# Al-Aqsa Mosque

## Al-Haram Ash-Sharif

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

*In the name of Allah,*
*most compassionate, most merciful*

**Dear Visitor,**

Welcome to one of the landmarks of Islamic civilization and history, and welcome to Jerusalem! Jerusalem is considered a holy city in Islam because it is the city of the prophets:

> *The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination (Qur'an 2:285).*

It is also the place where one of Prophet Mohammad's miracles - the Night Journey (*Al-Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj*) took place:

> *Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing (Qur'an 17:1).*

In addition, it was the first Qibla towards which Muslims turned for their daily prayers for 13 years until they were ordered to turn towards Al-Ka'aba in Mecca:

> *We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qibla with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]. Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do (Qur'an 2:144).*

Moreover, according to the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) traditions Al-Aqsa Mosque is considered one out of three restricted destinations to which Muslims travel in pilgrimage:

> *Do not prepare yourself for a journey except to three Mosques, i.e. Al-Masjid Al-Haram, the Mosque of Aqsa (Jerusalem) and my Mosque (Sahih-Bukhari 2:21:288).*

Using a wealth of library sources as well as undertaking field research, PASSIA's team has made all efforts to provide an informative guide for Al-Aqsa Mosque and the monuments it encompasses and to counter the continuous attempts to falsify historical and religious facts about them. This brochure will guide you through all those landmarks, including mosques, minarets, domes, arched gates, schools, corridors, gates, pulpits, platforms, water sources, the Islamic Museum, and Al-Buraq Wall.

*Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi,*
*Chairman of PASSIA - Jerusalem*



# Contents


Mosques ..... 4
Domes ..... 24
Minarets ..... 36
Arched Gates ..... 38
Schools ..... 40
Corridors ..... 48
Gates ..... 50
Water Sources ..... 58
Pulpits ..... 62
The Islamic Museum ..... 64
Al-Buraq Wall ..... 66
Platforms ..... 68


Kindly supported by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency - TIKA, Ramallah.

PASSIA © 1st edition, August 2013

**PASSIA**
Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem
Tel: +972-2-6264426, E-mail: passia@passia.org
Website: www.passia.org, PO Box 19545, Jerusalem

# Mosques

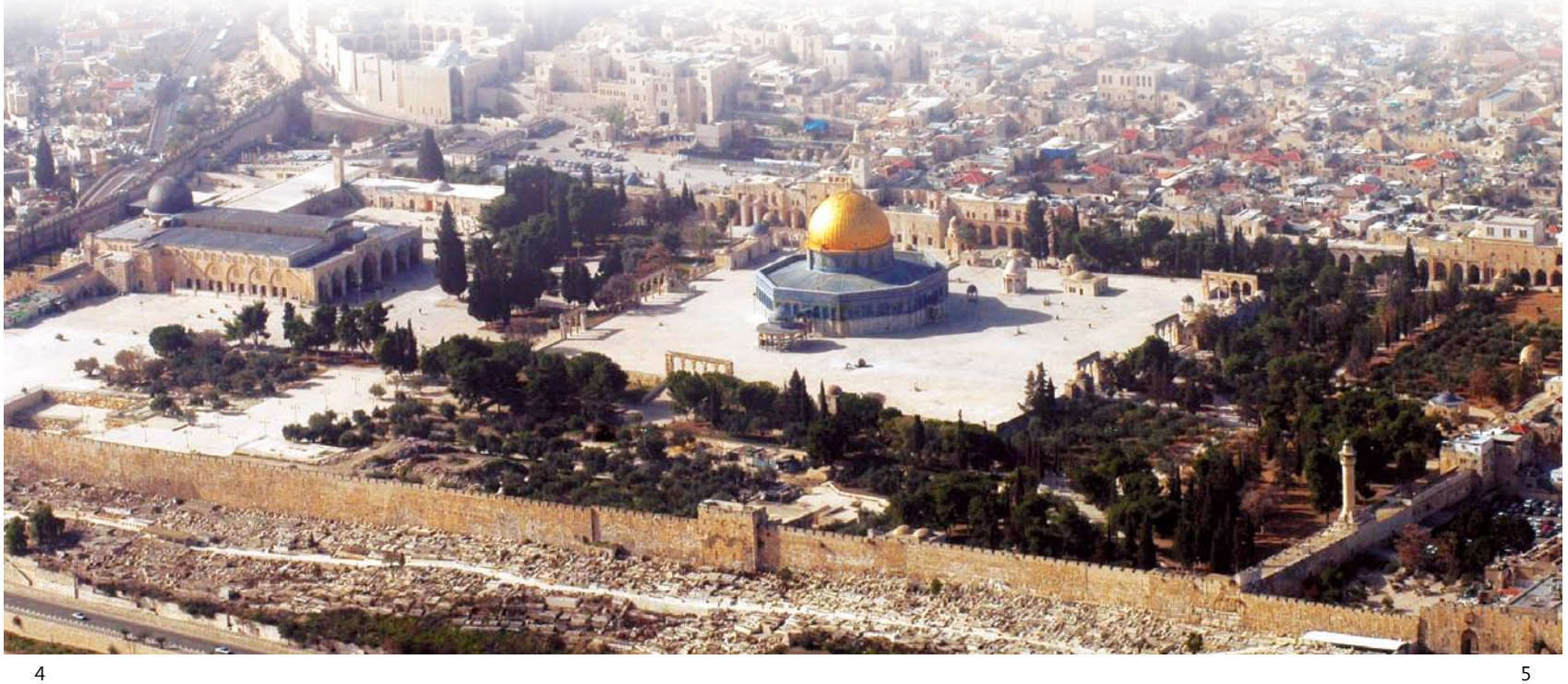
## Al-Aqsa Mosque

Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in the southeast corner of the Old City of Jerusalem, covering one-sixth of its area. Al-Aqsa Mosque, also referred to as *Al-Haram Ash-Sharif* (the Noble Sanctuary), comprises the entire area within the compound walls (a total area of 144,000 $m^2$) - including all the mosques, prayer rooms, buildings, platforms and open courtyards located above or under the grounds - and exceeds 200 historical monuments pertaining to various Islamic eras.

According to Islamic creed and jurisprudence, all these buildings and courtyards enjoy the same degree of sacredness since they are built on Al-Aqsa's holy grounds. This sacredness is not exclusive to the physical structures allocated for prayer, like the Dome of the Rock or Al-Qibly Mosque (the mosque with the large silver dome), or to the buildings located on the surface of Al-Aqsa's premises. Thus, a worshiper receives the same reward for praying anywhere within the Mosque including the open courtyards.

Al-Aqsa Mosque has the following four different levels:

- An underground level containing wells and water canals, and some buildings that are currently filled with dirt.
- A subterranean level, including the Marwani prayer hall in the southeastern corner, the Ancient "Aqsa" (actually two massive corridors leading to the Umayyad palaces, below the current Al-Qibly Mosque), the Buraq prayer hall (below the Moroccans' Gate in the west), the Golden Gate (called in Arabic Bab Al-Rahmah and Bab Al-Tawbah, in the east), and the closed gates: the single, the double, the triple, the Buraq's Gate, and the lower Gate of the Chain.
- The Southern Qibly Mosque and the expansive middle courtyard that includes open gates, corridors, platforms, trees, etc.
- The Dome of the Rock and its surroundings, including the decorative domes that adorn the highest plateau within Al-Aqsa Mosque.



**The Origin of Al-Aqsa's Name:**

The Arabic meaning of Al-Aqsa is two-fold: (1) the furthest, in reference to distance; (2) the supreme; in reference to status. Therefore, Al-Aqsa Mosque could mean the furthest from Mecca in the time when Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him - PBUH) received the divine revelations (the Qur'an), or the mosque with the supreme status.

Al-Aqsa is located in the "Holy Land" as described by Prophet Moses (PBUH):

> *"O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah's cause] and [thus] become losers."* (Qur'an 5:21)

It is a blessed land as stated by the Qur'an:

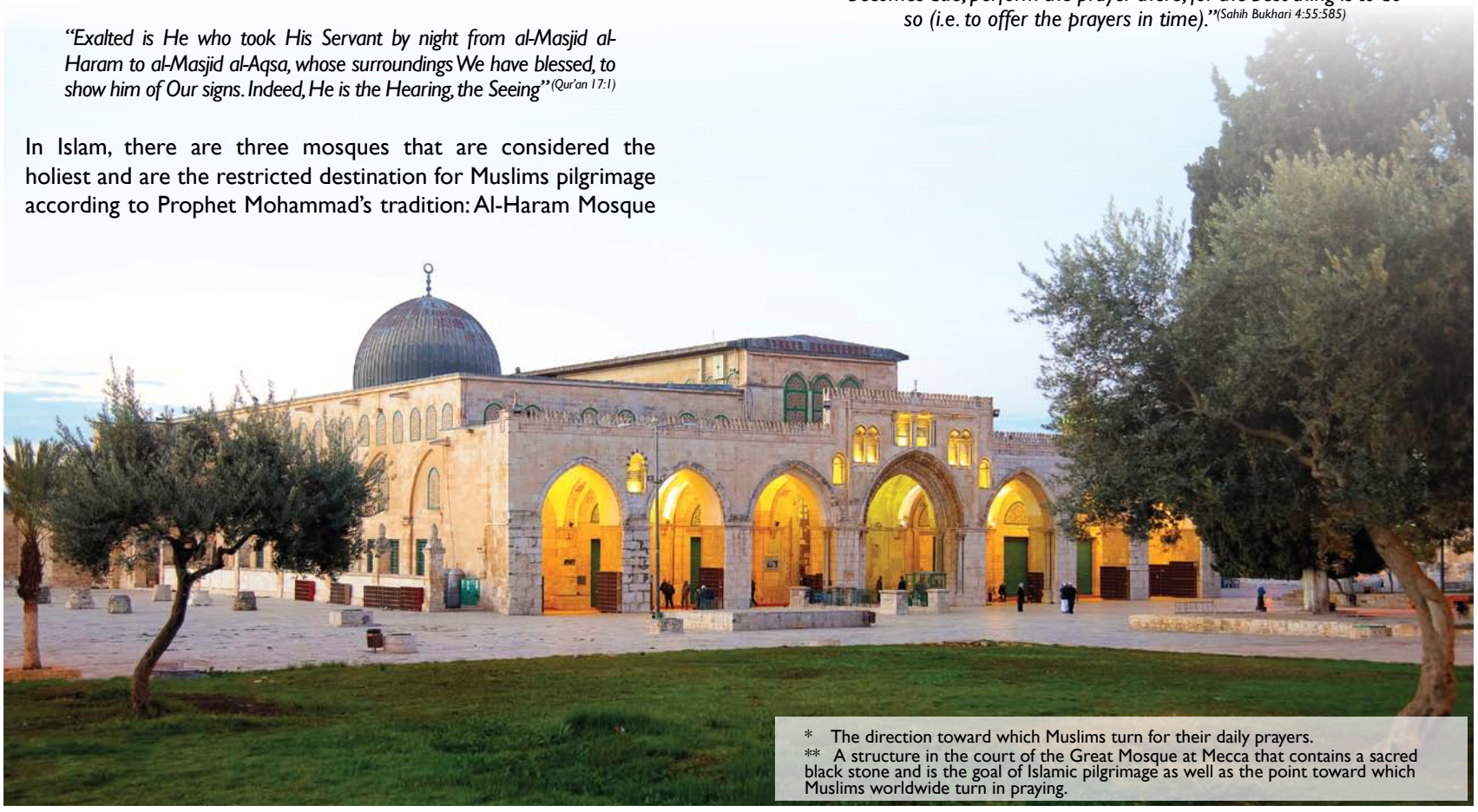
> *"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing"* (Qur'an 17:1)

In Islam, there are three mosques that are considered the holiest and are the restricted destination for Muslims pilgrimage according to Prophet Mohammad's tradition: Al-Haram Mosque in Mecca, the Prophet's Mosque (An-Nabawi) in Medina, and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem:

> *"Do not prepare yourself for a journey except to three Mosques, i.e. Al-Masjid-Al-Haram, the Mosque of Aqsa (Jerusalem) and my Mosque"* (Sahih-Bukhari 2:21:288)

According to Islamic belief Al Aqsa Mosque is also the first Qibla* and the second mosque built on earth after the Ka'aba** in Mecca.

> *Narrated by Abu Dahr: I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Which mosque was first built on the surface of the earth?" He said, "Al-Masjid-ul-Haram (in Mecca)." I said, "Which was built next?" He replied "The mosque of Al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem)." I said, "What was the period of construction between the two?" He said, "Forty years." He added, "Wherever (you may be, and) the prayer time becomes due, perform the prayer there, for the best thing is to do so (i.e. to offer the prayers in time)."* (Sahih Bukhari 4:55:585)



* The direction toward which Muslims turn for their daily prayers.
** A structure in the court of the Great Mosque at Mecca that contains a sacred black stone and is the goal of Islamic pilgrimage as well as the point toward which Muslims worldwide turn in praying.

## 1. Al-Qibly Mosque

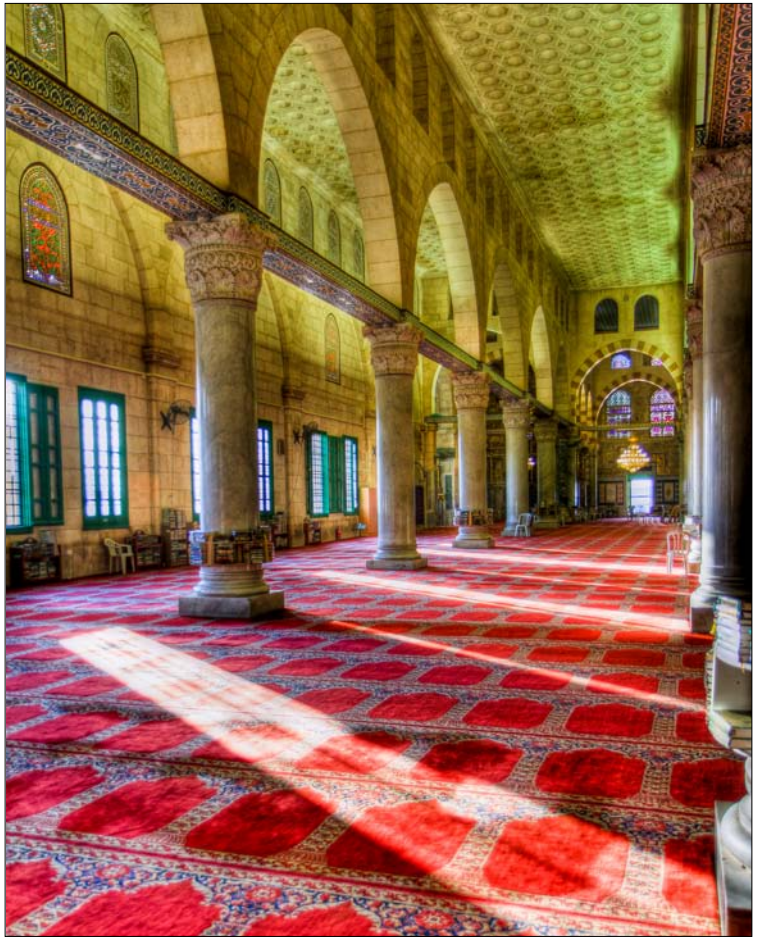
Al-Qibly Mosque is the first physical structure ever built by Muslims on Al-Aqsa compound. When Muslims first entered Jerusalem in 15 AH/638 AC the site was deserted and neglected with no signs of construction on it. Caliph Omar bin Al-Khatab and his companions cleared it from debris and dirt and built a simple mosque on its southern part after deliberating the best location for it, as some of the Prophet's (PBUH) companions suggested building it before the Rock of Ascension to the north facing the Qibla. Nonetheless, the Caliph decided to build the mosque in the heart of Al-Aqsa next to the southern wall instead. The first mosque was a simple building that sat on wooden trusses and was designed to accommodate 3,000 worshipers.

However, the mosque that is standing in Al-Aqsa today is not the one that was built by Omar bin Al-Khatab. Al-Qibly Mosque, as we know it today, was first built by the Umayyad Caliph Walid bin Abdul Malek bin Marwan between 90-96 AH/706-714 AC to replace the simple one built by Caliph Omar bin Al-Khatab and his companions. Some narratives say that Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan was the one who initiated the mosque's constructions, but he died before the building was completed and his son Al-Walid carried on the mission.

During the Umayyad era Al-Qibly Mosque consisted of 15 naves, with the widest being the one in the middle. The building was covered with a brick ceiling and topped with a magnificent dome at the end of the middle nave. The Mosque was renovated for the first time during the Abbasid era by Caliph Abu Jaafar Al-Mansour, and again by Caliph Al-Mahdi after the collapse of its eastern part due to a strong earthquake that hit Jerusalem, while Al-Ma'moun, another Abbasid Caliph rebuilt the central hallway. Prince Abdullah bin Taher of the Tahriah* State (855-923 AH/1451-1517 AC) later built the corridor leading to the mosque. The Fatimid Caliphs also renovated Al-Qibly Mosque more than once, including the time when Caliph Addahir Li Ezaz Din Allah renovated the mosque in 436 AH/1034 AC.

During the Crusaders' occupation of Jerusalem Al-Qibly Mosque was turned into a church, but when the Ayoubi Caliph Saladin liberated Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque in 583 AH/1187 AC he ordered the renovation of the building and returned it to its former state. He also brought the magnificent wooden pulpit which Nur Ad-Din Mahmoud Ibn Zinki, a Mamluki king from the Zinki dynasty, had ordered to be made in Aleppo and be placed next to the main *mihrab* (i.e. niche) in Al-Qibly Mosque.

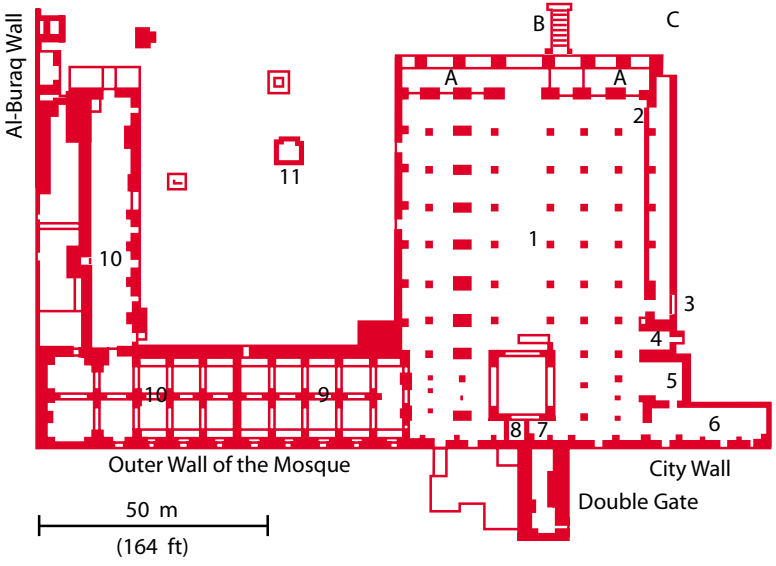
* A dynasty that ruled Yemen during the Mamluk era.



The Ottomans also invested a lot of care in Al-Qibly Mosque especially the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan Mahmoud II, Sultan Abdul Aziz, and Sultan Abdul Hammed II.

**The Current Structure of Al-Qibly Mosque**:

Al-Qibly Mosque is a square building made of seven naves; the biggest nave is in the center, which is topped with a magnificent silver dome, and there are three smaller naves on its eastern side and another three on its western side. The building dimensions are 80 meters in length to the south and 55 meters in width to the west. Al-Qibly Mosque has nine entrances; a separate door leads to each one of the seven naves, while there is one entrance on its western side, and another on its eastern side. The door in the middle of the building's northern façade is the mosque's main entrance; however, all seven doors lead inside the mosque where the seven naves overlap with no physical barriers between them other than stone and marble columns that carry the weight of the building. The stone columns are historic and ancient, while the marble ones were added to the mosque when it was renovated in the early 20th Century; these columns are connected by huge arches that are attached to the mosque's ceiling.




(A) Porch
(B) Steps to underground rooms
(C) Steps to "Christ's Cradle"
(1) Prayer hall
(2) Fountain
(3) Gate of Elias
(4) Mihrab of Zechariah
(5) Mosque of the Forty Martyrs
(6) Mosque of Omar
(7) Mihrab (prayer niche)
(8) Minbar (pulpit)
(9) White Mosque (Women's Mosque)
(10) Islamic Mosque
(11) Dome of Yusuf

## 2. The Dome of the Rock

The Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malek bin Marwan ordered the building of the golden dome between 71-72 AH/691-692 AC on the highest spot of Al-Aqsa Mosque, in the middle of a plateau that is 4 meters higher than the rest of the mosque's courtyards. The Dome of the Rock, which is the earliest existing model of Islamic architecture, was built over what Muslims believe to be the Rock of Ascension*. It is sitting on top of an octagonal-shaped building with four doors; the building's dimensions are 20.59 meters in length and 9.5 meters in height. The dome is based on a circular drum ornamented with faience** and decorated with verses from chapter 17 (Al-Isra') of the Qur'an. The dome has a 2.5-3° indentation in the structure of its circular pillars that grants the person full vision of its interior including the stone columns and pillars if he/she stands at any of its four entrances. A number of arched gates surround the Dome of the Rock's plateau, but they only serve a decorative function.

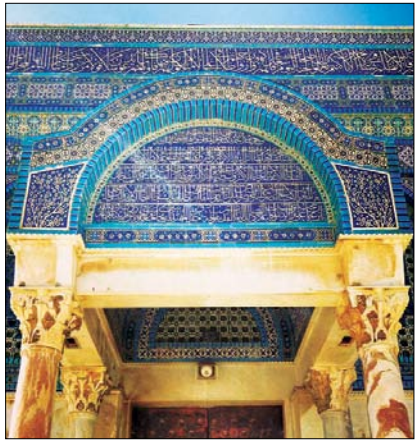
The Dome comprises of:

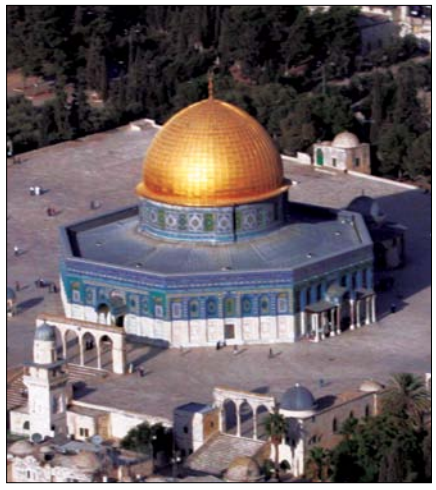
- The Dome built around the Holy Rock of Ascension;
- Four doors;
- Sixteen windows made of colored glass ornamented with Islamic motifs and writings;
- The Holy Rock of Ascension: it is a natural irregular shaped rock that has a small cave underneath in which two niches called the "Prophets' chapel" have been carved, one of them is flat, while the other is deep. A lot of Muslims believe that this particular rock is the Rock of Ascension; however, this was not confirmed by any of the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) traditions, thus the rock and the cave underneath it, in which many Muslims pray thinking it is blessed, enjoy the same degree of sacredness as any other part of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Another common misconception among Muslims is their belief that the rock is hanging in the air, which is also not true.

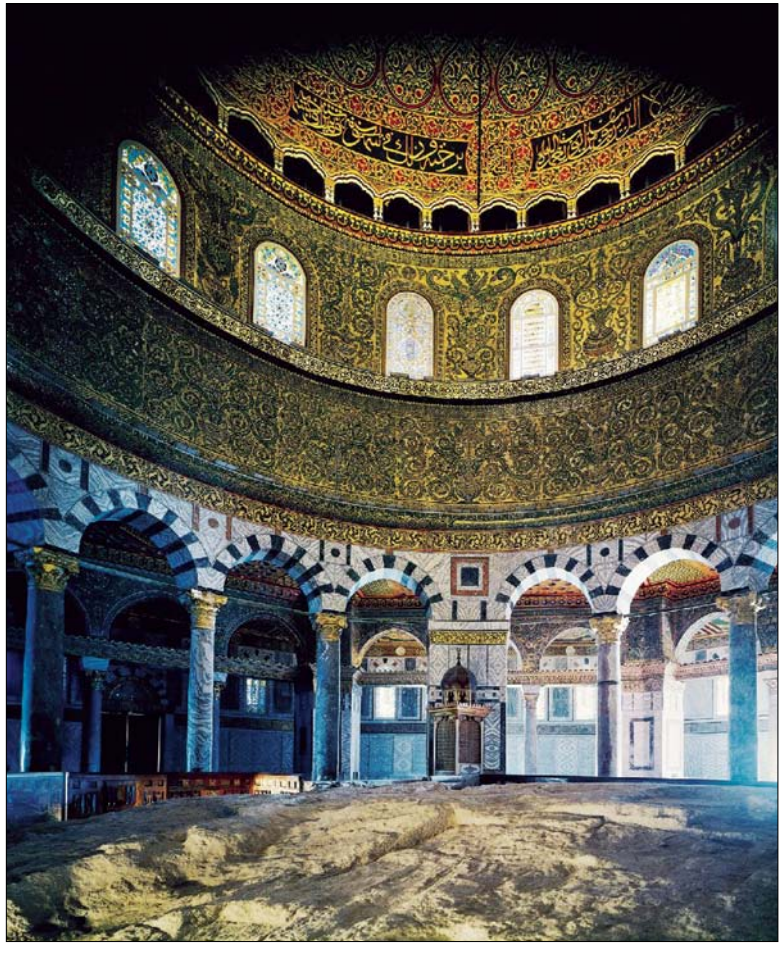
* According to Muslim tradition the rock is the spot where Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) ascended to heaven during his night journey (Al-Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj).
** Glazed ceramic ware, in particular decorated tin-glazed earthenware.

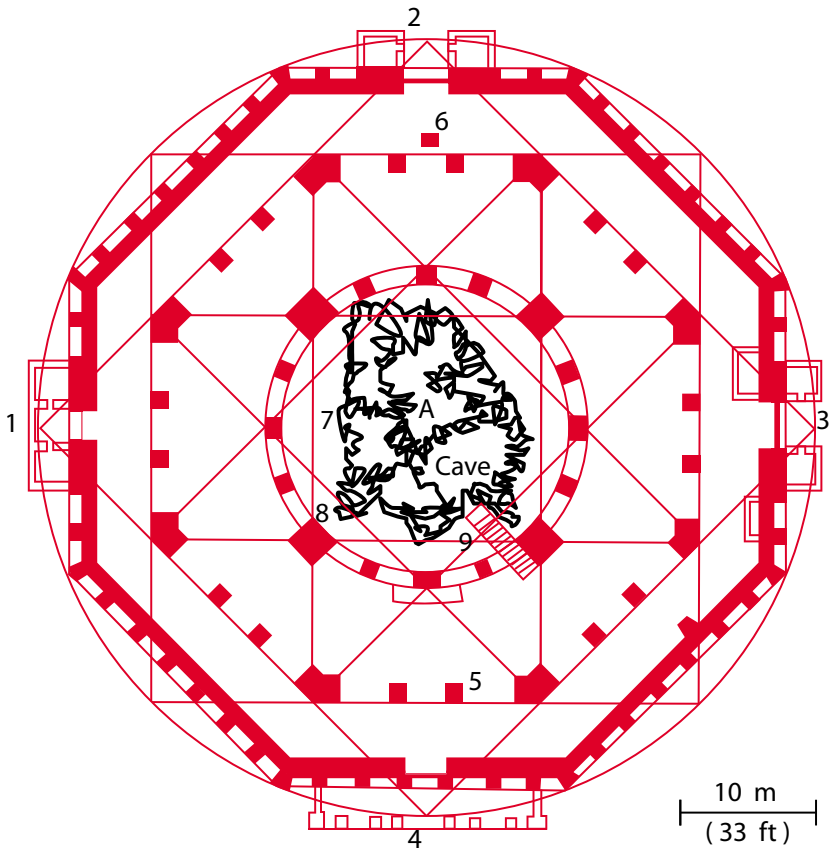
**The Dome of the Rock and the Crusaders:**

The Crusaders occupied the city of Jerusalem in 1099 AC, and turned the Dome of the Rock Mosque into a church called "Templum Domini" or God's temple. They added some ornaments, crosses, and icons to its original design and surrounded the Rock of Ascension with an iron fence to prevent people from stealing pieces of it. The church later became the Knights Templar's headquarters. However, when Saladin liberated the city of Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 583 AH/1187 AC he returned the building to its original function as a mosque for Muslims.










(A) Holy Rock (As-Sakhra)
(1) West Gate (Bab Al-Gharb)
(2) Gate of Paradise (Bab Al-Jenneh)
(3) David's Place of Judgment (Dome of the Chain)
(4) South Gate (Bab Al-Qibleh)
(5) Mihrab (prayer niche)
(6) Slab which covered Solomon's tomb and into which Prophet Mohammed is said to have knocked 12 golden nails.
(7) Hand-print of the Archangel Gabriel, who prevented the Rock from following the Prophet when he ascended to Heaven
(8) Footprint of the Prophet
(9) Steps down to the "Well of Souls" (Bir Al-Arwah)

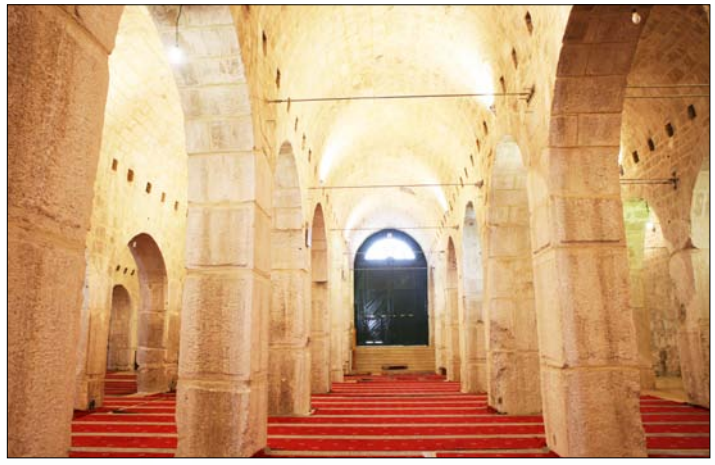
## 3. The Ancient Aqsa

The Ancient Aqsa is located underneath the central nave of Al-Qibly Mosque; it is a linear building that extends from north to south. It can be accessed by using an old staircase sitting in front of Al-Qibly Mosque's exterior corridor which is made of 18 steps. The Ancient Aqsa building ends with another door that is called "The Door of the Prophet" in Arabic literature and "The Double Gate" in English writings. The Mosque is a barrel-shaped vault, comprised of three cylindrical arches, that has an inclination towards the south due to the geographical nature of Al-Aqsa Mosque's location; the interior building consists of two naves that are surrounded by huge stone pillars. It originally served as passage for the Umayyad caliphs connecting their palaces to Al-Aqsa, as the palaces were built next to its southern wall. When the Umayyads restored this building they reused older construction material which could have pertained to the Roman or the Herodian era. However, the Ancient Mosque's building that was restored and reopened by Al-Aqsa's Committee for the Reconstruction of Holy Sites in 1998 is an Umayyad building. Today, the building hosts Al-Aqsa Mosque's library, called "Al-Khutniyah Library."

## 4. Al-Musalla Al-Marwani

Al-Musalla Al-Marwani or the Eastern Basement is a subterranean massive hall located in the southeastern corner of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Originally a very steep hill, this area was raised through various structures in order to be on the same level of Al-Aqsa Mosque's northern courtyards, as Muslims wanted to build the Al-Qibly Mosque on strong foundations. Although the accurate year of construction remains unknown, it has been confirmed that the Al-Musalla Al-Marwani was built before the Al-Qibly Mosque.

The mosque is made of 16 naves that extend over four and a half acres of land, which makes it the largest physical structure inside Al-Aqsa's premises with the capacity to accommodate over 6,000 worshipers at once. It can be accessed by using a stone staircase connected to two huge gates to the northeast of Al-Qibly Mosque which were built after its renovation to allow the large numbers of worshipers and visitors to enter and exit without any obstacles, and also to improve the ventilation system since the building lacks a sufficient number of windows. Before the restoration and reopening of Al-Musalla Al-Marwani by Al-Aqsa's Committee for the Reconstruction of Holy Sites and the Islamic Heritage Committee affiliated with the Islamic Waqf, the location of the mosque was known by the name "Solomon's Stables." The name can be attributed to the fact that during their occupation of Jerusalem, the Crusaders had built a church on Al-Aqsa's premises called "The Temple of Solomon" and used Al-Musalla Al-Marwani's building as a stable for their horses. What confirms this theory is the presence of big iron rings nailed to the building's walls similar to those used to tie up horses in the past. The Crusaders also opened a gate called "the Single Gate" in the eastern side of Al-Aqsa's southern wall to facilitate horses' access to the mosque. When the renovation and rehabilitation of these large halls started in 1996, it was named "Al-Musalla Al-Marwani" in honor of the Umayyads who descended from Marwan bin Al-Hakam, including Abd Al-Malik, Suleiman, Hisham, and Al-Walid who built most of the essential structures of Al-Aqsa Mosque.



## 5. The Women's Mosque (Ayoubi Era)

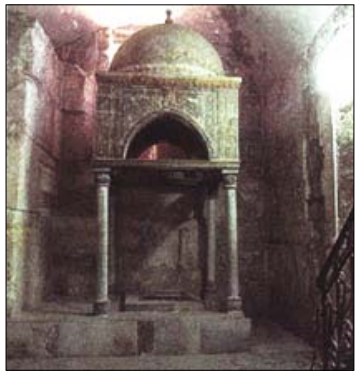
The Women's Mosque was originally built and used by the Crusaders as a dining room for the Knights Templar; however, when Saladin liberated Jerusalem he turned the building into a mosque for women. The building extends from Al-Aqsa's western wall to its southwestern corner. During the past three decades the building was divided into three sections:

(1) The southwestern section, used as the southern hall of the Islamic Museum;

(2) The central section, used to host the Faculty of Da'wa and Origins of Religion before it moved to Al-Bireh, and then to Abu Dis as part of Al-Quds University, and also served as Al-Aqsa's main library before it was moved to the Ancient Aqsa Mosque;

(3) The eastern section, which is adjacent to Al-Qibly Mosque and used as a warehouse.

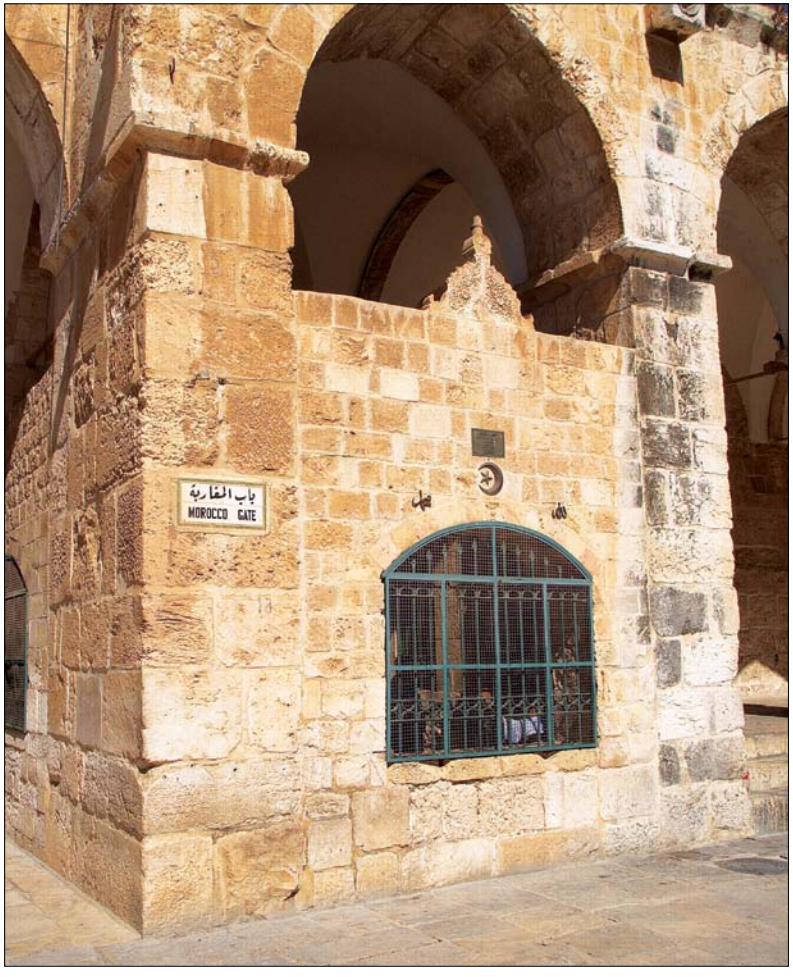
## 6. Cradle of Issa (Jesus) Mosque (Ottoman Era)



The Cradle of Issa Mosque (also referred to as "Christ's Mosque") is a small dome built during the late Ottoman era in 1898 AC, located next to the middle of a staircase on the southeastern corner of Al-Musalla Al-Marwani. It consists of a dome which is based on four stone columns that were built over a stone basin called "the Cradle of Issa," probably built during the Abbasid or Fatimid era. In spite of the mosque's name, there is no evidence in Islamic tradition that places Jesus (PBUH) in this location. Moreover, Christian clergymen in Jerusalem have issued a statement declaring that Christians do not have any monuments or holy sites anywhere inside Al-Aqsa Mosque.

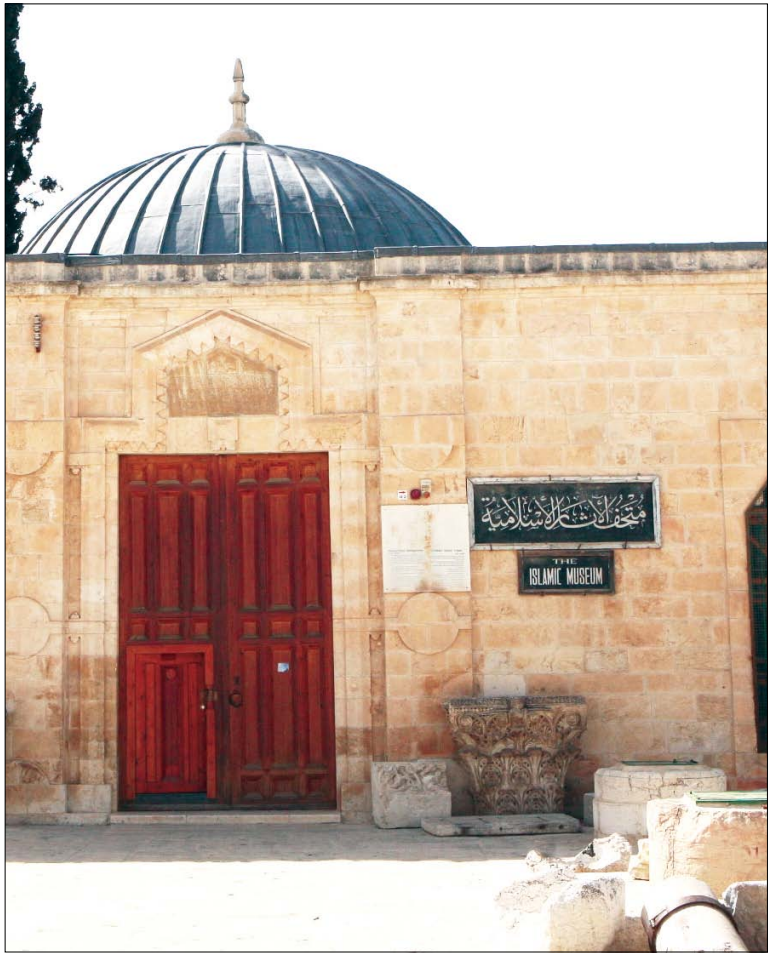
## 7. Al-Buraq Mosque (Umayyad/Mamluk Era)

Al-Buraq Mosque is a subterranean barrel vault built next to Al-Buraq Wall (Western Wall). It is called Al-Buraq Mosque because of a ring that is nailed to its wall which Muslims believe Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) used to tie Al-Buraq, a magnificent animal that carried him from Mecca to Jerusalem in the Night Journey of "Al-Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj." The main gate of Al-Buraq Mosque is located in Al-Aqsa's western wall, but is permanently sealed. Yet, the mosque is still open for prayers as worshipers use another entrance located in Al-Aqsa's western corridor.




## 8. The Moroccan Mosque (Ayoubi Era)

This ancient mosque is located in the southwestern part of Al-Aqsa compound next to the Moroccan Gate (Western Wall). It was built during the 12th or 13th Century AC and pertains to the Ayoubi era; however, the accurate year for its construction and the name of its founder remains unknown. The mosque was dedicated to the followers of the Maliki* School of Jurisprudence in the past, while it is now used as the western hall of the Islamic Museum where a number of Islamic historical pieces and monuments are displayed.




* There are four mainstream schools of thought for Islamic Fiqh Jurisprudence: Maliki, Shafei, Hanbali, and Hanafi.

# Domes

## 9. Dome of the Chain (Umayyad Era)

The Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan ordered the building of this dome in 72 AH/691 AC. It is located to the east of the Dome of the Rock; although some people believe it was built as a prototype for the Dome of the Rock, yet it is smaller in size and different in shape. Historians differ over the purpose the Dome of the Chain was constructed for. Some say it was used as an exchequer, but this theory is quite unlikely because of the building's open structure that would make keeping money safe inside of it a very difficult task. Others suggest it was used as a lounge for architects and builders when they were building the Dome of the Rock itself. As for the Dome's physical characteristics, it is an open building that has eleven sides which are based on eleven marble columns, while the dome is sitting on a hexagonal drum. The faience that decorates the dome was brought to Al-Aqsa Mosque upon the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's orders in 969 AH/1561 AC. During the Crusaders' occupation of Jerusalem the Dome was turned into a church called Saint James. It returned to Muslims' position after Saladin's liberation of Jerusalem in 583 AH/1187 AC.

## 10. The Dome of Ascension (Ayoubi Era)

The Dome of Ascension was built in commemoration of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) ascension to heaven (Al-Mi'raj). It is a small octagonal dome based on 30 marble columns; the open space between the columns was later sealed using marble slabs. In the past the dome was covered with lead sheets, but they were recently replaced by white stone plates. The Dome has a niche pointing towards the Qibla, and its main entrance is located on its northern side. What makes this Dome stand out is the smaller dome on top of it that looks like a crown. The Dome's accurate year of construction and its founder's name remain unknown; it was renovated by Prince Ezz Ad-Din Ottoman bin Ali Az-Zanjabily, the Governor of Jerusalem, during the Ayoubi King Al-Adel's reign in 597 AH/1200 AC.

## 11. The Prophet's Dome and Niche (Ottoman Era)

The Prophet's Dome is an octagonal dome located northwest of the Dome of the Rock. In 945 AH/1538-1539AC, Mohammad Bek, the governor of Gaza and Jerusalem during the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's reign, built a niche on this location to mark the place where Muslims believe Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) led the prophets and angels in prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque on the night of "Al-Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj." The Ottoman emperor Abdul Al-Majid bin Mahmoud II ordered the building of an octagonal dome that is based on eight marble columns over the niche.

## 12. Suleiman's Dome (Umayyad/ Ayoubi Era)

This dome is located in the northern part of Al-Aqsa Mosque to the southwest of the Gate of Darkness. It is believed that it was first built during the Umayyad era. It was rebuilt and renovated during the Ayoubi era since it is similar in characteristics to the Ayoubi Dome of Ascension. Some people say it was named in tribute to Prophet Suleiman (PBUH), while others believe it was named after its original founder, the Umayyad Caliph Suleiman bin Abdul Malek. The dome is octagonal and based on 24 marble columns; inside of it a small rock is displayed, believed to be a piece taken from the Holy Rock of Ascension, which is why it was protected by an iron fence in the past. The dome has a niche pointing towards the Qibla, and a small entrance on the north. Today, the building is used as headquarters for female preachers in the Jerusalem Waqf Directorate.

## 13. Dome of Moses (Ayoubi Era)

This dome is located in the middle of the Moses Platform in the western courtyard of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was built by the Ayoubi King Najm Ad-Din bin Al-Malk Al-Kamel in 647 AH/1249-1250 AC as a place of worship and a sanctuary for clergymen and imams. It has a number of simple niches inside and outside of it. Some historians say that it was named Dome of Moses in tribute to Prophet Moses (PBUH), while others say it was named after a sheikh who used to lead prayers in it. The Dome is also famous by the name the "Dome of the Tree" because of its close location to a huge palm tree that stood next to it in the past.

## 14. Al-Khadr's Dome (Ottoman Era)

This small hexagonal dome was built in the 10th Century AH on the Dome of the Rock Plateau, next to the northwestern arched gate to mark the spot where Muslims believe a righteous man, who was mentioned in chapter 18 of the Noble Qur'an, Al-Khadr (PBUH), used to pray to Allah. The dome is based on six marble columns and includes a niche built with red stone inside.

## 15. Dome of Yusuf Agha (Ottoman Era)

Yusuf Agha, an Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, built this dome to the west of Al-Qibly Mosque in 1092 AH/1681 AC. It is a square-shaped building topped with a small dome. Today, it is used as an information office of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

## 16. Yusuf's Dome (Ayoubi/Ottoman Era)

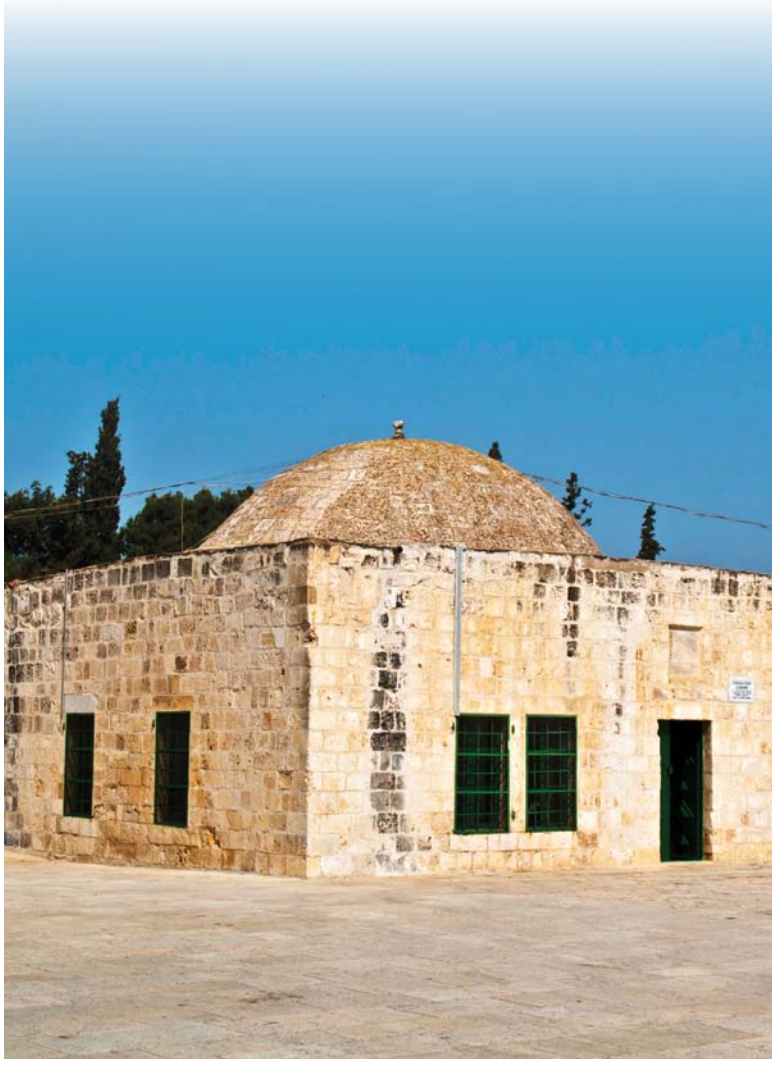
The dome was built in 587 AH/1191 AC by the Ayoubi King Saladin; it was renovated in 1092 AH/1681 AC during the Ottoman Era. According to some historians it was named Yusuf Dome in commemoration of Prophet Yusuf (PBUH). Others attribute the name to its founder Yusuf bin Ayoub, who is famous by the nickname Saladin. The dome's structure is open from all sides, except for the southern side which is sealed by a wall. It is based on two stone columns and contains two inscriptions inside, one documenting Saladin's deeds, the other, in Turkish, recognizing its renovator as Ali bin Yusuf Agha.

## 17. The Spirits Dome (Ottoman Era)

This is a small octagonal dome located on the Dome of the Rock's courtyard. It is based on eight marble columns attached to eight arches carrying the dome's drum. The Dome was probably built during the 10th Century AH/16th Century AC and was called the "Spirits Dome" because of its close location to a cave called the "Spirits Cave."

## 18. Mohammadiyah Lodge Dome/ Al-Khalili (Ottoman Era)

Mohammad Bek Hafez, an Ottoman Governor of Jerusalem, ordered the building of this dome in 1112 AH/1700 AC. The dome is located to the northwest of the Dome of the Rock and consists of two rooms, one at the ground level, the other an underground basement. This dome is also known by the name "Sheikh Al-Khalili Dome" after a Sufi Sheikh that used to lead prayers there. Today, the dome is used as an office for Al-Aqsa Mosque's Construction Committee.



## 19. Sultan Mahmud II Dome / The Lovers of the Prophet (PBUH) Dome (Ottoman Era)

The Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II wanted to leave a landmark that commemorates him inside Al-Aqsa Mosque, thus he built this dome in the northern part of the mosque next to the Gate of Darkness in 1223 AH/808 AC. The dome is made of a square building which is open from all sides and topped with a small dome. The building is based on four stone pillars built over a platform that is half a meter higher than the rest of Al-Aqsa's grounds. It is also known by the name "The Lovers of the Prophet (PBUH) Dome" because Sufi Sheikhs used to gather under it for prayers and remembrance of Allah.

## 20. Grammarian Dome (Ayoubi Era)

King Issa Al-Moatham ordered building this dome's basic structure in 604 AH/1207 AC and dedicated it to teaching Arabic language and grammar in particular. In 608 AH/1213 AC he added a dome on top of it. The building consists of two rooms and a hallway in the middle that is topped with two domes: the big silver dome lies on top of the western room, the smaller dome sits on top of the eastern room, while the hallway's roof is flat. The dome's entrance is located on its northern side, and is decorated with two marble columns famous by the name of the "Unthankful Son." The structure remained a school until the 12th Century AH and has played a great role in Jerusalem's cultural and intellectual scene and continued to be a school for Arabic language and grammar until the 12th Century AH. During the past century the dome was used as a library for the Islamic Supreme Council, and as an architectural office for the restoration and reconstruction of the Dome of the Rock. Today, it is serving as an office for the acting Supreme Judge and as headquarters for the Shari'a Appeal Court.

# Minarets

## 21. The Bani Ghanim Gate Minaret (Ayoubi Era)

The Ayoubi judge Sharaf Ad-Din bin Abdul Rahman Bin As-Sahib built the Bani Ghanim Gate Minaret in 677 AH/1278 AC during the reign of Sultan Hussam Ad-Din Lajeen. It is a square-shaped minaret located near Bani Ghanim's Gate which is considered the most decorated of Al-Aqsa's minarets. With a height of 38.5 meters it is the highest minaret inside Al-Aqsa with a staircase of 120 steps. The western tunnel which was dug by the Israeli Occupation Forces has weakened the minaret's foundations which called for its renovation in 2001.

## 22. The Tribes Gate Minaret/The Salahya Minaret (Mamluk Era)

The Tribes Gate Minaret was first built by the Governor of Jerusalem Saif Ad-Din Qatlo Pasha during the Mamluk Sultan Al-Ashraf Sha'ban reign next to the Tribes Gate. It used to be a square-shaped minaret until the Ottomans ordered its reconstruction in 1007 AH/1599 AC, making it the only cylindrical shaped minaret inside Al-Aqsa. The Tribes Minaret was renovated twice, first in 1927 AC after being damaged in an earthquake, and second in 1967 because it sustained some damages during Israeli raids. Al-Aqsa Mosque's Committee reconstructed the minaret and covered its dome with lead sheets.



## 23. The Moroccan's Gate Minaret (Mamluk Era)

The Mamluk Judge Sharf Ad-Din bin Fakhr Ad-Din Al-Khalili built the Moroccan's Gate Minaret in 677AH/1278AC next to the Moroccan's Gate. The 23 meters high minaret is the shortest minaret inside Al-Aqsa Mosque and is standing without any foundations. The top of the minaret was damaged in an earthquake that hit Jerusalem in 1922 and was repaired by the Islamic Supreme Council which added a dome to it, which was later covered with lead sheets by Al-Aqsa Construction Committee.

## 24. The Gate of the Chain Minaret (Mamluk Era)

Prince Saif Ad-Din Tankz bin Abdullah An-Nasry built this minaret over Al-Aqsa's northern corridor in 730 AH/1329 AC next to the Gate of the Chain. The square-shaped minaret can be accessed through Al-Ashrafiya School using a staircase made of 80 steps. It is built on a square base and topped with a covered porch resting on a set of stone columns. The minaret has been restored by the Supreme Islamic Council in 1922 after being damaged in an earthquake. Israeli forces banned Muslims from entering and using this Minaret to "protect" Jewish worshipers at Al-Buraq Wall "Western Wall" which the minaret overlooks.

# Arched Gates

Arched gates, also called "scales," comprise a number of stone or marble columns that are linked together using arches. A number of arched gates surround the Dome of the Rock's plateau on Al-Aqsa compound, each one of them connected to a staircase. In addition to facilitating worshipers' accessibility to the 4-meter high plateau, the gates were built to serve a decorative function.

## 25. The Southern Arched Gate

This arched gate was first built during the Abbasid Era and renovated twice after that: once during the Fatimid Era and once by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1311/1893 AC. It consists of two stone pillars with three marble columns between them which are topped with a number of arches. The gate has a sundial that was carved in the middle of its southern façade in 1311 AH/1907 AC by Eng. Rushdi Imam, the architect of the Supreme Islamic Council, adding a distinguished feature to it that no other arched gate surrounding the Dome of the Rock has.

## 26. The Eastern Arched Gate

The accurate year or era in which this gate was constructed remains unknown. Some historians claim it was built during the Abbasid era, while others say it was built during the Fatimid era. However, it is most likely that it was built during the Abbasid Era and renovated by the Fatimids later. The gate consists of two stone pillars that have four marble columns between them which are topped with arches.

## 27. The Western Arched Gate

The Western Arched Gate was built in 320 AH; however, its founder remains unknown. It consists of two stone pillars that have three marble columns between them which are topped with a number of arches.

## 28. The Northwestern Arched Gate

The Northwestern Arched Gate was built by the Mamluk King Al-Ashraf Sha'ban in 778 AH/1386 AC, and was renovated in 926 AH/1519 AC by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. It consists of two stone pillars that have two marble columns between them which are topped with arches.

## 29. The Northeastern Arched Gate

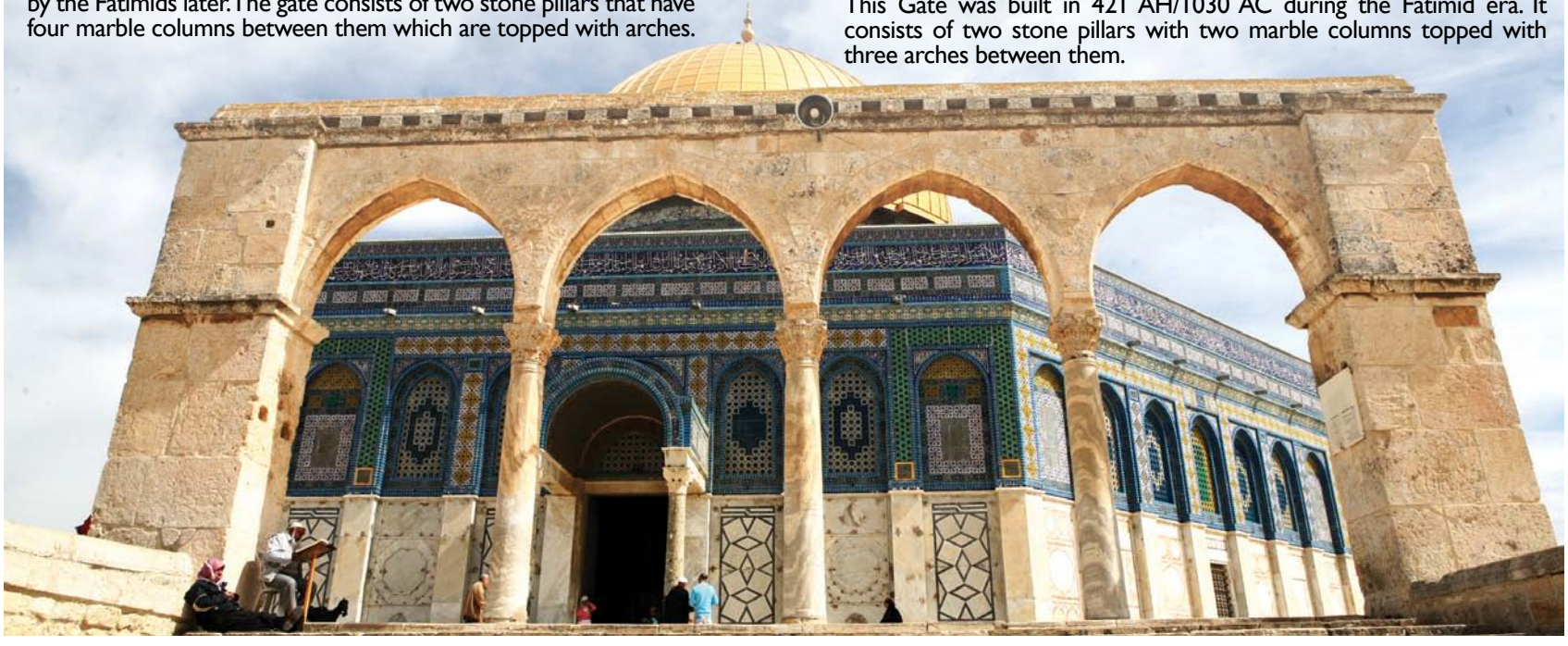
Sultan Mohammad bin Qalawun has built this gate in 726 AH/1325 AC. It consists of two stone trusses that have two thin stone columns between them which are topped with arches.

## 30. The Southwestern Arched Gate

Prince Naser Ad-Din An-Nashashibi, the governor of Jerusalem during Sultan Qaitbay's reign, supervised building this gate in 877 AH/1472-1473 AC. It consists of two stone pillars that have two marble columns between them which are topped with three arches.

## 31. The Southeastern Arched Gate

This Gate was built in 421 AH/1030 AC during the Fatimid era. It consists of two stone pillars with two marble columns topped with three arches between them.



# Schools

## 32. Al-Khutniya School (Ayoubi Era)

The Khutniya School was built during Saladin's reign in 587 AH/1191 AC adjacent to Al-Qibly Mosque's southern wall, and was named after Sheikh Al-Khutni, a scholar who taught Islamic Sciences at it. The school's original structure was subject to several changes by adding some rooms and restrooms to it. Today, only a few arches and windows remain of the school's original building.

## 33. Al-Fakhriya School (Mamluk Era)

Judge Fakhr Ad-Din Mohammad bin Fadl Allah built this school in 730 AH/1329-1330 AC. It was originally built as an Islamic religious school, but it was later turned into a Sufi lodge. Israeli forces have demolished parts of the school, leaving only three rooms and a small mosque out of its original building. The school's mosque structure is simple; it is an oblong room which is based on three stone pillars and topped with three magnificent domes that were added to the building during the Ottoman era. The mosque also has a beautiful niche built with red bricks pointing towards the Qibla.

## 34. Al-Duwaidaryah School (Mamluk Era)

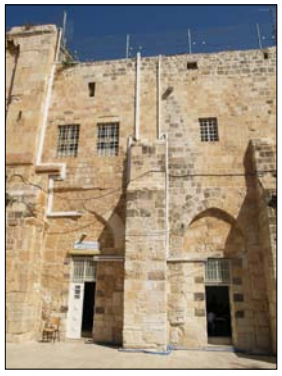
Prince Alam Ad-Din Abu Musa Sanjar Al-Duwaidar built this school near the Gate of Darkness in 695 AH/1295 AC. In addition to being an Islamic school that taught the Shafie jurisprudence, it also served as a hospice. The school remained an educational address until the late Ottoman era. Remarkably, it was devoted to teaching girls. It continued with this function during the time of the British Mandate. The school is made of a two-storey building that has a beautiful entrance decorated with stalactites*; it also has a mosque inside. Today, the building is used as a school called Al-Bakriyah School for people with special needs.

## 35. Al-Tankaziyah School (Mamluk Era)

The Governor of Great Syria Prince Saif Ad-Din Tankaz An-Nasri built this school in 729 AH/1328 AC. The school is located between the Gate of the Chain to the north and Al-Buraq Wall to the south. It was originally dedicated to teaching Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) traditions (Sunnah and Hadith); however, it was turned into a courthouse during the Mamluk Sultan Qaitbay's reign. Under the Ottomans it became a Shari'a Court, until the early days of the British Mandate when the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amin Al-Husseini made it his place of residence. The building went back to being a school for teaching Islamic jurisprudence until it was confiscated by the Israeli Authorities in 1969 and turned into a Border Police Station to monitor and oversee Al-Aqsa Mosque.

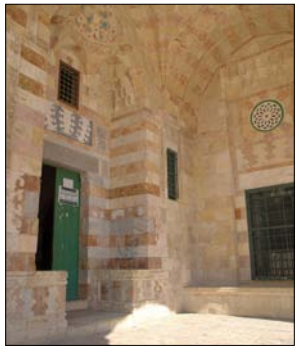
* A characteristic of Islamic architecture and decoration. It consists of a series of little niches, bracketed out one above the other, or of projecting prismatic forms in rows and tiers that are connected at their upper ends by miniature squinch arches.

## 36. Al-Farisyah School (Mamluk Era)



Al-Farisyah School is named after its founder Prince Faris Al-Baki bin Al-Amir Qatlo bin Abdullah. The school was built in 755 AH/1352 AC, on top of Al-Aqsa Mosque's northern corridor, where a staircase leads to its arched entrance. Inside the school there is an open courtyard and a staircase connecting to the adjacent Aminyah School, as the two schools' structures overlap. Today, the school is used as a place of residence for a number of Jerusalemite families.

## 37. Al-Ashrafiyah School (Mamluk Era)



Prince Hassan bin Tatr Ath-Thahiry built this school as a gift for King Ath-Thaher Khashqoum in 872 AH/1426 AC. However, the latter died before the construction was completed; thus, Prince Ath-Thahiry decided to dedicate it to Sultan Al-Ashraf Qaitbay who assigned scholars and teachers to it. When Sultan Qaitbay came to Jerusalem he visited the school, but was not quite impressed by the building, so he demolished it and ordered its reconstruction in 885 AH/1470 AC. Al-Ashrafiyah School is considered to be the third architectural jewel of Al-Aqsa Mosque besides Al-Qibly Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Half of the school is located inside Al-Aqsa, while the other half is outside the Mosque's borders. The school consists of a two-storey building, and has a beautiful entrance decorated with white and red bricks. It also has a mosque that was once used by the followers of the Hanbali principle. There are two graves inside its mosque; one of them is thought to be Sheikh Al-Khalil'si tomb. Today, a significant part of the school is used as Al-Aqsa Shar'ia School for Girls; another part is used as an office for the Department of Manuscripts subordinate to the Islamic Waqf Directorate, while the remaining parts are used as houses where some Jerusalemite families live. In 2000, the Islamic Waqf Department and the Welfare Association carried out a comprehensive renovation of the building.



## 38. Al-Malakiyah School (Mamluk Era)

King Joukndar Al-Malaki An-Nasiri built this school in 741 AH/1340 AC during the reign of Sultan An-Naser Mohammad bin Qalawun. The school consists of a two-storey building and has a beautiful decorated entrance, which leads to a vestibule (a small room or hall between an entrance and the interior of the building or house) connected to a central open courtyard; its largest room overlooks Al-Aqsa Mosque's courtyards. This school is currently used as residence for some Jerusalemite families.

## 39. Al-Jawiliyah School (Mamluk Era)

Alm Ad-Din Sanjr bin Abdullah Al-Jawli, Governor of Jerusalem during King An-Naser bin Qalawun'S reign, built this school in 712-720 AH/1312-1320 AC, on the northwestern side of Al-Aqsa. The school is made of a two-storey building that has an open courtyard surrounded by a number of rooms; its southern façade overlooks Al-Aqsa Mosque's courtyards. The school was turned into a city hall in the 9th Century AH, when the Ottomans took over Jerusalem, and later became a government's house but returned to being a city hall once again after a while. Today, it is used as part of Al-Omariyah School.

## 40. Al-Khatuniyah School (Mamluk Era)

Lady Agl Khatun endowed this school in the 7th Century AH. Its eastern windows overlook Al-Aqsa Mosque's courtyard. Originally it was dedicated to teaching Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence. Several Islamic and national figures are buried inside this school such as: Prince Mohammad Ali Al-Hindi, an Indian Prince who defended the Palestinian cause; Musa Kathem Al-Husseini, head of the Nationalist Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress and Mayor of Jerusalem under the Ottomans; Sharif Abdul Hamid bin Awn, father-in-law of King Abdullah of Jordan; Ahmad Hilmi Abdel Baqi, first Palestinian Prime Minister under the 1948 All-Palestine Government; Abdul Qader Al-Husseini, grandson of Musa Kathem Al-Husseini, commander of local Arab forces during the 1948 War and leader of the famous Al-Qastal battle; his son Faisal Al-Husseini, a Palestinian politician and head of the Palestinian representation in Jerusalem (Orient House); and Abdul Hamid Shoman, founder of the Arab Bank.

## 41. Al-Asa'rdiyah School (Mamluk Era)

Majd Ad-Din Abdul Ghani bin Saif Ad-Din Abu Bakr Yusuf Al-Asa'rdi ordered building this school in 760 AH/1385 AC, but it was officially endowed in 770 AH/1369 AC. The school's entrance is located in Al-Aqsa's northern corridor; it consists of a two-storey building and an open courtyard. The school is topped with three beautiful domes, and has a mosque that overlooks Al-Aqsa's courtyard. Today, the building is used as a house.

## 42. Al-Araguniyah School (Mamluk Era)

Prince Aragun Al-Kamili started building this school in 758 AH/1356 AC, but he died before its construction was completed. Consequently, the mission was carried on by Rokn Ad-Din Baibars. The school is located between the Cotton Merchants Gate and the Iron Gate at the west end of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It consists of a two-storey building, and has a beautiful entrance decorated with red and white bricks that can be found in the southern part of the Iron Gate alley. The entrance has a plate with the school's founder's name and the year of its construction inscribed on top of it. It also has two tombs inside; one belongs to its founder Prince Aragun, while the other is for the Hashemite King Al-Hussein bin Ali who was buried inside the school's eastern room on the first floor. Today, the school is used as a house.

## 43. Al-Aminiyah School (Mamluk Era)

Amin Ad-Din Abdullah built this school in 730 AH/1330 AC, overlooking Al-Aqsa Mosque's northern corridor. The school consists of a two-storey building, where a number of Muslim scholars were buried. Its structure overlaps with Al-Farisyah School. Today the school building is used as a house.

## 44. Al-Basitiyah School (Mamluk Era)

Al-Basitiyah School is located in the north of Al-Aqsa Mosque, to the east of the Gate of Darkness next to Al-Duawaidaryah School. It was endowed by Judge Zein Ad-Din Abdul-Basit Khalil Al-Dimashqi/Al-Qahiri who was in charge of the treasury and army during the reign of King Al-Mu'ayyad Saif Ad-Din Sheikh Al-Mamluki (815-824 AH/1412-1421 AC).

The school's foundation is credited to Sheikh Al-Islam Shams Ad-Din Mohammad Al-Harawi, inspector of the two noble mosques (Al-Aqsa and Al-Ibrahimi) who commenced its construction but passed away before its completion. It consists of three rooms and an outdoor yard. The school was concerned with teaching Shafei jurisprudence, Hadith and the Holy Qur'an for orphans, specially the Sufis. Today, it serves as a residential building.

## 45. Al-Manjakiyah School (Mamluk Era)

This school is located on the Western Wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque to the left when entering the mosque from the Inspector's Gate. It is attributed to its founder and the registrar of its waqf in the 8th Century AH, Saif Ad-Din Manjak Al-Yousifi An-Nasiry.

It comprises two floors which have a large covered corridor and include many rooms and halls of different sizes. Initially, it was built as a school, then, towards the end of the Ottoman era, it was turned into a residential house. It also served as a shelter for strangers who visited Jerusalem. During the British Mandate it became an elementary school. Later, the Supreme Islamic Council renovated it to become its headquarters. However, today it serves as the headquarters of the Jerusalem Waqf Directorate which is subordinate to the Jordanian Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs.

## 46. The Ottoman School (Ottoman era)

The Ottoman School is located at the Ablution Gate, next to Al-Ashrafiyah School. It is named after a Turkish lady, called Asfahan Shah Khatun Bint Mahmoud Al-'Uthmaniyah, who established it in 840 AH/1436 CE.

The school consists of two floors and can be reached through a beautiful Mamluk entrance surmounted by inscription of its foundation and decorated with alternating red and white stones. The school consists of a number of rooms and a small open courtyard, overlooking Al-Aqsa Mosque, with a façade made of red and white stones. There are two tombs to the left side of the entrance; one of them is for the lady who endowed it.

The building was reconstructed by the Supreme Islamic Council, yet the school and its mosque sustained some damages because of the Israeli authorities' excavations beneath it. The Israeli authorities have confiscated the school's mosque allegedly to create ventilation for the tunnel beneath it.

# Corridors

## 47. The Northern Corridor (Mamluk Era)

King Issa Al-Moatham built the oldest section of the northern corridor in 610 AH/1213 AC, extending to the west from the Gate of Darkness. An inscription can be found on this section of the corridor documenting the name of its founder and the year of its construction. The rest of the corridor was built during various Islamic eras. A number of schools were built over the corridor: Al-Aminiyah School, Al-Asa'rdiyah School, Al-Farisyah School, Al-Malakiyah School, and Al-Sabibyah School. The corridor is made of huge stone columns that are topped with arched ceilings and has overlapping vaults and hallways. It is paved with stone floors that are slightly higher than the rest of Al-Aqsa's courtyards. During the Ottoman era the corridor was sealed using stone partitions and turned into a lodge for poor pilgrims.

## 48. The Western Corridor (Mamluk Era)

This corridor was built during the Mamluk era between 707-737 AH/1307-1336 AC. It consists of stone columns that are topped with arched ceilings and have a number of overlapping hallways. The corridor is paved with stone floors that are slightly higher than the rest of Al-Aqsa's courtyards. In the past, the western corridor's hallways were used for scholarly gatherings.

# Gates

There are 15 gates leading to Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, ten of which are open while the remaining five are currently closed. The keys for the Moroccan's Gate are with the Israeli authorities since they occupied East Jerusalem in 1967. The keys of the rest of the gates are with the Islamic Waqf Directorate, but they are opened only with the permission of the Israeli police who control access to Al-Aqsa Mosque, often denying entry to Muslim men younger than 45 years of age (sometimes, younger than 50). The Israeli police have a station to the northwest of the Dome of the Rock inside Al-Aqsa Mosque.

## The Open Gates

### 49. The Tribes Gate (Ayoubi Era)

The Tribes Gate was built in 610 AH/1213 AC, and is a four meters high arched gate located on the Northeast side of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was renovated several times; however, the current door was renovated by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. This gate is also called "Virgin Mary's Gate" because of its close location to Saint Hannah Church where Christians believe Virgin Mary (PBUH) was born.

### 50. The Gate of Remission (Ayoubi/Ottoman Era)

The Gate of Remission is one of the oldest gates inside Al-Aqsa; it is located in the Mosque's northern corridor between the Gate of the Tribes and the Gate of Darkness. The accurate year in which the gate was built remains unknown; however, it was renovated during the Ayoubi and Ottoman eras. It is a simple gate topped with stone hangers that were used to carry fire lamps in the past. This gate leads As-Sadiyah Quarter in the Old City, and it is one of three doors in Al-Aqsa the Israeli Security Forces allow to remain open for the Dawn, Maghrib, and Isha prayers.

### 51. The Gate of Darkness (Faisal) (Ayoubi Era)

The Gate of Darkness is located in Al-Aqsa's northern part; it was last renovated in 610 AH/1213 AC by the Ayoubi King Al-Moatham Sharf Ad-Din Issa. The gate is known by a variety of names such as the Gate of Darkness, the Gate of Faisal in tribute to the Hashemite King Faisal's visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1930, and the Honor of the Prophets after the Honor of the Prophets Quarter to which the gate leads, and the Duwaidaryah Gate because of its close location to Al-Duwaidaryah School.

## 52. The Gate of Bani Ghanim (Mamluk Era)

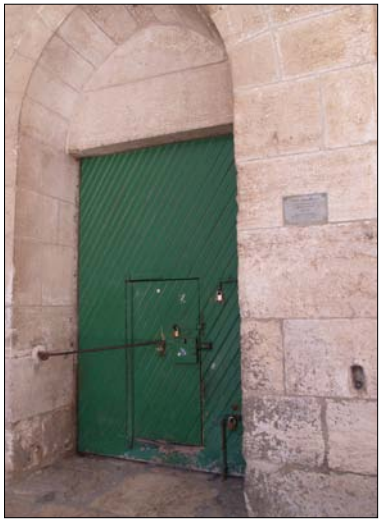
The Gate is located in the northwest part of Al-Aqsa Mosque and was last renovated in 707AH/1308AC. It is a relatively small gate named after the Old City's Bani Ghanim Quarter to which it leads. In the past, the Gate was called Al-Khalil (Hebron) Gate after Prophet Ibrahim Al-Khalil (PBUH). The Islamic Waqf Directorate has renovated this gate after an Israeli extremist burnt it in 1998.

## 53. The Inspector Gate (Mamluk Era)

The Inspector's Gate is located in Al-Aqsa Mosque's western corridor to the south of Bani Ghanim's Gate. It was renovated in 600AH/1203AC by King Moathem Sharaf Ad-Din. It is a huge gate with a 4.5 meter high entrance. The gate takes its name after the job of the Inspector of the two Noble Mosques (Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Ibrahimi Mosque) during the Mamluk Era. It is believed that the Inspector's residence was close to this gate and that is why it was named after him. It was also called Michael's Gate in the past, in addition to the Jail Gate because the Ottomans had built a jail next to it, and the Council Gate after the Supreme Islamic Council.

## 54. The Iron Gate (Mamluk Era)

The Iron Gate is located in the western corridor of Al-Aqsa Mosque between the Inspector's Gate and the Cotton Merchants' Gate; it was last renovated in 755-758 AH/1354-1357 AC. It is also called Aragun's Gate after its renovator and founder of the Araguniyah School Prince Aragun Al-Kamili.



## 55. Cotton Merchants' Gate (Mamluk Era)

The Mamluk Sultan Mohammad bin Qaloun built the Cotton Merchants' Gate in 737 AH/1336 AC, in the western part of Al-Aqsa Mosque between the Iron Gate and the Ablution Gate.The gate leads to the Cotton Market in the Old City of Jerusalem, from where it derives its name. This gate is considered to be one of Al-Aqsa Mosque's most beautiful gates with decorations of Islamic motif and stalactites covering its entrance.

## 56. Ablution Gate (Ayoubi Era)

This gate is located in the western corridor of Al-Aqsa Mosque near the Cotton Merchants' Gate which is close to the Dome of the Rock. It is the only gate of Al-Aqsa that does not lead to one of the Old City's quarters, but to an ablution built by the Ayoubi Sultan Al-Adel Abu Bakr Ayoub instead. The gate and the ablution were last renovated in 666 AH/1267 AC.

## 57. Tranquility Gate (Ayoubi Era)

The Tranquility Gate is one of Al-Aqsa Mosque's main gates. It is located to the north of the Gate of the Chain, and is also known as the Wizards' Gate and David's Gate. The gate was built and renovated during the Ayoubi era; it is relatively high with overlapping ornamented stones decorating it. The gate has a double wooden door with a small opening that allows a single person to pass through when the double door is closed. Today, the gate remains closed.

## 58. The Gate of Chain (Ayoubi Era)

The Gate of the Chain which was built during the Ayoubi era is one of Al-Aqsa Mosque's main entrances; it is located in the southern part of Al-Aqsa's western wall. The gate is relatively high and topped with ornamented bricks. The Ayoubis also renovated it in 600 AH/1200 AC. It has a double wooden door with a small opening that allows a single person to pass through when the double door is closed.

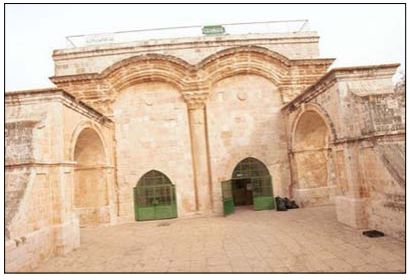
## 59. The Moroccan Gate (Mamluk Era)

The Moroccan Gate is located in Al-Aqsa Mosque's western wall (Al-Buraq Wall). It was last renovated in 713AH/1313AC. The gate leads to the Moroccan Quarter that was demolished by the Israeli Occupation Forces in 1967 to build the Wailing Wall Plaza in order to create a larger space for Jews to pray in front of Al-Buraq Wall, in addition to building the necessary facilities to service them. The Israeli forces ban Muslims from using this gate allegedly for security reasons.

# The Closed Gates

## 60. The Golden Gate (Umayyad Era)

The Golden Gate is an ancient historical door carved inside Al-Aqsa's eastern wall. It consists of two gates, one to the south (Al-Rahma - Mercy) and one to the north (Al-Tawbah - Repentance). The Mercy Gate was named after the Mercy Graveyard which is located in front of it and where Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) companions Ash-Shadad bin Aws and Obada bin As-Samet are buried. Archeologists say that this door was probably built during the Umayyad era, and it is said that Al-Imam Al-Ghazzali, the prominent Islamic Scholar and Philosopher, stayed in a chamber on top of the Mercy Gate where he wrote his famous book "The Revival of Religious Sciences." This door is currently closed; it was shut by Saladin when he entered Jerusalem in order to protect the city from future raids.



## 61. The Funerals Gate (Al-Buraq Gate)

The Funeral's Gate is one of Al-Aqsa's hidden gates, located on its eastern wall. Its name stems from the fact that it was used by Muslims restrictedly to carry out funerals to Al-Rahma (Mercy) Graveyard. Today, the gate is permanently closed.

## 62. The Double Gate

This gate is located to the West of the Triple Door (Huldah's Gate); it was used by Umayyad Caliphs when they visited Al-Aqsa as it connects Al-Qibly Mosque to their palaces which were built outside Al-Aqsa's southern wall. Today, the gate is permanently closed, yet the interior corridor connected to it has been turned into a mosque called "the Ancient Aqsa."

## 63. The Triple Gate/Huldah Gate (Fatimid Era)

The Fatimid Caliph Ath-Thaher L'Izaz Din Allah ordered building the Triple Gate in 452 AH/1034 AC, in the middle of the Southern Wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It consists of three entrances that overlook the Umayyad palaces outside the southern wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque and lead to the western wall of Al-Musalla Al-Marwani. Jews claim that these gates are remains of the second temple (the Herodias Temple) and call it Huldah's Gate which is a biblical name for one of the ancient temple gates.

## 64. The Single Gate (Fatimid Era)

This gate was rebuilt by the Fatimid Caliph Ath-Thaher L'Izaz Din Allah in 425AH/1034AC. It is located on the southern wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque to the east of the Triple Gate and is permanently closed.

# WATER SOURCES

There are 32 water sources inside Al-Aqsa Mosque: two pools, two cisterns, eight sabeels (a public water source that is meant to service people for free), and twenty wells, that were built and dug out by Muslims to provide running water sources for worshipers inside Al-Aqsa Mosque to perform ablution, drink and irrigate the plants and trees inside the compound.

## 65. Al-Ka'as (Ayoubi Era)

Al-Ka'as is an ablution that was built by the Ayoubi Sultan Al-Adel Abu Bakr bin Ayoub in 589 AH/1193 AC. It is a circular basin with a fountain in the middle which is surrounded by an ornamented iron fence encircled by stone stools. It has a number of side faucets pinned on it for wadu' (ablution). Al-Ka'as was last renovated by Sultan Qaitbay and Prince Tankz An-Nasiri in 728 AH/1327 AC.

## 66. King Issa Al-Moathem Cistern (Ayoubi Era)

King Issa Al-Moathem ordered building the cistern in 607 AH/1210 AC just after the Grammarian Dome was built in 604AH/1207AC. The cistern is made of three hallways that are separated by constructed partitions and are covered with overlapping vaults. It has three entrances on its southern side where the cistern's year of construction and its founder's name are engraved over the middle door. During the Mamluk Sultan Al-Mansour Qalawun's reign part of the cistern was used as a storage room for Al-Aqsa Mosque, while the other part was used as a mosque for the Hanbaliya. The cistern later suffered from negligence and is used today by Al-Aqsa's Gardening Department.

## 67. Sabeel Qaitbay (Mamluk Era)

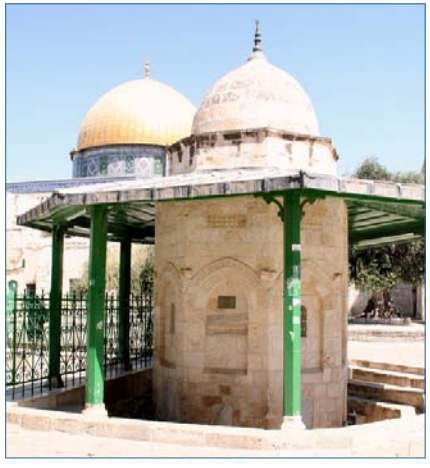
Sultan Saif Ad-Din Ennal built this sabeel in 860 AH; however, only a well remained of its original structure. The Mamluk Sultan Qaitbay reconstructed the Sabeel and added the building made of colorful bricks and the marble floors. The building is also topped with an octagonal dome ornamented with Islamic motifs. The sabeel was renovated again by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Majid Khan in 1300 AH/1882-1883 AC. Today, it is made of two floors; the first floor has a well on its grounds, while the second is a tank used for storing water.

## 68. An-Narenj Pool (Mamluk Era)

An-Narenj ('bitter oranges') pool is located on the western courtyard of Al-Aqsa Mosque between Sabeel Qasem Pasha and Sabeel Qaitbay's platform. The Mamluk Sultan Qaitbay renovated it in 887 AH/1483 AC when he built Al-Ashrafiyah School. The pool is square-shaped and has a fountain with marble floors in the middle of it which is out of use today. Al-Aqsa Reconstruction Committee renovated the pool and turned it into an ablution by adding 24 faucets on three of its sides. It is supplied with water from the nearby tank of Sabeel Qasem Pasha.

## 69. Sabeel Qasem Pasha (Ottoman Era)

Sabeel Qasem Pasha is located on the southwest side of Al-Aqsa Mosque close to the Gate of the Chain. Built by Qasem Pasha the Prince of Jerusalem in 933 AH/1527 AC, it is an octagonal sabeel with 16 faucets connected to it and a wooden sunshade built over it. The Sabeel is also called the Sabeel of the Courthouse.



## 70. Sabeel Suleiman (Ottoman Era)

Sabeel Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent is located near the Gate of Darkness over a platform that carries the same name; it was endowed in 948 AH/1541 AC. The Islamic Heritage Committee in coordination with the Waqf Directorate added an ablution to it in 1997 between the Sabeel's building and the Dome of the Prophet's Lovers.

## Wells

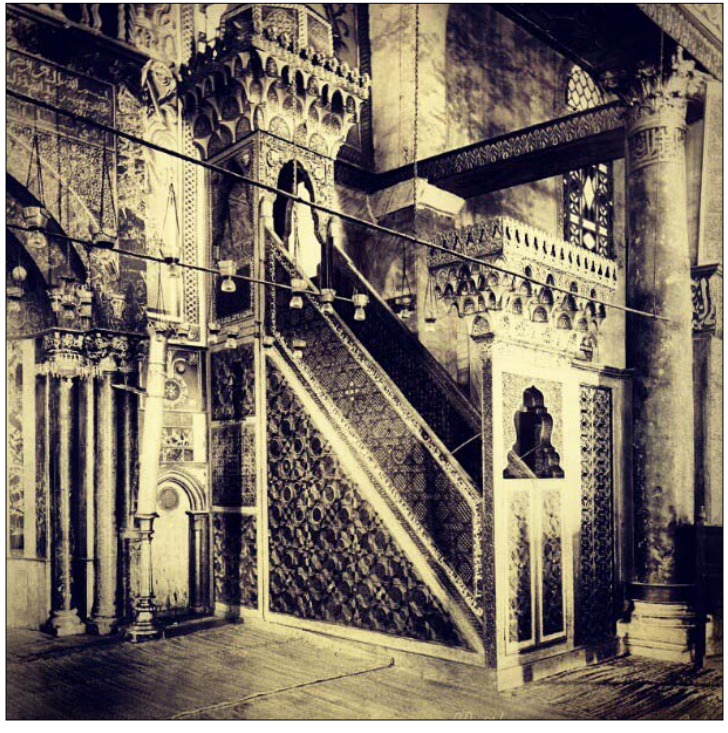
There are 20 wells in Al-Aqsa Mosque, most of them are rich with water, they provide water supply to the compound's water sources used for ablution, drinking and irrigation.

# Pulpits

A pulpit is a speaker's stand in a mosque. Almost every mosque in the Islamic world has a pulpit inside which is used to give Friday's and other sermons on special occasions such as Eid Al-Adha and Eid Al-Fitr. These sermons are considered part of Muslim prayer's rituals.

## 71. Nour Ad-Din Zinki (Saladin's) Pulpit (Ayoubi Era)

Nour Ad-Din Zinki built this pulpit in 564 AH/1168 AC to be placed inside Al-Aqsa Mosque after liberation from the Crusaders; however, he died before hand. When Saladin conquered the Crusaders and liberated Jerusalem he shipped Nour Ad-Din Zinki's Pulpit from Aleppo and placed it in Al-Qibly Mosque. The pulpit is made of cedar wood which is decorated with ivory and sea shells. It has a gate that is topped with a magnificent crown believed to be the slogan of the Tankaziyah State, most probably added to its structure by Prince Tankz An-

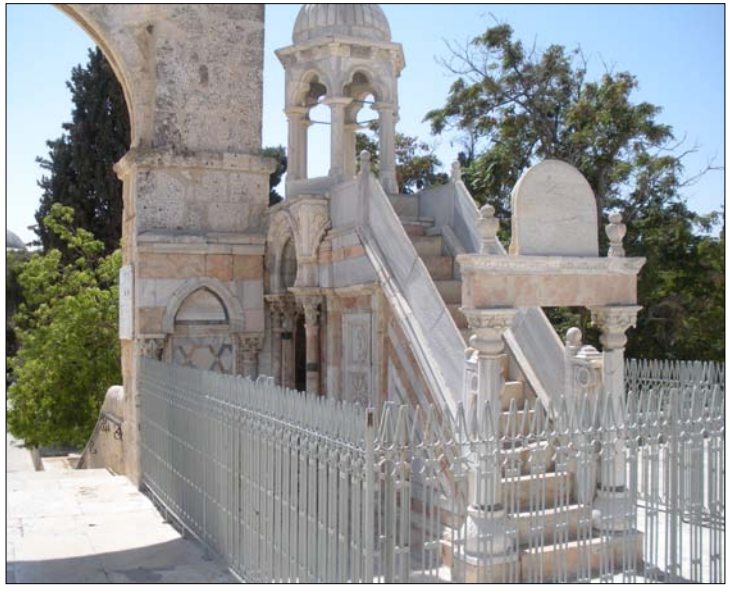


Nasiri in 731 AH/1330 AC. The pulpit also has a staircase that is topped with an arch and a wooden porch.

In 1969, Dennis Michael Rohan, an Australian Christian Zionist, set Al-Qibly Mosque on fire; the historical pulpit was destroyed completely in the arson. It was temporarily replaced with a simpler one until an identical pulpit was built in Jordan using the same original materials, which was brought to Jerusalem in 2007 to be placed inside Al-Qibly Mosque.

## 72. Burhan Ad-Din Pulpit (Mamluk Era)

This pulpit is located in the southern part of the Dome of the Rock's courtyard to the west of the southern arched gate which leads to Al-Qibly Mosque. The Supreme Judge Burhan Ad-Din bin Jamaa' ordered building the marble pulpit in 709 AH/1309 AC to replace a small portable one made of wood. The pulpit has a small entrance which is connected to a number of steps leading to a stone seat made for the speaker to sit on. It is topped with an attractive dome called the Dome of the Scale, because of its adjacent location to one of the arched gates that were known as scales in the past. There are two niches carved in the body of the pulpit: one can be seen under the speaker's chair while the other is on its eastern side next to the arched gate pillar. Today, the pulpit is out of use, in spite of being the only exterior pulpit within Al-Aqsa's compound.

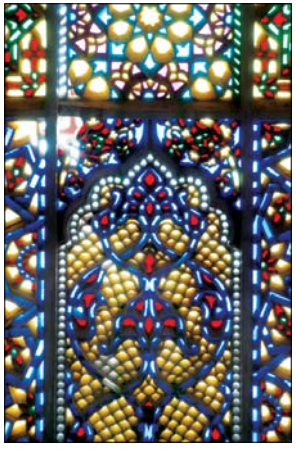


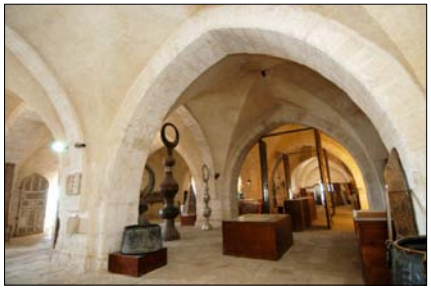
# The Islamic Museum

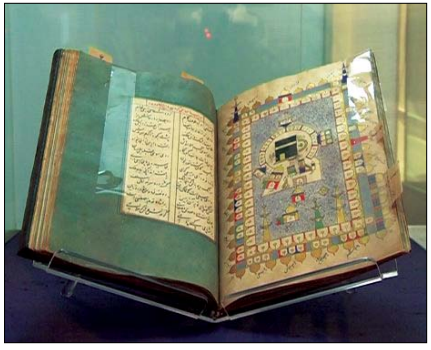
The Islamic Museum was established in 1923 AC by the Supreme Islamic Council. It is considered to be the first museum founded in Palestine. Initially, it was housed at Al-Ribat Al-Mansouri, which is located opposite the current Islamic Waqf headquarters, immediately outside Al-Nazer Gate. In 1929 AC, the museum was moved from there to its current location at the southwestern corner of Al-Aqsa Mosque, next to the Moroccans' Gate.

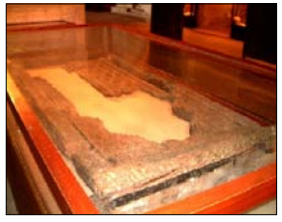
The museum has two halls that form a right angle. The western hall was a mosque known as The Moroccans Mosque, while the southern hall is part of the Women's Mosque.

The Islamic Museum includes rare archeological and artistic collections which pertain to the various Islamic historical eras. In addition, the museum has about 750 manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an with the oldest copy dating back to the 2nd Century AH. There is also a copy of the Holy Qur'an from the Mamluk Sultan Barsbay, which was written between the years 1422-1437 AC. With its dimensions of 110 cm x 170 cm it is considered the largest copy of the Holy Qur'an in Palestine.





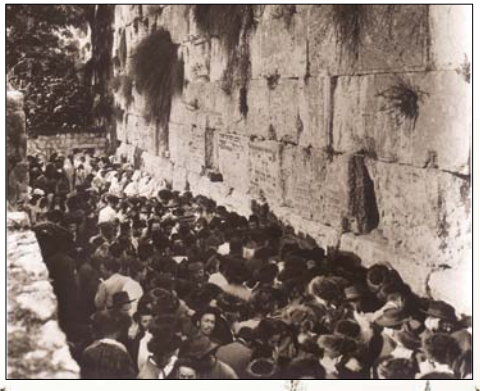




# Al-Buraq Wall

Al-Buraq Wall represents the southwestern section of Al-Aqsa Mosque's wall, some 50 meters in length and approximately 20 meters in height. It is part of Al-Aqsa Mosque and considered an Islamic property.* The Jews now call it "The Wailing Wall" claiming it is the remaining part of their destroyed Temple. At least until the 15th Century Jews used to pray at the Mount of Olives which is separated from the Old City by the Kidron Valley.

According to Muslim tradition this is the wall where Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) tied his winged creature, Al-Buraq, before ascending to heaven on his journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (Al-*Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj*), where he received his revelations of Islam and lead the other prophets in prayer.

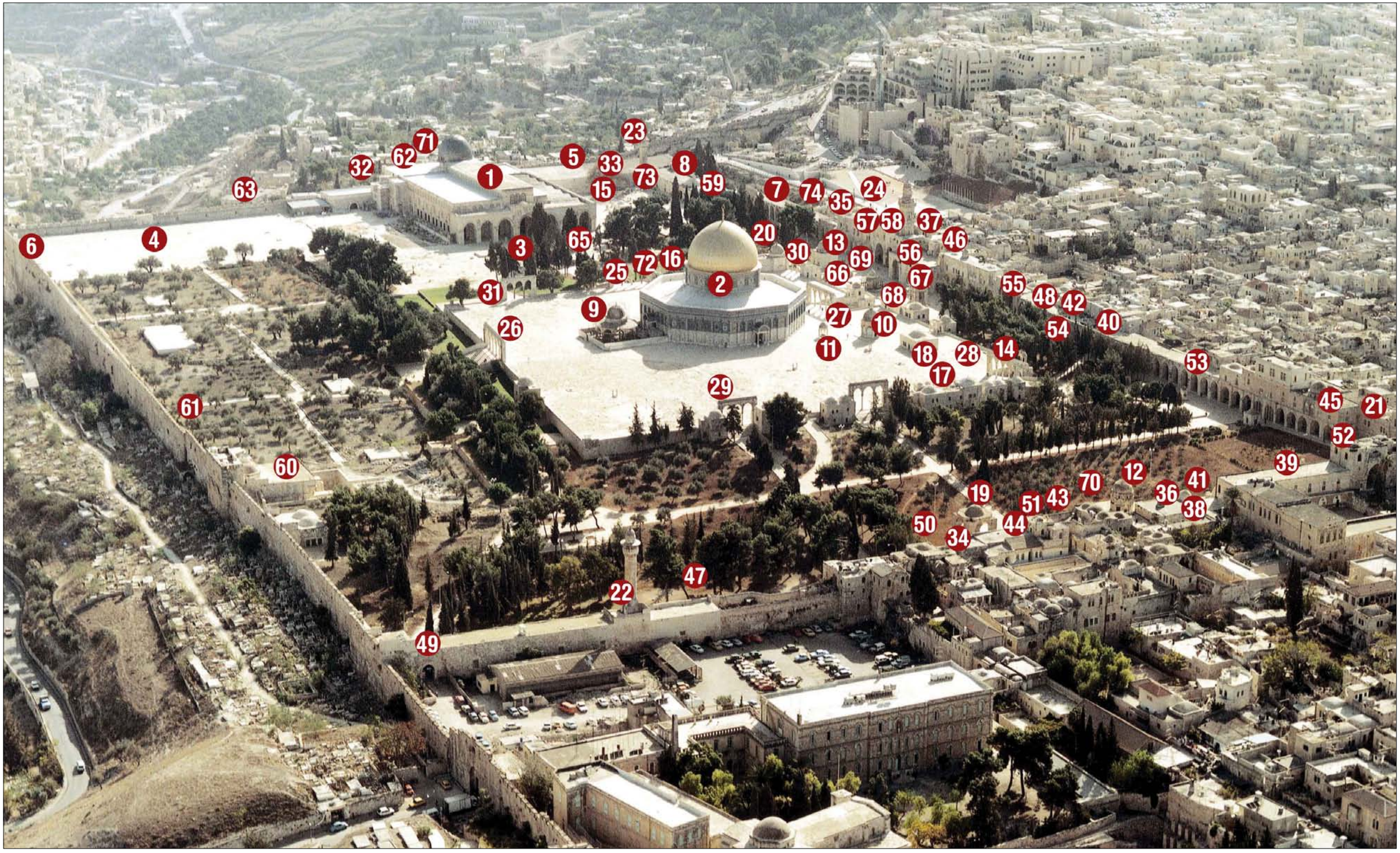


The Al-Buraq Wall area before the destruction of the adjacent Moroccan Quarter by Israeli occupation forces after their 1967 conquest.

* In 1930, the British Inquiry Commission to Determine the Rights and Claims for Muslims and Jews in Connection with the Wailing Wall confirmed that the wall and much of the area around it constitutes Waqf property. The plaza in front of today's wall was created after Israel's 1967 conquest of the city and involved the demolition of the entire Arab Mughrabi Quarter, which rendered hundreds of Palestinians homeless.

# Platforms

A platform is a flat space made of stone that is elevated from Al-Aqsa's surface, it is usually connected to a few steps and has a niche carved in it pointing towards the Qibla. There are 26 platforms in Al-Aqsa Mosque; in the past these platforms were allocated for prayers, and scholarly and preaching circles. They continue to serve the same function today. Out of the 26 platforms only two were built recently while the rest pertain to the various historic Islamic eras.


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74

# Map Legend

1. Al-Qibly Mosque
2. The Dome of the Rock
3. The Ancient Aqsa
4. Al-Musalla Al-Marwani
5. The Women's Mosque (Ayoubi Era)
6. Issa (Jesus) Cradle Mosque (Ottoman Era)
7. Al-Buraq Mosque (Ommiad/ Mamlouk Era)
8. The Moroccan's Mosque (Ayoubi Era)
9. Dome of the Chain (Ommiad Era)
10. The Dome of Ascension (Ayoubi Era)
11. The Prophet's Dome and Niche (Ottoman Era)
12. Suleiman's Dome (Ommiad/ Ayoubi Era)
13. Moses Dome (Ayoubi Era)
14. Al-Kahdr's Dome (Ottoman Era)
15. Yusuf Agha Dome (Ottoman Era)
16. Yusuf Dome (Ayoubi/ Ottoman Era)
17. The Spirits Dome (Ottoman Era)
18. Mohammadiyah Lodge Dome/Al-Khalily (Ottoman Era)
19. Sultan Mahmud II Dome/The lovers of the Prophet (PBUH) Dome (Ottoman Era)
20. Grammarian Dome (Ayoubi Era)
21. The Bani Ghanim Gate Minaret (Ayoubi Era)
22. The Tribes Gate Minaret/The Salahya Minaret (Mamlouk Era)
23. The Moroccan's Gate Minaret (Mamlouk Era)
24. The Gate of the Chain Minaret (Mamlouk Era)
25. The Southern Arched Gate
26. The Eastern Arched Gate
27. The Western Arched Gate
28. The Northwestern Arched Gate
29. The Northeastern Arched Gate
30. The Southwestern Arched Gate
31. The Southeastern Arched Gate
32. Al-Khutniya School (Ayoubi Era)
33. Al-Fakhriya School (Mamlouk Era)
34. Al-Duwaidaryah School (Mamlouk Era)
35. Al-Tankaziyah School (Mamlouk Era)
36. Al- Farisyah School (Mamlouk Era)
37. Al- Ashrafiyah School (Mamlouk Era)
38. Al Malakiyah School (Mamlouk Era)
39. Al-Jawiliyah School (Mamlouk Era)
40. Al-Khatuniyah School (Mamlouk Era)
41. Al-Asa'rdiyah School (Mamlouk Era)
42. Al-Araguniyah School (Mamlouk Era)
43. Al-Aminiyah School (Mamlouk Era)
44. Al-Basitiyah School(Mamlouk Era)
45. Al-Manjakiyah School (Mamlouk Era)
46. The Ottoman School (Ottoman era)
47. The Northern Corridor (Malouk Era)
48. Western Corridor (Mamlouk Era)
49. The Tribes Gate (Ayoubi Era)
50. The Gate of Remission (Ayoubi/ Ottoman Era)
51. The Gate of Darkness (Faisal) (Ayoubi Era)
52. The Gate of Bani Ghanim (Mamlouk Era)
53. The Inspector Gate (Mamlouk Era)
54. The Iron Gate (Mamlouk Era)
55. Cotton Merchants' Gate (Mamlouk Era)
56. Ablution Gate (Ayoubi Era)
57. Tranquility Gate (Ayoubi Era)
58. The Gate of Chain (Ayoubi Era)
59. The Moroccans Gate (Mamlouk Era)
60. The Golden Gate (Ommiad Era)
61. The Funerals Gate (Al-Buraq Gate)
62. The Double Gate
63. The Triple Gate/Huldah Gate (Fatimid Era)
64. The Single Gate (Fatimid Era)
65. Al- Ka'as (Ayoubi Era)
66. King Issa Al-Moathem Cistern (Ayoubi Era)
67. Sabeel Qaitbay (Mamlouk Era)
68. Raranj Pool (Mamlouk Era)
69. Sabeel Qasem Pasha (Ottoman Era)
70. Sabeel Suleiman (Ottoman Era)
71. Nour Ad-Dein Zinki (Saladin's) Pulpit / (Ayoubi Era)
72. Borhan Ad-Dein Pulpit (Mamlouk Era)
73. The Islamic Museum
74. Al-Buraq Wall