said: O Messenger of God, which mosque was placed on earth first? He said: The Sacred Mosque. He said: I said then which? He said: The Al-Aqsa Mosque. I said: How much was it between them? He said: Forty years. Then wherever the prayer takes you after it has ended, the merit is in it." (Al-Bukhari 3366, Muslim 520).

The importance of the hadith becomes clear here in explaining one of the unseen things, which is the precedence of the two Grand Mosques and Al-Aqsa Mosques in construction over the rest of the mosques, as indicated by their specialization thanks to their precedence, when there were no mosques on earth except them. The two noble mosques were a haven for the worship of monotheism for many centuries until God specifically

gave permission to our Master Muhammad to continue building mosques due to the frequency of hadiths about that, such as what was mentioned in the narration of Jabir bin Abdullah that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: “I was given five things that none of the prophets before me had been given. I was supported by terror for a distance of a month, and the earth was made for me a place of mosque and purification...” (Al-Bukhari 348, 355, Muslim 521).

The revelation confirms the uniqueness of the two mosques as mosques before Islam, as it did not explicitly name any other mosque from that period.

Moreover, the texts of the Noble Hadith give Al-Aqsa merit in several sections, as it is one of the three major mosques in Islam that are worthy of a visit for their own sake. On the authority of Abu Saeed Al-Khudri, may God be pleased with him, that the Messenger of God, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, said: “Do not embark on a journey except to three mosques: the mosque.” The Sacred Mosque, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and this mosque of mine.” (Al-Bukhari 1197, 1864, 1995, Muslim 827, Al-Tirmidhi 326).

Then, visiting Bayt al-Maqdis entails the hope of forgiveness of sins. On the authority of Abdullah bin Amr, may God be pleased with them both, he said: I heard the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, saying: “When Suleiman bin Daoud built the Mosque of Bayt al-Maqdis, he asked God for three things: He asked God for a ruling that would happen.” He ruled and was given to him, and he asked God for a kingdom that no one should have after him and he was given to him, and he asked God when he finished building the mosque that no one would come to it who would not distract him except to pray in it, to free him from his sin like the day his mother gave birth to him” (Al-Nasa’i 774, Ahmad 2/176).

The reward for praying in Bayt al-Maqdis is double that of other mosques, except for the Grand Mosque and the Prophet’s Mosque. On the authority of Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, he said: We discussed while we were with the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace: Which is better, the mosque of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, or Bayt al-Maqdis? The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: “One prayer in this mosque of mine is better than four prayers in it, and what a wonderful prayer place it is.” It was mentioned in the hadith of Abu Hurairah on the authority of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace: “A prayer in this mosque of mine is better than a thousand prayers in any other place, except the Sacred Mosque” (Al-Bukhari 1190, Muslim 1394).

Based on that hadith, Al-Ali (1996: 62) believes that prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis is equivalent to two hundred and fifty prayers in other mosques. Other than that, none of the hadiths about it have been proven from the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. The hadiths that bring this meaning are weak and cannot be supported as evidence. .

It is also noted that the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, called Al-Aqsa Mosque “Bayt al-Maqdis” in several places, so our saying “Bayt al-Maqdis” may be a designation for a specific landmark and not for the entire city. The formula (Bayt al-Maqdis) shares a meaning with the designations of the most important halls in the building that the Jews called (the Temple) or one of the names for the Holy City, but that formula does not appear literally in either part of the “Holy Book.” The formulas of sanctification in the Old Testament are numerous, such as the formula (the Holy of Holies) about 21 times, some of which are related to the period before the Temple and some of them are related to the Temple, and the formula (the sanctuary) is also mentioned many times (such as: Exodus 35, Leviticus 19 and 26, Ezekiel 45). The word “Bait Al Qudus” was also mentioned once (1 Chronicles 3/29), and the word “the sanctuary of the house” was mentioned similarly (Ezekiel 21/48), and the word “the house is outside the sanctuary” (Ezekiel 43). However, this formula was mentioned in the Talmud, where the name (Beit Hamikdash = בית המקדש) was given to the entire Temple, especially in the Gemara, which some consider to be an indirect reference to this formula in the heritage of the children of Israel.

The word “Maqdis” is the name of a place that goes back to the root “Qaddas” with an emphasis on the signifier, which means the repetition and continuation of sanctification. This is similar to our saying “east,” “west,” and “mosque.” Thus, (the sanctuary) is an object of sanctification that does not go away. It is continuous

and repeated day and night. This includes the fact that sanctification was in place at the moment of the Night Journey of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, during the night.

From comparing the word “Bait Al Qudus” to the word “House of Sacred,” such as the saying of the revelation: “God made the Kaaba the Sacred House” (Al-Ma’idah 97/5); We see that if the Kaaba is the House of God in the area of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, then it is the Sacred House in the text of the verse, then Al-Aqsa Mosque is the House of God in the area of the Levantine Holy Mosque, so it is Bait Al Qudus.

As for the reason for focusing on the sanctification of that place, it seems to be a reminder to visitors and attendees that it is not like other places, lest some be negligent in glorifying it out of habit, especially since a group of the Children of Israel went into it with all debauchery and immorality.

## **Those Responsible for Establishing the Two Mosques**

### **The Importance of The Issue of Establishing the Two Mosques**

According to the Meccan revelation texts, the name “mosque” was only given to two mosques before the migration and the spread of Islamic mosques: The Sacred Mosque and Al-Aqsa Mosque: “Glory be to Him who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque” (Al-Isra 1/17)

There is an important note, which further links the two holy mosques together, which is that the Islamic sources did not mention the date of the founding of Al-Aqsa Mosque directly, but rather left that matter due to its chronological connection with the founding of the Grand Mosque (Al-Bukhari 3366).

The founding of the Sacred House is a solemn matter. We realize the extent of its importance and the sensitivity of its details from the allocation of several places in the revelation to mention it explicitly, as we will explain below. To the same degree, the frequency of the hadith that linked the dates of their founding confirms that the founding of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is important within Muslim culture, as they were linked in the text of the revelation in the event of the Night Journey (Al-Isra 1/17).

### **Al-Aqsa Mosque, The Second Mosque**

It has been previously stated that Al-Aqsa Mosque is the second mosque built by Abraham, peace be upon him, as stated in the hadith of Abu Dharr, may God be pleased with him, on the authority of the Prophet, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, mentioned above, who specified 40 years between the establishment of the two mosques.

The revelation made it clear that Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them, were the founders of the Sacred House in several places, the clearest of which is the Almighty’s saying: “And when Abraham raised the foundations of the House and Ishmael, our Lord, accept it from us. Indeed, You are the Hearer, the Knower” (Al-Baqarah 127/2).

Thus, it is an ancient mosque, as stated in the revelation, as it was described as the Ancient House in two places, such as the Almighty’s saying: “Then let them put an end to their indecency and fulfill their vows and circumambulate the Ancient House” (Al-Hajj 22/29), in addition to verse 33 of Surat Al-Hajj itself.

Hajj to it was a comprehensive obligation for all people: “Indeed, the first House established for mankind was the one in Mecca, blessed and a guidance for the worlds (96). In it are clear signs, the station of Abraham, and whoever enters it will be safe. And to God is the obligation of the people to perform Hajj to the House, whoever is able to make a way to it” (Al Imran 3/96-97).

These verses show that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is from the era of Abraham, peace be upon him, because it was limited to a period that was the life of Abraham, peace be upon him, and its mention was linked to the mention of the Sacred Mosque, and this is what the People of the Book neglected to mention, and it is what God has designated His Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, to know.

There is a note of great importance, which is the revelation’s care in clarifying the identity of the builder of the house and emphasizing that, which indicates the sensitivity of this information within the Muslim culture, and

thus we are not inclined to some people saying that it is secondary because they think that no work is based on it. This strongly indicates that determining the identity of the builder of Al-Aqsa Mosque also becomes essential, since the hadith stipulates linking the two mosques.

We also see that the texts of the revelation insist on highlighting the role of Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them, in the matter of establishing the House. It did not link any other of the prophets to the story of the founding of the House, not even as a hint, or to intervene in any detail, no matter how marginal. Here only Abraham and Ishmael. Neither Adam, Noah, nor the prophets of the Children of Israel, peace be upon them all, had their names connected in the verse of revelation to the House or any of its rituals and affairs, from near or far.

Likewise, Al-Bukhari (3364) narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, may God be pleased with them both, that the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "Then he brought her [i.e. Hagar], Ibrahim, and her son Ismail, and she was breastfeeding him, until he placed her at the house, at a fountain above Zamzam at the top of the mosque. And there was no one in Mecca that day... So Ibrahim set off until when he was at the place where they could not see him, he faced the House with his face, then he called out these words, and raised his hands and said: Our Lord, I have made some of my descendants dwell in a valley devoid of crops - until it reached - they would be grateful... The king said to her: Do not be afraid of the wasteland, for here is a house for God, built by the boy and his father, and God will not waste its people, and the house was high from the ground like a hill, and the torrents came to it and took it from its right and left [Then the hadith narrates the descent of Jurhum and the marriage of Ishmael]... Then he [Ibrahim] stayed away from them. God willing, then he came after that, and Ismail was clearing a spear for him under a bush close to Zamzam. When he saw him, he rose to him, and they did as a father does to a child and a child does to a father. Then he said: God has commanded me to do a command. He said: So do what your Lord has commanded. He said: And you will help me. He said: And I will help you. He said: God commanded me to build a house here, and he pointed to a hill that was high around it. He said: Then they raised the foundations of the house, and Ishmael began to bring stones and Abraham built, until when the building was raised, he brought this stone, and placed it for him, and he stood on it, while he was building and Ishmael handed him the stones, and they said: "Our Lord, accept it from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Ibn Ashour says in the Qur'an description "Who has blessed us around him": "The reasons for the blessing of Al-Aqsa Mosque are many, as indicated by the word "around it", including that it was established by Abraham, peace be upon him, and among them is the blessing that was attached to it by those of the prophets who prayed through it, from David and Solomon and to the prophets after them. The children of Israel, then the arrival of the Messenger Jesus, peace be upon him, and his announcement of the call to God in him and around him, and among them is the blessing of the prophets who were buried around him. It has been proven that the graves of David and Solomon are around Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the greatest of those blessings is the arrival of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, in it, that is an extraordinary arrival, and his connection therein to all the prophets." (Ibn Ashour: 20/15)

### **Other Sayings About the Construction of The Kaaba, And Thus Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Some opinions are based on the fact that the Kaaba was built on an ancient foundation. There have been narrations that the builder of the Kaaba was Adam, peace be upon him, and others attribute the work to the honorable angels, and so on. This is a necessary detail, because some Muslim researchers repeat statements for which no reliable sources are known.

### **Sources of This Saying**

The saying that the Kaaba was not founded by Abraham and Ismail has been mentioned in a number of sources, the most important of which is "The Book of Mecca News and the Antiquities that Contain Therein," which is attributed to Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Azraqi (d. 250 AH/864), and that book is full of antiquities that are supposed to detail the situation. The Grand Mosque throughout its history. However, dealing with Al-Azraqi's novels has problems, including:



## **Al-Azraqi Is Unknown**

Al-Fasi (d. 832 AH/1429) is surprised by the absence of a translation of Al-Azraqi among the scholars of hadith, more than five hundred years after the death of the one who was supposed to be the narrator of the hadiths of the book. Al-Fasi said in his translation of Al-Iqd Al-Thameen (1987: 2/49): I did not see anyone translating it, and I am astonished by that. Al-Mu'alami (1996) said: "Al-Azraqi himself was not authenticated by any of the imams of al-Jarh wal-Ta'deel, nor did Al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH/864) mention him, nor did Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 327 AH/938). Rather, Al-Fasi said in his translation of Al-Iqd Al-Thameen: I did not see anyone Translate it, and it is according to the rule of the imams of hadith: the condition is unknown." Al-Albani said: "We did not find a translation of it in the printed or manuscript references except the sayings of Al-Samani and Ibn Al-Nadim."

## **The Book Was Attributed to Al-Azraqi Late After His Death**

The book "Akhbar Mecca" was not attributed to Al-Azraqi before Al-Nadim mentioned it in his book "Al-Fihrist" (d. 384 AH/994), that is, more than a hundred years after the death of the supposed author, and after an additional hundred years, Abu Al-Muzaffar Al-Sam'ani (d. 489/1096) followed him, which raises doubt in its attribution to him, in addition to Al-Tabari not mentioning it and what Al-Albani said about it.

## **The Strangeness of Its Contents**

Abu Shahba (168) said: "Also, Al-Suyuti, in his interpretation of "Al-Durr Al-Manthur," said most of the narration from Al-Azraqi and other historians and commentators like him who are like lumberjacks at night, and do not distinguish between the dung and the fat and the acceptable and the rejected in building a house." He continued: "And may God have mercy on the Imam." Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir, he explained to us the origin of most of these narratives, which were created by the Children of Israel and fabricated by their heretics.

For this reason, we question the accounts of the book "Akhbar Mecca" attributed to Al-Azraqi.

## **Al-Azraqi's Narratives Regarding the Founding of the Kaaba by the Angels and Adam**

Al-Azraqi cited a number of narrations regarding Adam's construction of the Kaaba, no less than thirteen, such as that he claimed on the authority of Ibn Abbas that he said: "When God brought Adam down to earth from Paradise, his head was in the sky and his feet were on the earth... so God lowered him for sixty arm and he said: O Lord, why do I not hear the voices of the angels or sense them? He said: It is your fault, Adam, but go and build me a house and circumambulate it, and remember me around it like what I saw the angels doing around my throne. Then Adam began to pass, and the earth was folded for him, and God seized the victors for him, and every conquest became a success. He passes through it step by step, and God took what was in it of labor or sea, and made it for him a step, and his foot did not set on any part of the earth without it becoming a land and a blessing, until he reached Mecca and built the Sacred House..., and its place was removed by the flood until God sent Abraham and Ishmael to them. Peace, so raise its bases and flags." (Al-Azraqi/Malhas 1987: 36/1)

In this narration and other narrations in the book, there are many other details that are extremely strange without any evidence: Adam is taller than the mountains, the Kaaba was a tent from Paradise in the shape of a ruby red like a copy of the built house, the corner is a seat for Adam, and Eve was cast out - for her sin - outside the sanctuary with the jinn and devils. Despite this, Adam would go out to her to have sex with her and return, while Ibrahim indicated the location of the house through a cloud similar to the size of the house that was not revealed until he finished building (Al-Azraqi/Malhas 1987).

As for the chain of transmission, Al-Azraqi is unknown, and the book's attribution to him is fundamentally doubtful. We also notice the strangeness of the meaning in an objectionable way that is not consistent in all the narrations. Regarding the identity of the builder of the Kaaba, it is noteworthy how Al-Azraqi's texts frantically try to go beyond the Qur'an concept to convince that Adam is the one meant.

Al-Azraqi also narrates that angels are the builders of the Kaaba. On the authority of Muhammad bin Ali bin Al-Hussein: "God, Blessed and Most High, said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will place a caliph on earth.' The angels



said: 'Is there a caliph from other than us, who will make mischief therein and shed blood, and who envy each other, and hate each other, and retaliate against one another?' That is, 'Lord, make that caliph from among us, for we will not cause corruption therein, nor will we shed blood.'" ...And God Almighty said: I know what you do not know. He said: Then the angels thought that they had only said it in response to their Lord, the Almighty, and that He had become angry at their words, so they took refuge in the Throne, and raised their heads, and pointed with their fingers, supplicating and crying out of pity for His anger. They circled the Throne for three hours, then God looked at them and mercy descended. Then God Almighty placed a house under the throne on four pillars of aquamarine and overlaid them with a red ruby... Then God Almighty sent angels and said to them, "Build for me a house on earth similar to its size. So God Almighty commanded those on earth of his creation to circumambulate this house as the people of The sky is in the populated house" (Al-Azraqi/Malhas 1987: 1/34).

In terms of the chain of transmission, when it was published, it was found that in its chain of transmission is Al-Qasim bin Abdul-Rahman Al-Ansari, and they said about it: It is very weak, and it is nothing, the hadith is objectionable, the hadith is confused, and its hadiths are falsehoods (Al-Shalahi 2019: 1/102). Thus, the story of the construction of the Kaaba before the creation of Adam and the beginning of the circumambulation becomes a false and weak story. In addition, Al-Azraqi himself is of unknown condition. As for the meaning, he says that the angels are entrusted with legislation, and that they asked for caliphate on earth, and that God Almighty became angry with them, then turned to them in repentance three hours after they circumambulated the throne, and that they built a mosque for the people of the earth while Adam had not yet been created, and that is what is in great contradiction with the constants in Islamic concepts.

### **Lexical Review**

One of the most important words that some scholars rush to judge is their analysis of the word (foundations) in the verse: "And when Abraham raised the foundations of the House and Ishmael, our Lord, accept it from us. Indeed, You are the Hearer, the Knower" (Al-Baqarah 127/2).

The word "Qaeda" is derived from the root "Qaada," and therefore the root is a group of derivations.

It indicates empowerment, like the verse in the revelation: "You place the believers in seats for battle" (Al-Imran 121/3), meaning you lead them to it so that they can gain strength in it. The shoot sat down and was sitting: it had a trunk to sit on.

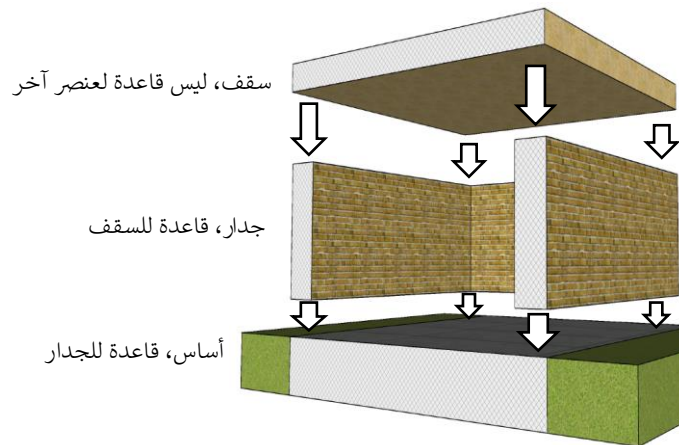
It includes preface, taming, and lifting weights. And sitting in the saddle and riding; You sit on them. Sitting, open: a person's vehicle and seat. A sitting animal is one that a man mounts to ride, especially like a donkey. Sitting camels: those that the shepherd has subjugated to ride and carry provisions and luggage.

It contains the meaning of the origin of the structure; The base of a building is the foundation stone on which it stands. Likewise, parts of the building have bases; The column is a base for the parts of the building that support it and form it. Al-Zajjaj said: The foundations are the pillars of the building that support it, and in the revelation: "So God came to build their building from the foundations, and the roof fell upon them from above" (An-Nahl 26/16), that is, from the walls and columns, and for this reason it was said that so-and-so is the pillar of the house, meaning Its basis (Ibn Mandur 1414, Omar 2008).

Thus, we see that the concept of the foundation in establishments refers to what they depend on and constitute their form. The group of load-bearing walls and columns emerge from their bases, and those in turn are bases on which the roof is mounted above them. Therefore, in the hadith of Al-Nasa'i (3827), the foundations of Abraham were described as being "like the humps of camels touching each other," as the touching is the intensity of their elements coming together and cohesive.

Therefore, the expression "revealing" by saying "he raises... the foundations" should not be understood as some have imagined; It was based on an old foundation and then topped it with walls. Rather, it is a common expression in the revelation for the foundation of the new building as well. Did you not see that the context of the expression "raised" was mentioned in the matter of the Kaaba and in the matter of building the houses of God in general, such as the Almighty's saying: "And when Abraham raised the foundations of the House" (Al-

Baqarah 2/121), “in houses that God had permitted to be raised” (An-Nour 36/ 24), the nominative case here expresses the origin of the construction in both places



**Fig. 4:** Clarification of the linguistic concept of the idea of what may be called foundation in constructions

### **Reviewing The Physical Characteristics of Adam, Peace Be Upon Him**

In reviewing the physical specifications, we must return to parts of the narratives attributed to Al-Azraqi, to highlight their contradiction from this aspect as well.

As for the first, it describes the structure of Adam’s body, peace be upon him: “His head was in the sky and his feet were on the earth... Then God Almighty lowered him by sixty cubits, so Adam, peace be upon him, began to step forward... until he reached Mecca and built the Sacred House.” There is no basis in the Sahih for this except what Al-Bukhari narrated (3326) on the authority of Abu Hurairah, may God be pleased with him, that the Messenger of God, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, said: “God created Adam and his height was sixty cubits..., and the creation has continued to decrease until now.” Al-Azraqi’s description is similar to Al-Maqrizi’s exaggerations about those he calls the Amalekites, as he reported that they reached four hundred cubits in height, and that the cranium of one of them provided shade for seventy men (Al-Habashna ,292;2019).

The second part describes the measurements of the Kaaba when Abraham, peace be upon him, built it. Al-Azraqi (109) mentioned that “Ibrahim, Khalil al-Rahman, built the Kaaba, the Sacred House, and made its length in the sky nine cubits, its length on earth thirty cubits, and its width on earth twenty-two cubits, and it was unroofed during the reign of Abraham.”

The third part, according to Al-Azraqi, says that Abraham built the house on the foundation of Adam: “When God Almighty sent Abraham, his friend, peace be upon him, seeking a foundation, and when he reached it, God Almighty shaded them. The house was covered with a cloud, which was the edge of the first house, and then it remained resting on its edge, shadowing Abraham and guiding him in place of the foundations until... May God raise the rules high.”

The summary of the three texts according to Al-Azraqi above is that Abraham built the Kaaba on the foundation of Adam, who sought it until he reached it, and whose average size is 31 x 22 cubits (about 15.5 x 11 meters), and this is not correct. The basic principle is that the huge physical measurements of Adam’s body, peace be upon him, required a house for circumambulation in the same monument, while the measurements of the Kaaba, with a length of 30 cubits, were only half of his height for him, and a height of nine cubits that remained below his knee. If we believe Al-Azraqi in his narration about the dimensions of Adam, peace be upon him, then the latter did not succeed in providing a suitable house for his circumambulation. It is like people today circumambulating a box, excluding the Kaaba from that expression.

Thus, it is impossible for Adam, peace be upon him, to build a house with the current measurements of the Kaaba. If he wanted to do that, what would be the need to build on separate stones or to build brick by brick so that each of them was of infinitesimal dimensions relative to its dimensions, as if they were pebbles to him? Perhaps he could have placed them in a rocky mass. One is enough, or a few slabs of rock, or he makes it out of wood, and those executive details seen from ancient times are additional confirmation that the Kaaba was not created by him.

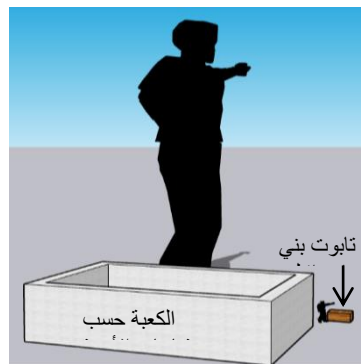
But here the relationship of this idea to the Israelites emerges again. If we took the measurements of that box according to the dimensions of Adam, and then reduced them to suit our current dimensions (2.2 cubits Its length is two and a half cubits [corresponding to 36.5 cubits according to Adam], and its width is a cubit and a half [corresponding to 22 cubits according to Adam], and its height is a cubit and a half" (Exodus 10/25). Wahb bin Munabbih said that it was three cubits by two cubits (Nafsir al-Tabari 5664) to roughly match the proportions of the Kaaba (about 3/2). Perhaps the opposite is true: that the proportions of the Ark are derived from the proportions of the Kaaba, according to the instructions of the prophets of the Children of Israel, and their followers are unaware

Fig. 5: Illustration of the ratio of a shape with the measurements of the Kaaba to a human being multiplied 15 times in size, and comparing that to the natural size of a human being and a box the size of the Ark of the Covenant.

### A Summary of The Opinions of Scholars Regarding the Builder of The Kaaba

We have presented various opinions of scholars regarding the news of Al-Azraqi, and we will summarize them in some statements below.

According to Al-Tabari in his saying: "The correct statement Almighty, in mentioning Him, friend, that he and his son House, and there is no news of established by it and one must



In turn, Ibn Kathir concluded authentic report from the Abraham , peace be upon him, place of the house" (Al-Hajj apparent, because what is meant is his destined place in the knowledge of God Almighty, established in his power and exalted in the sight of the prophets, his place from the time of Adam to the time of Abraham."

interpretation (57/3), he concluded by regarding this for us is to say: God told on the authority of Abraham, his Ismail raised the foundations of the Sacred [any of the other options] "The proof is submit to it."

in his history (378/1) that "there is no infallible that the house was built before and whoever adheres to this by saying "the 26/22) is neither contradictory nor

We have cited the opinion of Abu Shahba (1974: 168) that "Al-Azraqi and his like are historians and commentators who are like lumberjacks at night, and do not distinguish between the dung and the fat and the acceptable and the rejected in building a house. And who built it before Abraham: the more important of the angels or Adam?... This transmission took time." Most of which are from the Israelites who took a few ten pages from the People of the Book, none of which are authentic or proven to exceed a tenth of this amount.

In his history (379/1), Ibn Kathir was also surprised by Al-Azraqi's news and attributed it to the Children of Israel: "We mentioned that a dome was erected over by Adam, and that the angels said to him: We circumambulated this House before you, and that the ship circumambulated it for forty days or so, but all this news is about the Children of Israel, and we have determined that it is neither truthful nor false, so it cannot be used as evidence. But if the truth rejects it, it is rejected."

As for the revelation, nothing was mentioned other than the relationship of the two honorable prophets Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them, with the affairs of the Grand Mosque, from determining its location to raising its structure and announcing its rituals. Returning to the lexical study, grammar has a precise meaning that differs from foundations.

As for the hadith, this research above has shown that everything that was mentioned about the angels or Adam building the Kaaba is weak in chain of transmission and strange in the text, and is likely to be from the Israelites. Only the hadiths that spoke about Abraham and Ishmael building the Sacred Mosque were authentic. In addition, it is not reasonable for angels to be assigned to build mosques, nor are the measurements of the Kaaba suitable for the structure of Adam, peace be upon him.

Thus, the two noble prophets Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them, were the ones who founded and built the Kaaba.

## **The Founding Builder of The Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque**

### **Ibn Kathir's Theory, May God Have Mercy on Him**

Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH/1373) directs in his history (375/1) the following statement: "According to the People of the Book, it is Jacob, peace be upon him, who founded Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is the Mosque of Elijah in Jerusalem, may God honor him. This is the basis of what we have mentioned from the hadith. This will be the building of Jacob, who is Israel, peace be upon him, after Abraham and his son Ishmael built the Sacred Mosque, forty years alike."

He cited the hadith of Abu Dharr regarding the difference of 40 years between the two mosques, linking it to the saying of the revelation: "And We gave to him Isaac and Jacob" (Maryam 19/49), and he concluded that there must be a reason for the birth of Jacob after Isaac during the days of Abraham, peace be upon them, which in his opinion is that Jacob, peace be upon him, builds Al-Aqsa Mosque. But his text shows that he was guided by an understanding he had gained from the People of the Book.

Ibn Kathir later narrated this story in the chapter "Ishaq bin Ibrahim, peace and blessings be upon them" in his history (1/448-454), in the chapter "Ishaq bin Ibrahim, peace and blessings be upon them" (1/448-454):

"When their mother heard what Eas was promising his brother Jacob, she ordered her son Jacob to go to her brother Laban, who was in the land of Harran, and to be with him until his brother's anger against him subsided, and to marry one of his daughters. She told her husband Isaac to order him to do that and advise him and pray for him, so he did.

So Jacob, peace be upon him, left them at the end of that day, and evening caught up with him in a place where he slept. He took a stone and placed it under his head and slept. In his sleep, he saw that ascension erected from heaven to earth, and behold, the angels were ascending and descending in it, and the Lord, Blessed and Most High, was speaking to him and saying to him: "I am." I will bless you, increase your offspring, and make this land yours and your descendants after you.

When he woke up from his sleep, he was happy with what he saw, and vowed to God that if he returned to his family safely, he would build in this place a temple to God Almighty, and that everything He provided him with would be a tenth of God. Then he went to that stone and applied oil to it to recognize him, and he called that place Bethel. That is, the House of God, and it is the site of Bait Al Maqdis today, which Jacob built after that, as will follow, then he went to Harran and stayed for twenty years.] Then he passed by Jerusalem, the village of Sahem [perhaps it is Nablus today], so he descended before the village and bought the farm of the children of Hamor, the father of Sahem, for a hundred ewe, so he pitched his tent there, and built then an altar and called it (El, God of Israel), and God commanded him to build it so that he might be revealed to him in it, and it is Bait Al Maqdis today... and it is the place of the rock that he marked by applying oil on it before that, as we mentioned first."

Thus, he almost quotes a biblical text in its entirety: "So Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a place and spent the night there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and put them under his head, and he lay down in that place. And he saw a dream; and behold, a ladder was set on the ground with its top He touched the sky, and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and he saw the Lord standing over it, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be like the

dust of the earth, and you will spread west, east, north, and south, and all the families of the earth will be blessed in you and in your descendants. And, behold, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have said to you.” Then Jacob woke up from his sleep and said, “Truly, the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” He was afraid and said, “How terrible this place is!” This is nothing but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its head. And he called the name of that place Bethel...And Jacob vowed a vow, saying: If God be with me...this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be a house for God (Genesis 28/10-22). [Then he went to Harran and stayed for twenty years (Genesis 31/38-41)]. Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan... and he set up an altar there, and called it “El, the God of Israel” (Genesis 33/18-20). Then Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, which is Bethel... and built an altar there, and called the place “El Bethel” because there God appeared to him when he fled from his brother (Genesis 35/6-7).”

It is clear that Ibn Kathir, may God have mercy on him, derived his theory from the Torah, in addition to the fact that he mentioned this, perhaps with some geographical and historical confusion in his narration when he mixed Shechem with Jerusalem, that is, Nablus with Jerusalem. But the issue is that the Israelites here are the basis for what Ibn Kathir mentioned, that Jacob was the one who built Al-Aqsa Mosque, and we see that he did not achieve a broad investigation into the possible conflicts in Jacob’s story regarding the course of the narrative and the arrangement of its details.

### **Why Did Ibn Kathir Neglect to Assume That Abraham Was the Builder?**

Although the narratives of the Israelites have no evidence in Islamic culture, Ibn Kathir exploited their narrative to clarify his conviction that Jacob was the builder of Al-Aqsa.

The question is why Ibn Kathir did not return to the establishment of altars (sites for ritual slaughter) and the establishment of “Bethel” to its earlier time, the days of Abraham, as stated in the Book of Genesis: “So Abram went, as the Lord had said to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out from Haran, Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew, and all the possessions they had acquired, and the souls that they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. The Canaanites were then in the land, and the Lord appeared to Abraham and said: “To your offspring I give this land.” So he built an altar there [the altar of Shechem] to the Lord who had appeared to him, and then he moved it to the mountain east of Bethel [perhaps in the area of Jerusalem today - perhaps the Mount of Olives] and set it up his tent, and he had Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, so he built there an altar to the Lord [the altar of Bethel] and called on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4/9-12), [Then he traveled to Egypt and returned to meet the prophet Lot at Bethel, then Lot went to the Jordan and he moved south] So “Abram moved his tents and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre which are in Hebron [perhaps present-day Hebron], and built there an altar to the Lord [the Hebron altar]” (Genesis 18/13). Note that this biblical text mentioned three altars in Shechem and Bethel. Hebron, as “Bethel” mentioned, meaning the House of God, was founded by Abraham, peace be upon him, before his trip to Egypt.

It seems that Ibn Kathir, may God have mercy on him, reviewed this text and did not accept it completely. He presented a brief part of it in his book (The Beginning and the End) in the chapter “The Migration of Abraham to the Levant,” thus: “And the People of the Book mentioned that when [Abraham] came to the Levant, he revealed by God, I am giving this land to your successor after you. So Abraham built an altar to God in thanks for this blessing, and set up its dome to the east of Bait Al Maqdis .”

Thus, we find that Ibn Kathir’s text goes beyond the details of Abraham’s construction of the House of God and three altars, while he focused on the details of Jacob’s construction of the House of God and was lenient in interpreting them in the story of Jacob above (see 1-3 above) that it is “the site of Bait Al Maqdis today, which Jacob built later.”

The reason is most likely because the Biblical text of Abraham’s arrival to the land of Canaan conflicts with the hadith that states that the Sacred House preceded Al-Aqsa by forty years. If Ibn Kathir assumed that Abraham

founded the Al-Aqsa Mosque (House of God or Bethel) upon his arrival from Harran, then he must have built the Sacred House forty years before that, but the Torah says that his age at that time was seventy-five years, meaning that Ishmael was not born. The visit to Egypt did not take place at all, so that Abraham would marry the mother of Ishmael, according to the books of the Torah. The time frame here was evidenced against it in an authentic hadith, and it is clear that Ibn Kathir paid attention to this.

But instead of Ibn Kathir transferring the details of Abraham's construction of Al-Aqsa Mosque (Beit El) to a suitable time frame, perhaps by delaying it by about fifty years to fit within the time frame of Abraham's return from Mecca, he ignored it. Then he quoted the saying that Jacob built the mosque and was lenient in believing it, which constituted a reference that we consider confusing to many scholars.

### **How Do We Re-Read the Topic?**

Ibn Kathir concluded that the founding of the mosque occurred after the return of Jacob from the land of Harran, when he was at least 60 years old. His twin brother Esau (or Al-Eis) was 40 years old when he left, as the Torah states (Genesis 26/34), and we will see below that Abraham, peace be upon him, had died at that time according to that hypothesis. If Abraham did not exist, then what was the significance of Ibn Kathir linking Jacob and Abraham and citing a verse from Surat Maryam?

From here, we saw that listing the ages of these noble figures and the ages of the events of that period is important to clarify the confusion that occurred with Ibn Kathir.

Let us begin with the age of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, upon his death. We can infer it from Sahih Ibn Hibban (6205) on the authority of Abu Hurairah, may God be pleased with him, that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Ibrahim the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, was circumcised when he reached 120 years of age, and he lived after that for eighty years [80] and was circumcised at the time." The hadith was authenticated by Shuaib Al-Arnaout according to Muslim's conditions.

It is also confirmed in another narration that his age at the time of circumcision was only 80 years. The two sheikhs (Bukhari 3356, Muslim 2370) narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: "Ibrahim the Prophet, peace be upon him, was circumcised when he was eighty years old "By coming."

It is as if Ibn Hajar in Al-Fath (11/92) felt comfortable combining the two narrations by saying that he died when he was about 160 years old. In fact, he cited in this sense a hadith narrated by Ubaid bin Umair, which tends to be weak.

As for Ibn Kathir (1/403-404), he reported: "They said: Then Abraham, peace be upon him, fell ill and died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five [Shiri (1/201) added: It was said that he was ninety years old. And there has been evidence that indicates that he was that he lived two hundred years."

This, and by extrapolating the age of his wife, Mrs. Sarah, may God have mercy on her, it is possible to derive the minimum age of Ibrahim, even though most of the data are from Israelites. She gave birth to Isaac at the age of 90 and Abraham was 100 (Genesis 17/17, 21/5). Ibn Kathir inclines to the fact that she met Jacob according to the verse: "So We gave her the good tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac is Jacob" (Hud 71/11), and it is narrated that Jacob was born to his father at the age of 60 (Genesis 25/26), so her age would then be 150 years, while Abraham's age at the birth of Jacob was 160, and he may have been alive at that time due to God Almighty's saying: "And We gave him Isaac and Jacob" (Al-An'am 84/6). The Israelites tell a touching story about the death of Sarah and Abraham's efforts to bury her, then how he married Keturah and she bore him six sons (Genesis 26/1-2). This may have taken a few years, over one hundred and sixty, until Abraham, peace be upon him, died.

As for the texts of the People of the Book, they state: "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years (Genesis 25/7).

In summary, there are one hundred and sixty in our sources in the hadith of Ubaid bin Umair, and two hundred in the narration of Ibn Hibban. Among the Israelites there are one hundred and sixty-odd, based on the ages of Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, and one hundred and seventy-five in the Book of Genesis.

For another reason, we must estimate Abraham’s age when the Kaaba was built, as Al-Aqsa was forty years later, so that we can know the possibility that Abraham was the one who founded it. The introduction to this is the age of our master Ismail, with whom the Kaaba was built.

The birth of Ishmael, peace be upon him, was mentioned in the texts of the People of the Book, and it was stated that the age of Abraham, peace be upon him, was 86 years at that time (Genesis 16/16).

One of the biblical texts links the circumcision incident between the two noble prophets to explain the age difference. It says that Abraham, peace be upon him, was circumcised when he was 99 years old, and his thirteen-year-old son Ishmael was circumcised with him (Genesis 17/26), so the difference again is 86 years. As for the two previous hadiths, they indicate that the circumcision occurred when Ibrahim was 120 years old according to Ibn Hibban, compared to 80 according to Al-Bukhari. If we accept that Ishmael was 13 years old then, Abraham would have been 107-167 years old when Ishmael was born. The construction of the Kaaba occurred after the construction of Ishmael in two consecutive pairs and Abraham’s visit to both of them, as stated in Al-Bukhari’s narration (3364) of the hadith of Abdullah bin Abbas above.

As for the first wife, she complained about the hardship of living, and she began detailing to Abraham what had happened and her opinion on what should be. He must have seen that a complaining wife like this would not be of help to his son, so he felt pity for him and advised him to leave her. As for Ismail’s second husband, Ibrahim was pleased with her welcome, ease, satisfaction, and praise of her husband, while their livelihood remained the same. She expressed that she would help her husband through the hardships of his life, so he prayed for her and advised him to support her.

Then Abraham returned a third time to build the Kaaba.

The text of the hadith suggests two issues: The first is that Ismail, peace be upon him, was a young man establishing the marital home, and the second issue is that strengthening family understanding was a necessary prelude for Ismail to participate in building the Kaaba, an honor that was one of the great achievements in the record of Ismail, peace be upon him, and at the same time one of the most difficult costs, as Nations did not know it. How old do we expect Ishmael to be then? Again, there is no authentic text in our sources, but rather a weak narration by Ibn Saad, which stated that the age of Abraham on the day of construction was 100 years and that Ishmael was 30 with him (Al-Zuhri/Umar 2001: 1/35).

What is noteworthy is that if we adopt this figure for Ismail’s age, our conclusion is supported by the hadith on circumcision above, as is evident in Table (1).

according to Ibn Saad	According to the Israelites	According to Ibn Hibban	According to Al-Bukhari	Ages of the characters associated with the census	S/N
Ibn Saad 100	Genesis86	Ibn Hibban	Al-Bukhari 80	(Abraham’s age at circumcision (texts	A
		Genesis13	Genesis 13	(Ishmael’s age at circumcision (Israeli text	B
		Subtraction 107	Subtraction 67	Abraham’s age at the birth of Ishmael (subtract b (from a	C
	Ibn Saad 30	Ibn Saad 30	Ibn Saad 30	Ismail’s age when building the Kaaba (weak text)	D
Abu Dharr140	Abu Dharr 156	Abu Dharr 177	Abu Dharr 137	The age of Abraham when building the Kaaba (add (d to c)	E
Al-Bukhari and Ibn Hibban 160	Genes175	Ibn Hibba 200	Al-Bukhari and Ibn Hibban 160	The age of Abraham when Al-Aqsa was built (add (40 to AH	F
Genesis100	Genesis 100	Genesis100	Genesis100	((Abraham’s age at his death (text	G
Genesis160	Genesis160	Genesis160	Genesis160	Abraham’s age at the birth of Isaac (Israeli text)	H
Not born	Not born	17	Not born	Abraham’s age at the birth of Jacob (add 60 to h)	I
				Age of Jacob when building Al-Aqsa (subtract i from f)	J



30 years is a reasonable age according to what is customary regarding the age of marriage and maturity, and there is no other text in our sources or in the Israeli sources. If we accept it beyond our promise to the Israelites, then we add it to the age of Abraham on the day of Ishmael's birth, which is 86 years, so that Abraham's age will become 116 years when the Kaaba was built.

So Abraham's age when it was built would be 100-116 years, according to the above.

Add 40 years of difference between the two mosques, so Abraham's age on the day Al-Aqsa was built was 140-156 years. We most likely think that he was still alive at that time, based on our analysis of his age, that he was between 160 and 200 years old.

If the Kaaba was founded when Abraham was 100, as Ibn Saad narrated, Only then, according to the Israelites, was Isaac born.

Isaac, in turn, did not marry until he was forty, and Jacob was not born to him until he was sixty. That is, Al-Aqsa Mosque had been established and fully established when Jacob, peace be upon him, was born.

The matter is no different when you say that Abraham built the Kaaba when he was 116 years old. According to the Israelites, Jacob was still in the womb of the unseen in those days.

### **Founder of Al-Aqsa Mosque**

According to the direct conclusion after the previous study, which is the first in our opinion, we believe that Abraham was the one who built Al-Aqsa Mosque for the first time himself. The Qur'an text mentioned that the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, peace be upon them, built the Holy Kaaba without anyone's participation (Al-Baqarah 2/127), so that we can understand that building that, the honorable building requires extremely pure prophetic hands, because its future role requires absolute credibility.

Because there is no text for the construction of Al-Aqsa, it is unlikely that anyone participated in it with Abraham, peace be upon him. Even the biblical text that described Abraham establishing an altar in Bethel mentions him alone and does not mention anyone with him, as it says: "So [Abram] built an altar to the Lord there" (Genesis 7/12), and the text does not even mention our master Isaac, peace be upon him.

What is not consistent with the number of years, neither in the biblical texts nor in the Islamic sources, is that Jacob, peace be upon him, had a hand in establishing that great mosque, as he had not been born yet.

Linking Jacob, peace be upon him, to the incident of the founding of Al-Aqsa Mosque, as reported in the Israelites, is nothing more than a distortion of the original story, as narrated in the Book of Genesis (28), for the same purpose as the distorters.

As for the fact that our Master Jacob restored the building erected by his grandfather Abraham, peace be upon them, this is merely a weak and unfounded assumption. How could a mosque be established with such preaching value that is comparable to the value of the Sacred Mosque, and Jacob did not visit it during its upbringing, then pass by it and it disappeared within a period of sixty years at most since its founding, such that he would not recognize it at all if it were not for a vision he saw (Genesis 28).

The meaning hidden by the Israelites is that the people of the region were evil and disbelieved in the call of our Master Abraham, and were hostile to him to the extent that they did not leave the building of the Al-Aqsa Mosque (the altar) to be destroyed alone, but rather destroyed it completely with their own hands without any doubt and did not leave any ruins or ruins from it, and accordingly, Jacob, peace be upon him, was forced to teach anyone Its stones are splattered with oil to guide it (Genesis 28). Certainly, this narration does not explain to us how Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in safety in Palestine, had the people of the country not been truthful, faithful, or at least peaceful, nor does it explain what those prophets would have done if they had not been preoccupied with preaching the Hanifism of Abraham, peace be upon him. Indeed, the Book of Genesis narrates how The Holy Prophet Jacob traveled between Beersheba and Harran (Aram), fearing no one, except his twin brother Esau (Eas), who was the reason for his fleeing to the pastures of eastern Jordan to their uncle Laban the Aramean, where his uncle celebrated him and married him off to his two daughters (Genesis 28).

The biblical text was creative in satirizing the people of the country, and even claimed that on the lips of Isaac, peace be upon him, who married them and entrusted them to his son Jacob. But it is clear from their texts that neither Abraham nor Isaac ever left Palestine after setting foot in it and interacting with its people, nor did Jacob leave it until a long time after his return from Harran. This was voluntarily so that he and his children could join Joseph, peace be upon him, in Egypt and spread the call of truth there.

### **Al-Aqsa Mosque location**

#### **Definition of Al-Aqsa Mosque**

What is usually mentioned in the sources is that Al-Aqsa Mosque is defined as “the furthest mosque, and what is meant by its distance from Mecca is based on the context that it makes it the end of the Isra from the Sacred Mosque, which is a revealing description that is required here to increase the attention to the miracle of this Isra and its being extraordinary because it traveled a long distance in one night” (Ibn Ashour 14/15).

Al-Tabari said that it was named Al-Aqsa “because it is the farthest of the mosques that are visited and it is worth visiting it.” Ibn Katheer said: “It was named Al-Aqsa because of the distance between it and the Sacred Mosque, and it was the farthest mosque on earth from the people of Mecca and it was venerated by visits.” Ibn Burjan said that it was named Al-Aqsa. “There was news from it, may be glorified and exalted, that He would create a third mosque for the Muslims, which would be the mosque of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, in Medina. The Mosque of Medina was the closest one, meaning to the Sacred Mosque.” Aside from discussing the topic, we find that most of the approved books of interpretation go to interpreting the term “Al-Aqsa” specifically based on the distance from Mecca, despite the diversity of the way they approach analyzing that term.

This analysis by relying on the meaning of distance from Mecca for the linguistic root (q-s-y) does not find it valid when comparing the verses that deal with the concepts of distance and proximity, such as God Almighty’s saying in Surat Al-Isra: “The Al-Aqsa Mosque,” compared to His saying in Surat Al-Rum: “In the lowest part of the earth.” The two are well known in the Levant. If the commentators say that the Levant is the furthest from Mecca, what about the nearest land? The Levant here will definitely not be the closest to Mecca.

But this is precisely the confusion in interpretation into which commentators of the caliber of Al-Qurtubi, may God have mercy on him, fell. He said about Al-Aqsa Mosque: “Al-Aqsa was named because of the distance between it and the Sacred Mosque, and it was the farthest mosque on earth from the people of Mecca that was venerated by visits” (Al-Qurtubi 212/10), then he said in the lowest part of the earth: “mean the land of the Levant... it is one of the lowest parts of the earth, by analogy to Mecca” (Al-Qurtubi 14/4). With this perspective, the Levant becomes the farthest and closest part of Mecca at the same time, according to the text in the decisive revelation, and this is an incorrect interpretation, forbid the preserved tablet from that.

Through a lexical analysis of the word (maximum), we find that its meaning goes to the end of a thing or to its limit or extent when comparing several distant matters. There is the near and the far, and if we reach the extent of it, it is the near and the far. Certainly, we find the expression close to the meaning of distance in some contexts, and from that we understood the phrase Al-Aqsa Mosque that it is the mosque furthest from the generality of the earth and closest to the beginning of heaven as it is at the lowest of the earth, but not from Mecca, which God has honored, as there is no mosque closer to the edge of the sky than Al-Aqsa Mosque, and that is connoted morally that we may not understand based on our physical geography.

This may be indicated by the saying of the revelation: “And listen on the Day when the herald calls from a nearby place” (Q 41/50), so the Levant here is close to the sky. Al-Tabari reported that the place near is the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis, and Al-Qurtubi said: “It was said: The place near is the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis. It is said that it is the middle of the earth and the closest of the earth to the sky by twelve miles. Ka’b said: by eighteen miles.”

We must take into account that the numbers mentioned are from Israelites, so we should not rely on them unless there is evidence of them from our correct sources.

It is well-known in our culture that the Levant is the land of mass gathering. It was narrated that the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "Here you will be gathered, here you will be gathered, here you will be gathered (three times), riding and on foot, and on your faces." So he pointed with his hand to the Levant. " (Ahmad / Al-Arna'ut: 20011). This is supported by the saying of the revelation: "And if you could see, when they were terrified, they did not escape, and they were taken from a nearby place" (Saba 34/51). Ibn Ashour said that this panic is at the time of resurrection and the nearby place is the gathering place; they will be taken from it to the fire. .

If we examine the texts of the People of the Book, we will find a text that agrees in meaning, as it is narrated that Jacob, peace be upon him, saw an ascension in his dream and woke up saying: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28/17). Ibn Kathir explained that place as Al-Aqsa Mosque: "He called that place Beit El, meaning the House of God, and it is the location of Bayt Al-Maqdis today." (The Beginning and the End (achieved by Sherry) 223/1).

### **Location of Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Due to its high status and exceptional value for dialogue and spreading the call to the worlds, and because of the greed of other nations for it, perhaps it is not surprising that there have been numerous and persistent campaigns to camouflage the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque to the Muslim masses, and to try to make them doubt its geographical location and seek to confuse them regarding it being the well-known site in Palestine.

Some campaigns, past and present, have spread with this effect in a number of directions, such as:

Al-Aqsa Mosque is in heaven and not in the city of Jerusalem in Palestine.

Exploiting the multiple modifications of the name of the Holy City throughout Islamic history. Such as Ilia, then Bait Al Maqdis and Jerusalem, to claim that they are made up locations.

The claim that Al-Aqsa Mosque is sometimes in Yemen and sometimes in Abyssinia.

It is in Al-Jarana, north of Mecca, and the attempt to confuse Muslims by using historical texts outside their context.

As for the fact that the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque is in the sky, see the statement of Shiite sources such as Al-Kashani, for example, where he said when interpreting the expression "Al-Aqsa Mosque" in the opening of Surah Al-Isra: "That is, the kingdom of Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is in the sky." It was reported that Al-Baqir said to Ismail Al-Jafi while they were in front of the Kaaba: "They say he was taken on a journey from the Sacred Mosque to Jerusalem." He said, "Not as they say, but he was taken on a journey from this to that," and he pointed with his hand to the sky." Then he claimed that Jaafar Al-Sadiq was asked about the mosques that have merit, and he said: "The Sacred Mosque and the Mosque of the Messenger, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace." It was said: And the Al-Aqsa Mosque? He said: That is the one in the sky to which the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, was captured. It was said: The people say it is Bait al-Maqdis, and he said: The Kufa Mosque is better than it." (Al-Kashani/Al-Amini: 4/373-374).

Some scholars have addressed this topic and clarified its aspects from the standpoint of legal evidence, such as the opinion of Afanah (Fatawa 9), for example: "The Shiites do not look at the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque as the Sunnis do. For the Shiites, Al-Aqsa Mosque is only in the sky, and those among them acknowledge that it is known in the world." Jerusalem, the Kufa Mosque is better than it, and there is no doubt that this is pure slander against the religion of God, as no virtue of the Kufa Mosque has been proven neither in the Qur'an nor in the Sunnah."

Among the implications of the opening of Surah Al-Isra are the implications of this claim. It is understood from the verse that what surrounds Al-Aqsa Mosque is the earthly area that God Almighty has blessed: "Who has blessed us around it" (Al-Isra 17/1). As we saw in the topic of (Blessing), there is a blessed land specified in the texts of the revelation as the place of Noah's landing, the migration of Abraham and Lot, the capital of

Solomon and David, and other earthly events mentioned in the revelation. There is no need to explain how she was blessed in locations in heaven when there is no evidence for those locations in the first place.

In addition, it has been authenticated in the hadith that the use of the name for the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque was exchanged between Bait Al Maqdis and Ilia. They are all synonymous names that indicate the well-known Levantine site in Palestine, and major historical events and documents have been linked to it, such as the conquest of Jerusalem and the Omariya Covenant.

The hadith also includes an exchange of using Al-Aqsa with distinct earthly locations. Al-Bukhari (1189) narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "Do not embark on journeys except to three mosques: the Sacred Mosque, the Mosque of the Messenger, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and Al-Aqsa Mosque." Compare this with the hadith of Ahmad (11417) on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri: "A journey is only made to three mosques: the Sacred Mosque, my mosque, and the Mosque of Bait al-Maqdis," and compare with the hadith of Muslim (1397) on the authority of Abu Hurairah: "He only travels to three mosques: the Kaaba mosque and my mosque, and the mosque of Ilia." Anyone familiar with these authentic hadiths will not doubt that Al-Aqsa Mosque is the same as the mosque in Ilia or Bait Al Maqdis, as they are all synonyms for one geographical location, which is the frequent location in the city of Jerusalem in Palestine.

As for the other matter, which is exploiting the multiple names of the city, geographical names tend to be modified or replaced, and the oldest official evidence of modifying the name of the city of Jerusalem in the Islamic era dates back to an Abbasid coin from the early third century AH (ninth century AD), and it was inscribed that it was minted in Jerusalem" in the year 219 AH, while we know that the name has always been Ilia or Jerusalem. We cannot guess the motives for that amendment without in-depth study, but replacing the name of a pivotal city from Ilia to Jerusalem with a mere official decision is not a common occurrence, and it is difficult for the state to have passed it by force. Rather, we tend to think that the spread of that new name was a reflection of its acceptance among the public before that procedure. Evidence of this is that the new name is still valid and has even gained acceptance among the public and in Muslim literature. On the other hand, the Holy Mosque (Al-Aqsa Mosque) has a fixed name and has not changed, and one of the most important reasons for its stability is the explicit mention of its name in revelation, as Muslims have unanimously agreed upon it since then.

There are other campaigns that say that Al-Aqsa Mosque was never in Palestine, but sometimes in southern Arabia (as Kamal Al-Salibi (1985) and Fadel Al-Rubaie (2008) said, and sometimes in Abyssinia, as the "There is No Conflict" program (2019) said, and sometimes near Mecca. As Mordechai Kedar (2008) and his followers said, Firas Al-Sawah denies the existence of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine without suggesting an alternative location (2019). Many of these statements claim that the Umayyads, in the midst of their competition for the caliphate with Abdullah bin Al-Zubayr, may God be pleased with them, were the ones who falsified the location of the mosque and clothing for Muslims.

These statements are difficult to take seriously because they lack evidence and contradict well-known, agreed-upon principles.

The determination of the location or status of Al-Aqsa Mosque was not influenced by the Umayyad caliphs, may God have mercy on them, and that is a claim that is not supported by the course of history. Historical sources narrated that the successors of the Abbasid House honored the site with a respect equal to that of their predecessors, while the two parties were political rivals, each of them interested in exposing any transgression committed by the other party, if any. It is narrated that Abu Jaafar Al-Mansur visited Al-Aqsa Mosque, prayed in its mosque, and took care of its restoration in the years 140 AH (Al-Tabari 7/503-504) and 145 AH (Al-Tabari 8/44), and the Mahdi did likewise in 163 AH (Al-Tabari 8/144). It is also said that Caliph Al-Ma'mun entrusted Abdullah bin Tahir with expanding the area of his halls until it became larger than it was during the days of the Umayyads (Obaidat 2021: 27), and all of them were Abbasids. Indeed, there was a mint (i.e., a mint) in the city of Jerusalem during the Abbasid era, from which we find Abbasid penny minted in the year 219 AH, as we mentioned above, and some return them to the days of Al-Ma'mun. Which means that there was no

disagreement between the Umayyads and the Abbasids regarding the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque being Jerusalem, despite the political difference.

As for the claim that Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in Al-Jarana near Mecca, it is a late statement, as we found, and it is spread in the form of a media campaign more than it is presented by scientific studies and discussions. It was apparently launched by Mordechai Kedar in 2008 (Kedar 2008), followed by Hisham Kamal Abdul Hamid (2012), then Yousif Zidan (2015), then Osama Yamani (2020). They tried to give this saying a scientific character by referring to a report narrated from Al-Waqidi when he described a mosque there and called it “the farthest” because it was at the farthest part of the valley (i.e., far away), compared to another mosque that they called “the closest” because it was at the bottom of the valley (i.e., close) (/Al-Waqidi/ Jones 1989: 3/958); This statement does not require much effort to prove that it is linguistically incoherent and distorted for some detail: Al-Jirana is a Miqaat for the people of Mecca on the way to Taif, outside the borders of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, and it was not described in the revelation as a blessing, but rather the Kaaba was specifically mentioned for that: “Indeed, the first house established for mankind was the one in Mecca that was blessed and a guidance for the worlds” (Al-Baqarah 2/96), while Al-Aqsa described its surroundings with blessing : “To the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed” (Al-Isra 17/1), and the revelation detailed the blessed area from several angles, leaving no room for doubt that it is an earthly location, which is the Levant, and its religious focus is the city of Jerusalem. The features of the Al-Jirana area do not fit the historical events mentioned in the Blessed Al-Aqsa and its environs, including the story of Talut, David, Goliath, and the coffin mentioned in Surat Al-Baqarah (2/246-251). The story, for example, contains a river and there are no rivers on the island, and it contains armies, wars, peoples, and characters that were not mentioned in history of Mecca and the Kaaba, although fewer are counted.

From here we realize that the reference value of the name separately is not enough, and this, by the way, is a simple axiom that only a biased person can ignore.

Here, the fourth group intervenes, such as Al-Salibi (1985) and Al-Rubaie (2008), and its trend is to transfer the scene of biblical events in Palestine to other countries, and attempt to present the new as what is intended in the Torah. This team takes advantage of the fact that there may be a consensus in the names of geographical features between Palestine and others, especially since it is the site of ancient migrations back and forth of ethnic groups who left their country reluctantly. Nostalgia will prompt them to give familiar names to the country’s new features. The Children of Israel are among the races whose historical migrations were numerous, and the revelation stated three of them: The migration of Joseph from Palestine to Egypt, the migration of Moses back, and the displacement of the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, to some of their tribes from Medina. After that, there are migrations mentioned in their history, such as the captivity of Sargon II, the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar, the return of some in the days of Cyrus, then the dispersion of Titus, then Hadrian, then Justinian, during those historical migrations, they settled in Egypt, the Levant, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, and other regions, and in some of them there were kings and heads of state, as is mentioned about Abu Nuwas in Yemen, who is the owner of the groove. It is not unlikely that they used historical names here and there as a matter of remembrance and nostalgia. Likewise, the Yemenis who left their country for the Levant on several occasions.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

It is not always possible that good faith or scientific honesty is what prompts the emergence of allegations that question the status of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque or its location. The above discussion puts us in the perception that there are two groups: one group deals with the texts hastily and without sufficient investigation, and we also feel that there is an old, urgent campaign that seeks to shake the Islamic culture’s attachment to Al-Aqsa Mosque, which we all know in the Levant, in Palestine, in the city of Jerusalem, as it is called now.

There must be diligent scientific work that seeks to clarify the facts, which confronts and restores false claims from a cultural standpoint, whether they are in good faith or otherwise. The cultural concept needs continuous awareness, even though it is supported by the accumulation of texts and performances from solid sources of Islamic culture.

There is no doubt that there is also a long-standing momentum of responses to these allegations and refutations of their opinions, but the need to follow up on the issue is constantly present. Here, the importance of coordination between relevant specializations emerges to understand suspicions from a common perspective, which helps in a clearer understanding of them and how to address them.

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