

Masjid Al-Aqsa

Al Masjid Al Aqsa has a very special place in the hearts of the entire Muslim community due to its unique and rich history as a place of worship that is so closely intertwined with the lives of many of the Prophets of Islam, as well as for its special status as a Masjid to which travel is recommended and in which reward is increased. It is a special and blessed Masjid of vast size comprising 144,000 square meters (covering approximately 1/6th of the entire area of the Old City of Jerusalem) and with capacity to accommodate in the region of 500,000 worshippers. It was the second place of worship build in Islam, 40 years after the building of Kaaba, and is mentioned in the Qur'an as being 'holy' and 'blessed'.

Why is Masjid Al-Aqsa so special?

Masjid Al-Aqsa is an important holy site in Islam, located in the Old City of Jerusalem in Palestine. It's name translates literally as 'the Farthest Mosque'. The wider compound includes the Dome of the Rock, seventeen gates and four minarets, and is usually referred to as al-Haram ash-Sharif, which means 'the Noble Sanctuary'.

Isra wal Miraj

According to the Quran and Islamic traditions, Al-Aqsa Mosque is the place from which Muhammad (s), went on a night journey (al-isra) during which he rode on Buraq, who took him from Mecca to al-Aqsa. Muhammad tethered Buraq to the Western Wall and prayed at al-Aqsa Mosque and after he finished his prayers, the angel Jibril (Gabriel) traveled with him to heaven, where he met several other prophets.

****Glorified be He [Allah] Who did take His servant for a journey by night from Al Masjid Al Haram to Al Masjid Al Aqsa, whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of our Signs. Verily He is the All Hearing, All Seeing." Surah Isra (17:1)****

First Qibla

The historical significance of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Islam is further emphasized by the fact that Muslims turned towards al-Aqsa when they prayed for a period of 16 or 17 months after migration to Medina in 624; it thus became the qibla ("direction") that Muslims faced for prayer. Muhammad (s) later prayed towards the Kaaba in Mecca after receiving a revelation [Quran 2:142–151]. The qibla was relocated to the Kaaba where Muslims have been directed to pray ever since.

Brief History Of Masjid Al Aqsa

From Prophet Adam (as) to Prophet Muhammad (s):

- It was built 40 years after Al Masjid Al Haram in Makkah. There is a difference of opinion amongst scholars as to who exactly built Al Masjid Al Aqsa, with some scholars and

historians asserting the view that Al Masjid Al Aqsa was built by Prophet Adam (as), and others opining that it was built by Prophet Ibrahim (as). It has also been rebuilt, renovated and expanded many times in the history of Islam.

- It was a well known place of worship at the time of Prophet Ibrahim (as) and for his son Prophet Ishaq (as) and grandson Prophet Yaqub (as). When Prophet Yaqub's son Prophet Yusuf (as) attained a position of power in Egypt, he asked his family to join him and escape the poverty that engulfed Palestine.
- The Israelites who voluntarily emigrated to Egypt, remained there for approximately four centuries and became slaves to the Egyptians. This slavery only ended when Prophet Musa (as) freed them from Firaoun under the command of Allah. However, the Israelites rejected the orders of Allah to enter Palestine and were thus commanded to live in and wander through the desert of Sinai for 40 years. This ended when a new generation was born, containing within it Prophet Daoud (as), who led his generation of believers to Palestine.
- Prophet Daoud (as) established his kingdom in part of Palestine, and controlled Jerusalem.
- His son Prophet Suleiman (as) rebuilt Al Masjid Al Aqsa with the help of the local indigenous population and next to it he built the ruler's palace.
- After Prophet Suleiman's death, his two sons divided his kingdom amongst themselves with each having its own capital. These kingdoms existed for a very short period of time – approximately two hundred years, with the last king of Jerusalem in this dynasty being dethroned in 586/587BC as he tried to resist the Babylonians (led by King Nebuchadnezzar) but failed due to a crippling siege that the Babylonians had placed on the city.
- Shortly after the Babylonians took control of Jerusalem, Al Masjid Al Aqsa was destroyed again.
- The Persians overthrew the Babylonians (during which time efforts to rebuild Al Masjid Al Aqsa as a place of worship were renewed), but in the period thereafter ownership changed hands numerous times, and Al Masjid Al Aqsa was destroyed, rebuilt and then destroyed again within a century by the Romans in 70AD after a revolt in the city.
- By 315-325AD, when the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, the Romans and the people residing in their land (including the Jews) no longer had any regard for Al Masjid Al Aqsa and no longer treated it as a place of sanctity and worship, with the site of Al Masjid Al Aqsa actually being used as a place of waste disposal for the citizens of the city. This is how Al Masjid Al Aqsa remained for the next few hundred years until the Prophet Muhammad (saw) revived once again the spirituality of this blessed place, and his great companion Umar Ibn Al Khattab (ra) liberated the city.

Caliph Umar's Trip to Jerusalem

After the battle of Yarmuk the Muslim forces under the command of Abu Ubaydah Amir Ibn Jarrah (RA) lay siege to Jerusalem. The inhabitants consented to surrender on condition that the Khalifa, Umar ibn al Khattab (ra) came in person and took the keys to the city. Accordingly, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) travelled from Madinah to Jerusalem where Sophronius,

the Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem, offered him the 'keys' to the city in 637 AD. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) entered the city of Jerusalem on foot with no bloodshed or harassment of the inhabitants. On his arrival, he concluded the famous peace treaty with the people of Holy City. This opened the doors to the Jews, who were denied access for hundreds of years and for the first time Jerusalem under Muslim rule became truly an OPEN CITY to all the three faiths.

When he arrived at the site of Al Masjid Al Aqsa in 637/638AD, Umar (RA) didn't find a place of prayer but rather a plot of land that had been left barren and had been used as a rubbish dump by the Romans. Upon seeing this he took the responsibility to remove the waste with his own hands and to rebuild Al Masjid Al Aqsa. Both the Christians and the Jews were pleased with the arrival of Umar and the Muslims, and with their just rule.

In 691/692AD, Abd' al Malik bin Marwan began constructing what is nowadays known as the Dome of the Rock on top of the rock which some believe was the place where Prophet Muhammad (s) embarked on his Miraj to the Heavens. However, it must be noted that regardless of whether the rock has importance for this reason, its main significance derives from it being within the boundaries of Al Masjid Al Aqsa and therefore part of Al Masjid Al Aqsa.

The Muslims lost Al Masjid Al Aqsa to the Crusaders in 1099AD and were the victims of one of the darkest and most bloody days in its history. On arrival into Jerusalem. the Crusaders announced that they would not take any prisoners, resulting in a large proportion of the Muslims fleeing to Al Masjid Al Aqsa in order to seek refuge. The Crusaders later entered the blessed Masjid and massacred thousands of Muslims inside. Al Masjid Al Aqsa was then converted into a palace, and it took 88 years before the Muslims reclaimed it in 1187 under the leadership of the great leader Salahuddin Ayyubi. His reclamation of Jerusalem and Al Masjid Al Aqsa was reminiscent of Umar Ibn Al Khattab's liberation five centuries earlier, and was a stark contrast to the actions of the Crusaders just a generation prior. Like Umar Ibn Al Khattab, Salahuddin Ayabbi did not allow a massacre of civilians or soldiers, and after reclaiming Al Masjid Al Aqsa he also used his own hands to clean the blessed land, and famously sprinkled rosewater through the Masjid.

The Muslims once again had unhindered control of Jerusalem and Al Masjid Al Aqsa for a significant period of time – approximately eight centuries – and their rule was characterized by peace, justice and prosperity, with Al Masjid Al Aqsa becoming a great centre of learning with scholars from all over the world travelling to study and teach within its blessed precincts. Throughout almost this entire period, the Christians and Jews were provided safety and protection, and their rights were respected as People of the Book.

From 1917 to the present day

For numerous centuries during the Ottoman caliphate, the city of Jerusalem and Al Masjid Al Aqsa were preserved with honour and dignity, with Muslims being in charge of the administration of the city, but in line with Islamic law and the Ottoman millet system, they provided religious freedom and security for the Jewish and Christian minorities. However all this

changed when the Zionist movement in Europe emerged with the aim of creating a Jewish state on the Palestinian land.

MUSALLAH AL QIBLI

- This constitutes the main prayer hall within the Masjid al Aqsa compound.
- It was in this location that Umar (RA) built a structure when he liberated Jerusalem in and found Masjid al Aqsa neglected and deserted.
- The original was a simple wooden building designed to accommodate 3000 worshippers.
- The current form of the Qibli Masjid has its roots in the construction embarked upon by the Umayyad Caliphs Abdul Malik bin Marwan and his son, Walid bin Abdul Malik.
- Renovations occurred throughout the Islamic era, presided over by Umayyads, Abbasids and Fatimids.
- When the Crusaders occupied Masjid al Aqsa, they used the Qibli Masjid as their headquarters. Salahuddin Ayyubi RA, on liberating al Aqsa from the Crusaders, ordered another renovation of the Qibli Masjid and returned it to its former state. He also installed a magnificent wooden pulpit that had been prepared exclusively for Masjid al Aqsa years earlier by Nur ad Din Zangi.
- For their part, the Ottomans played a superb role in the upkeep of the Qibli Masjid, renovating it, as well as furnishing it with carpets and lanterns.
- Refurbishment and maintenance efforts today continue under the auspices of the Jordanian monarchy which oversees the Masjid al Aqsa Waqf.

Significance of Masjid Al Aqsa according to some ahadith

Masjid Al-Aqsa – The Second House of Allah on Earth (Hadith 1)

Abu Dharr (ra) reported that he asked the Prophet (saw), “O Messenger of Allah, which Masjid was built first on earth”? The Prophet (saw) replied, “The Sacred Masjid of Makkah”. Abu Dharr (ra) again asked, “Which was next”? The Prophet (saw) said, “Masjid Al-Aqsa”. Abu Dharr (ra) further asked, “How long was the period between the building of the two Masjids”? The Prophet (saw) said, “Forty years”. Apart from these, offer your prayer anywhere when it is time to pray, although excellence is in praying in these Masjids”.

[Bukhari]

The Importance of Visiting Masjid Al-Aqsa (Hadith 2)

Abu Hurayrah (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “You should not undertake a special journey to visit any place other than the following three Masjids with the expectations of getting greater reward: the Sacred Masjid of Makkah (Ka’bah), this Masjid of mine (the Prophet’s Masjid in Madinah), and Masjid Al-Aqsa (of Jerusalem)”. In another narration the words are, “For three Masjids a special journey may be undertaken: The Sacred Masjid (Ka’bah), my Masjid and Masjid of Jerusalem (Al-Aqsa).

[Muslim, Bukhari, Abu Dawud]

Greater Virtue of praying in Masjid Al-Aqsa (Hadith 3 and 4)

Abu Darda (ra) relates that the Prophet (saw) said, “A prayer in Makkah (Ka’bah) is worth 1000,000 times (reward), a prayer in my Masjid (Madinah) is worth 1,000 times and a prayer in Al-Aqsa Sanctuary is worth 500 times more reward than anywhere else”.

[Tabarani, Bayhaqi, Suyuti]

The Importance of Donating to Masjid Al-Aqsa (Hadith 5 and 6)

Abdullah Ibn Umar (ra) relates, I asked the Prophet (saw), “Apostle of Allah, tell us the legal injunction about (visiting) Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem).” The Apostle of Allah (saw) said, “ Go and pray there. If you cannot visit it and pray there, then send some oil to be used in the lamps”.

[Bukhari]

The Blessed Land of Masjid Al-Aqsa (Hadith 8 and 9)

Zaid Ibn Thabit (ra) reports that the Prophet (saw) said, “How blessed is Al-Sham”! The Companions (ra) asked, “Why is that”? The Messenger (saw) replied, “I see the Angels of Allah spreading their wings over Al-Sham”. Ibn Abbas (ra) added, “And the Prophets lived therein. There is not a single inch in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) where a Prophet has not prayed or an Angel not stood”.

[Tirmidhi, Ahmad]

IMAM ABU HAMID AL-GHAZALI

Who was Al-Ghazali?

Al-Ghazali was a Muslim Saint, a scholar, who came from a humble background and through intelligence and determination became one of the most famous scholarly authorities in the whole Islamic world.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

- Al Ghazali's full name was Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali.
- He was born in 1058 CE in the district of Tus, which lies in present day Iran. However this place does not exist now because it was almost entirely destroyed during the Mongol invasion in 1220 CE.
- Al Ghazali's father, Muhammad, was a poor man who made his living as a cotton merchant. He passed away when Al-Ghazali was very young.
- Al Ghazali's early education was from local teachers, in his hometown.
- In 1073 CE, Al Ghazali travelled to Gurgan, a town on the shores of the Caspian Sea, to study law. He was only fifteen years old at the time.
- In those days there were many schools and colleges in every major town and city. However, Nishapur and Baghdad were the two most famous towns. Since Nishapur was closer to home, Imam Ghazali decided to go there around the age of twenty. Al Ghazali studied Islamic sciences under Imam Al-Haramain al Juwayni, the greatest scholar of his time. Nishapur was one of the famous centers for learning in the Muslim world. Imam Al-Haramain was the Grand Mufti at that time. He was held in high esteem by the government and the public. He had an unrivaled reputation and status.

THE STUDENT

- Imam Ghazali soon earned a special place amongst the students of Imam Al-Haramain. He was appointed as the “Mueed”, assistant teacher. Imam Ghazali began to write books and his teacher encouraged him in this endeavor. Soon his fame began to spread.
- He was cleverer than many of his teachers.
- Apart from Quran, the young Al Ghazali learned Arabic grammar, theology (study of divinity or religious truth), logic, Islamic law and Hadith.

IMAM GHAZALI IN BAGHDAD

After the death of Imam Al-Haramain in 1086 CE (475 AH), Imam Ghazali, who was then twenty seven years old, decided to leave Nishapur and head for Baghdad. Baghdad was the other great centre of learning under the patronage of Nizam al-Mulk. Nizam al-Mulk was the vizier or chief minister of the sultans of Seljuq Dynasty (Seljuqs was a Turkish group that had claimed control of Baghdad and thus controlled much of the Islamic world, during Al Ghazali's life). Nizam al Mulk's court was like a debating society that provided the young scholars the opportunity not only to show off their debating skills but also to impress the royals.

While searching for knowledge, al Ghazali had the desire to advance in the world, so he joined this court and loved the pomp and ceremony of these occasions. It wasn't long before Imam Ghazali's genius became apparent, his debates, lectures and counseling was overwhelmingly impressive. His brilliance in all branches of learning was now well established and Nizamul Mulk recognized this.

In 1091 CE, when Al-Ghazali was thirty four, Nizam al Mulk, offered him to be the principal of the Al Nizamiyyah College in Baghdad.

Al Ghazali accepted the offer and this penniless young boy from Tus was now one of the most important scholars in Islamic world. He became a wealthy, powerful and famous man. Imam Ghazali had a lot of influence on the royal family, so much so that they listened to him and heeded his advice. Nizamiyyah College was located on the eastern bank of the River Tigris. Later, this building was damaged during the Mongol conquest of Baghdad and now no longer exists.

Al Ghazali had a wide range of interests, but philosophy and spirituality were his favorite subjects. This young professor also investigated the teachings of Muslim philosophers, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, who had studied the philosophy of ancient greeks and attempted to apply it to Islam. Al Ghazali strongly opposed the ideas of these philosophers and it was his arguments and books that prevented Greek philosophy from having long term influence in the Islamic world.

As his interest in spirituality deepened, Al Ghazali became critical of the pomp, wealth and his love of status. A conflict began to brew inside him. He started experiencing a personal spiritual crisis and felt like leaving Baghdad and retire into wilderness. He found that there was something lacking in how the religion was presented to Muslims of his time, for he himself sought a deeper

knowledge and could not find it in most of the avenues open to him.

Searching for inner peace, he took the path of Sufism.(A path of spirituality in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God, under the guidance of a Shaykh of s Sufi order). Sufism provided a way into the heart of Islam for him, but he also wanted to revive the religion for all Muslims.

A NEW LIFE

After years of success, Al Ghazali left behind his fame, money, his prestigious position and his family, and became a poor traveller to experience the peace of a content inner life. Before leaving Baghdad, he gave up his teaching post to his brother, Ahmed Al Ghazali left for Damascus and spent most of his time at The Umayyad Mosque, one of the great buildings of Islamic world. He spent nearly two years in Damascus, devoting himself to the purification of his soul and cleansing his heart for the remembrance of Allah (SWT), according to the way he had learned from the writings of the Sufis.(A Sufi is a Muslim seeking Allah's pleasure by His constant remembrance and abstaining from worldly pleasures.) After two years of devotion and spiritual exercises he moved to Jerusalem and stayed in the Dome of the Rock. Later he went to Hebron to visit the tomb of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), after which he went to Makkah to perform hajj. For ten long years he remained on his journey of self discovery and the search for truth.During this time Imam Ghazali wrote books and taught in seminaries and guided students. Once again he returned to Baghdad after ten years. However, he returned a very different man this time. He was no longer a proud scholar seeking worldly desires and fame.He was a seeker of Allah (SWT)'s pleasure. After his return,Imam Ghazali taught at Nizamiyya Nishapur only for a short while before going back to his home town of Tus.Here he established a small seminary where he taught and directed students.

HIS DEATH

He died on 14th Jamadi-as-Sani 505 AH (1111 CE) at the age of 53. His younger brother Ahmad Ghazali gives an account of his last moments: “On Monday morning Imam woke up, he performed wudu and prayed salat al Fajar and then asked for his shroud and kissing it said “I eagerly accept my Lord’s command. He lay down and passed away.May Allah bless his soul.

IMAM GHAZALI'S BOOKS

Following are some of his books:

- Minhaaj ul Abidin – A Program for the worshipers
- Al-Munqiz min Ad-dalal – The savior from deviation.
- Ihya ‘ulum ud din – The Revival of Religious Sciences.

Ihya 'ulum ud din, is his most famous work bringing out much of the hidden depths of ordinary Islamic worship and leading the reader on a journey towards Allah (SWT), showing how He might be reached and some of the traps and pitfalls along the way.This book is divided into four sections.

STORIES FROM SEERAH

SURAQA BIN MALIK

Suraqah bin Malik tells this story himself, which was later narrated by his nephew. He was from Banu Mudlaj, who were affiliates of the Quraysh. He was considered a leader among his people.

One day, Suraqah was sitting with other Quraysh leaders, some people of the Quraysh went up to them and offered the leaders the equivalent of blood money (100 camels each) for both Abu Bakr & the Prophet (S). These people wanted Abu Bakr and the Prophet (S) either killed or captured, and the reward would be 100 camels. One man said, "Ya Suraqah, along the sea, I saw a small group of people traveling. I'm almost certain that it is Muhammad (S) and his travel companions." Suraqah immediately understood, "Yes, that's got to be them. If you wanted to travel and didn't want to get caught and wanted to keep a low profile, that would be the way to go. That had to be Muhammad (S) and Abu Bakr."

Suraqah said to the other Quraysh leaders, "That can't be them. The people that you saw can't be Muhammad (S) and his travel companions. That must have been someone else. You know such-and-such from this neighborhood and so-and-so from that neighborhood just left Makkah. They told me they were going to go by the shore. That's them. You got them mixed up."

Suraqah made up a story to throw off the other bounty hunters so that he can get the reward himself. Suraqah waited for a little while, sitting there with the other leaders, conversing while keeping an eye on the man who gave this information, from the corner of his eye. When the man went about his business, Suraqah went home and told his maid to prepare his horse and to take his horse outside of the village and wait for Suraqah. Then Suraqah grabbed his spear and snuck out the back of his house. He held his spear in such a way that the pointy end of the spear would touch the ground (he'd be dragging it on the ground). As Suraqah was leaving his footsteps, the spear would be cutting through the earth, distorting his footsteps, so that no one would be able to follow him. Suraqah met up with his maid, got on his horse, and followed the route that the man said he saw the Prophet (S) on.

After traveling a while, Suraqah saw the Prophet (S) and got closer. When Suraqah got close enough to the Prophet (S) and his travel companions, he drew his spear and aimed it at the Prophet. Right when he was thinking of throwing the spear, Suraqah got close enough to hear the Prophet (S) reciting the Qur'an. Abu Bakr was looking around in all directions, while the Prophet (S) wasn't looking left or right; he was just riding straight ahead while reciting the Book of Allah without a worry in the world. Both men are representative of high Imaan. The Prophet was on this journey for Allah, reciting the Book of Allah, nothing can trouble him in the least bit. Abu Bakr has such profound and deep love for the Prophet that he can't rest for a moment because of his need to protect and guard his best friend. In this situation, you see both Imaan and faith in Allah and dedication to the Prophet.

When Suraqah got close enough to hear the Prophet (S) reciting the Qur'an, the front legs of Suraqah's

horse suddenly sunk into the ground up to its knees. Suraqah freaked out and immediately backed up the horse while yelling at it. The legs of the horse wouldn't come out for a long time, until it finally did. This happened 4 times. As soon as the horse's legs would come out of the ground, Suraqah would direct the horse toward the Prophet, but every time he came close to the Prophet (S), the horse's legs would sink into the ground; Suraqah would back his horse again until its legs came out of the ground. Finally, after the 4th time, a smoky cloud appeared and started to cover the sky. When the smoke started to descend upon Suraqah, he screamed at the Prophet (S): "Let me go! Let me go! Please, save me, save me!". Abu Bakr and the Prophet (S) stopped, and the legs of Suraqah's horse got released. Suraqah then rode his horse up to the Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr.

As he was approaching them, Suraqah couldn't stop thinking about what just happened to him. Every time he got close to the Prophet (S) with a bad intention, his horse's legs would sink in the sand. Suraqah was still thinking of this frightening experience. That is when Suraqah realized that Muhammad (S) is indeed the Messenger of Allah and no force on earth can stop the Prophet's mission. He is divinely protected. Suraqah said to the Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr "Your people have fixed a price on your head." He then told the Prophet (S) everything about who was looking for him and where they were looking.

Suraqah then offered the Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr whatever provisions he had on him, but they neither took nor asked for a single thing from Suraqah. They simply said, "Keep our information private." Suraqah asked them, "Could you write down something for me, like a note saying that I have your protection?". The Prophet (S) then commanded either Abu Bakr or the guide to write down the note on a patch of leather. They then went their separate paths.

After Suraqah received the note of protection from the Prophet (S), he went on his way back to Makkah. As he was traveling back to Makkah, whenever he would meet another search party or bounty hunters who were looking for the Prophet (S), Suraqah would mislead them. He would say, "I have already checked out this place. There's nothing over there." Everyone knew Suraqah and knew he was a smart man and a respectable leader, so they would believe him. Suraqah went back to his tribe Banu Mudlaj and didn't say a word until a few days later, when he heard the news that the Prophet (S) was safely in Medina

That is when Suraqah started to tell stories about what he experienced with the Prophet, about the horse's legs sinking and how he found the Prophet (S) to be a kind and generous man. Eventually, Suraqah's story started to spread.

People started talking amongst each other, "Did you hear what Suraqah said about Muhammad?" Other leaders of Quraysh were worried that Suraqah's story will attract members of his tribe to Islam. Abu Jahl then wrote a poem to the other leaders of Suraqah's tribe: "O Banu Mudlaj, I'm afraid that this foolish man from amongst you, Suraqah, is going to lead people astray and take people to the help of Muhammad against you. He is going to end up dividing you, so be careful and deal with him now. Before you know it, your people will become divided. So deal with him now."

Suraqah found out that Abu Jahl had sent this message, so he responded, "I swear by Allah, Abul Hakam, if you were there and you saw what happened with my horse, you would have been so amazed and you would have no doubt left about the fact that Muhammad is indeed the Messenger and that he comes

with solid proof. You need to leave him alone and you need to tell your people to leave the Prophet alone. I will join the Prophet once his teachings become well known. I will help him and everyone else will join to help the Prophet.

Suraqah met the Prophet SAW much later on, at the Fathul Makkah (Victory of Makkah). Suraqah was captured as a prisoner of war, along with other non-believing Makkans. He was brought to the Prophet (S) and reminded the Prophet (S) of his promise of protection, and showed the Prophet (S) the patch of leather that Abu Bakr had written on. The Prophet said, "This is the day of fulfilling promises. Bring him close." Suraqah came close to the Prophet and he accepted Islam.

Suraqah ibn Malik's role in helping the Prophet was a unique one, especially if we realize that he started off in pursuit of the reward offered by Quraish for anyone who would bring Muhammad SAW back to Makkah alive or dead.

STORY OF UMAR'S MIGRATION

— Hijra was very difficult, challenging, & life-threatening.

Going from Makkah to Medina wasn't just about escaping persecution & torture. There were many people who were hiding their Islam (living underground). In order to practice their Islam properly, they had to make the sacrifice of giving up their homes, family, & friends & undertake this very dangerous journey with the threat of being followed & even killed along the way, & show up in an unknown place with nothing in hand & no relationships

This sacrifice was what people were willing to commit to practice their deen to the fullest. Nearly every single person who was making Hijra at that time was doing so quietly because of the danger at hand. They would sneak out in small groups at night, except for Umar al-Khattab

When he made the intention for Hijra, Umar hung his sword around his neck, put his bow on his shoulder, pulled out a bunch of arrows from his quiver & held them in his hand. He was armed to the teeth & marched toward the Ka'bah. The entire leadership of Quraysh was there at the Haram. Umar made tawaaf & prayed 2 rakaat at the Ka'bah. Umar didn't actually tell any of the Quraysh that he was going to make Hijra. He just went there to put these people back on their heels, & no doubt that he was frustrated with the fact that the Quraysh were chasing after the people making Hijra, so he went there to put people in their place

No one followed Umar out. Some of the weak Muslims who were there at the Haram went with Umar. He told them, "Go on your way. Make Hijra. These people will not do anything to you."

Umar did this to make it a little easier for people making Hijra. Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ayyash bin Abi Ra'bia, Hisham ibn al-A'as decided they would do Hijra together

At-tanadub was where a specific type of plant used to grow outside of Makkah, where Banu Ghifar lived. The 3 men agreed to leave Makkah & meet up individually at At-tanadub.

They agreed that if two people made it there & one didn't show up, the two people there would wait for a bit, but then they would leave if the 3rd person didn't show up.

Umar then reached At-Tanadub, & found Ayyash waiting there, but Hisham was not there. Umar & Ayyash figured that Hisham had been kept back & restricted from leaving. Umar & Ayyash then went on their way to Medina. Abu Jahl & Hadith bin Hisham heard about Umar & Ayyash leaving for Medina, so they went after the Umar & Ayyash.

Umar ibn al-Khattab was the nephew of Abu Jahl. Hadith bin Hisham & Ayyash bin Hisham were related. When Abu Jahl & Hadith bin Hisham caught up with Umar & Ayyash, they tried to talk to the Muslims. Umar told them, "I don't want to hear anything you have to say. I have no interest in talking to you. You are wasting your time. It's best if you go back."

Hadith turned to Ayyash & said, "Do you know what happened to your mother after you left? Your mother has sworn that she will never comb or brush her hair until she sees you (expression meaning that she will not take of herself). She will sit out in the sun & not seek any shade in the sun until she sees you."

This was Ayyash's mother, so he felt really guilty.

Umar said to Ayyash, "I swear to you, these people are just trying to take you away from your deen, so be careful and don't trust them."

Umar was letting Ayyash know that it doesn't sound right, it doesn't sound like Ayyash's mother. Still, Ayyash said, "I have to go check on my mother. I have to go find out. This kind of works out, because I left in such a hurry. I have a lot of money in Makkah, so I'll go & get my money. That way I'll actually have something to start my life with in Medina; I won't be empty-handed."

Umar said, "You know how wealthy I am. I will give you half my money. Please don't go. Don't do this."

He was basically royalty. He came from a rich family & had a lot of money from being a diplomat.

Ayyash insisted, "I have to go."

Umar said, "At the very least, take my camel. My camel is obedient & swift. If you feel that these people have bad intentions, then you can get away from there quickly."

Ayyash ended up going with Abu Jahl & Hadith bin Hashim back to Makkah.

A little while later, Abu Jahl said, "My camel is starting to slow down. It's very uncomfortable to sit on.

Can we switch for just a little bit? I just need some rest from my camel."

Ayyash said, "Sure, no problem."

As soon as they got down from the camel, Abu Jahl & Hadith jumped on Ayyash, pinned him down, tied him to a camel, & took him back to Makkah as a prisoner

Umar narrated, "Making Hijra was mandatory for the Sahaba. People who were not willing to make because of financial reasons or they were afraid, had fitna in their imaan. These people were of weak faith."

Ayyash & other Sahaba who were kept back in Makkah started to think amongst themselves, "Allah will not accept our repentance. Allah will not forgive us for not making Hijra." The other Sahaba who were able to make Hijra also started thinking along these lines.

When the Prophet himself finally reached Medina, Allah revealed the ayah from Surat Az-Zamur: "Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'" [39:53].

This ayah specifically talks about the mercy of Allah, not the forgiveness of Allah. The mercy of Allah is representative & the means of forgiveness, but it also speaks of not "despairing/not to lose hope in the mercy of Allah," because His mercy might still come to your aid & rescue, & you might still be given a way to still make the migration. Not only will Allah forgive you, but Allah will grant you the ability to recognize

your deen. When the Prophet recited the above ayah, Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote it down with his own hands & he sent it to his Hijra travel partner, Hisham ibn al-A'as, who had been held back & not allowed to make the Hijra. Even though Hisham was being kept a prisoner, he was allowed to move about in a certain area under watchful eyes. Every day, he would climb a hill & reflect on his situation. Then he would climb down from the hill in the evening time. All day long, Hisham would sit at the hill & read the ayah over & over again, but by the end of the day, he still wouldn't understand why Umar sent this particular ayah to him.

Hisham narrated, "My heart wasn't just embracing this ayah, until I made dua. I said, 'Allah, please give me the reality & understanding of this.' I kept making dua until my heart found contentment & peace in the fact that this ayat was about me & about what we were thinking about ourselves & what people were saying about us, that Allah opened His door of mercy on us. I kept reading this ayah & praying & asking for forgiveness until the time finally came when I was finally able to join the Prophet in Medina."

When the Prophet reached Medina, Umar told him about Hisham & Ayyash's situations. The Prophet said, "Who will help me in regards to Hisham bin al-A'as & Ayyash bin Rabi'a?"

Walid bin Walid, the brother of Khalid bin Walid, said, "I will take care of this, ya Rasulallah."

Walid bin Walid snuck in to Makkah. He saw a woman who was carrying some water & food around the area where they were keeping Hashim & Ayyash. Walid didn't know exactly where Ayyash & Hisham were being kept, but he had a feeling that the woman, who seemed to be a servant, knew

Walid asked the woman, "Where are you going?"

The woman said, "There are two men who are locked up. I'm just taking this food & water to them."

Walid said, "Oh, that's interesting," pretending to mind his own business

He followed her & checked out where Hashim & Ayyash was. The woman gave the prisoners food & water and then she left. The prison had high four walls, but no ceiling/roof, Hashim & Ayyash were inside tied up. Walid scaled the wall

He first threw rocks into the prison, & yelled to let Hashim & Ayyash know where he was.

Walid then climbed the wall using his sword. He jumped in, & cut up their restraints

Then he stacked up the rocks, & told the two men to climb up the rocks & jump over

Then all 3 of them rode into Medina. Hisham ibn al'Aas & Ayyash bin Rab'ia were riding on the camel, while Walid was walking forward, holding on to the rope of the camel as they made their way to Medina

Walid bin Walid placed his own life in danger to be able to bring his brothers back.

GOLDEN AGE FACTS: INVENTIONS AND FACTS FROM

MUSLIM CIVILIZATION

The Islamic Golden Age is traditionally dated from the mid-7th century to the mid-13th century at which Muslim rulers established one of the largest empires in history.

During this period, artists, engineers, scholars, poets, philosophers, geographers and traders in the Islamic world contributed to agriculture, the arts, economics, industry, law, literature, navigation, philosophy, sciences, sociology, and technology, both by preserving earlier traditions and by adding inventions and innovations of their own. Also at that time the Muslim world became a major intellectual center for science, philosophy, medicine and education.

Abbasid Caliphs Harun al-Rashid and his son, al-Ma'mun, who followed him, established a House of Wisdom in Baghdad—a dedicated space for scholarship. The House of Wisdom increased in use and prestige under al-Ma'mun's rule, from 813 to 833. He made a special effort to recruit famous scholars to come to the House of Wisdom. Muslims, Christians, and Jews all collaborated and worked peacefully there.

Rival Muslim dynasties such as the Fatimids of Egypt and the Umayyads of al-Andalus were also major intellectual center with cities such as Cairo and Córdoba rivaling Baghdad. The Islamic empire was the first “truly universal civilization,” which brought together for the first time “peoples as diverse as the Chinese, the Indians, the people of the Middle East and North Africa, black Africans, and white Europeans.”

PAPER: A major innovation of this period was paper – originally a secret tightly guarded by the Chinese. The art of papermaking was obtained from prisoners taken at the Battle of Talas (751), spreading to the Islamic cities of Samarkand and Baghdad. The Arabs improved upon the Chinese techniques of using mulberry bark by using starch to account for the Muslim preference for pens vs. the Chinese for brushes. By AD 900 there were hundreds of shops employing scribes and binders for books in Baghdad and public libraries began to become established. From here paper-making spread west to Morocco and then to Spain and from there to Europe in the 13th century.

UNIVERSITIES: The Guinness Book of World Records recognizes the University of Al Karaouine in Fez, Morocco as the oldest degree-granting university in the world with its founding in 859 CE. Al-Azhar University, founded in Cairo, Egypt in the 975 CE, offered a variety of academic degrees, including postgraduate degrees, and is often considered the first full-fledged university.

ARABESQUE: During the Golden Age, the people used a design called an arabesque. The consisted of "surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils", combining to make a beautiful design. Intricate vines and extravagant floral designs were found all over pottery, textiles, paper manuscripts and buildings. The use of patterns and plants as well as other things, if you were wondering, is due to Muhammad's teachings, that of which includes a restriction against using humans to represent faith.

HOSPITALS: The hospital was one of the greatest achievements of medieval Islamic society. The relation of the design and development of Islamic hospitals to the earlier and contemporaneous poor and sick relief facilities offered by some Christian monasteries has not been fully delineated. In Islam there was generally a moral imperative to treat all the ill regardless of their financial status. The hospitals were largely secular institutions, many of them open to all, male and female, civilian and military, adult and child, rich and poor, Muslims and non-Muslims. They tended to be large, urban structures. The earliest documented hospital established by an Islamic ruler was built in the 9th century in Baghdad probably by the vizier to the caliph Harun al-Rashid.

In Egypt, the first hospital was built in the southwestern quarter of present day Cairo in 872 by Ahmad ibn Tulun, the Abbasid governor of Egypt.

MAPS: Al-Idrisi introduced the world map in the 12th century, which is regarded as the most elaborate and complete description of the world made at the time. It was greatly used by travelers for several centuries. Maps have helped people find their way for about 3,500 years in history maps were made from travelers' and pilgrims' accounts.

TOOTHBRUSH: Islam was one of the first global religions that emphasized on bodily hygiene. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) popularized the use of the first toothbrush in around the 7th Century, using a twig from the Miswak tree. The twig not only cleaned his teeth but also freshen breath.

FATIMA AL FIHRI: Founded the world's first university. She financed and supervised the building of the Al Qarawiyyin Mosque, in Fez, Morocco about 1,150 years ago. It is now the world's oldest active university.

JABIR IBN HAYYAN: Perfected the distillation process which is still used in the creation of perfume, gasoline, and more. He is also famous for discovering Sulfuric acid and Hydrochloric acid.

MIMAR SINAN: Born in Turkey, he was a famous architect and designed and built more than 477 mosques, schools and structures throughout the Muslim world. He was the chief architect for the Ottoman Sultans. Two of his most famous mosques are Selimiye in Edirne, Turkey and Suleymaniye in Istanbul, Turkey.

AL KHWARIZMI: He was the "Father Of Algebra" who introduced new concepts in Math in Baghdad around 830. His book Al Jabr Wa l Muqabala introduced basics of Algebra, that we study today. Al khwarizmi in Latin is known as ALGORITMI, the source of the term, ALGORITHM.

AL IDRISI: In 1154, the Muslim geographer, Al Idrisi finished the first atlas, which showed most of North Africa, Asia and Europe. This was about 100 years before Marco Polo wrote about his travels to China and back.

MUHAMMAD AL KARAJI: An 11th century mathematician and engineer from Persia, he described a network of underground tunnels called QANATS, that could carry water over long distances without evaporation. QANATS are still used in some areas in Iran and other Middle East countries.

AL JAZARI: Made the first machine that combined a crank and connecting rod to convert circular motion to linear motion.

Today crank-rod system is used in everything from car engines to toys.

IBN BATTUTA: In 1324, a 21 year old Moroccan, named Ibn BATTUTA set out for Mecca on a journey that would last 29 years and take him to the four corners of the world. He travelled more than 75,000 miles and 44 countries. He called CHINA the safest and best country for travelers. He is often called the Muslim Marco Polo.

TURKISH KIOSKS OR KOSHKs: A domed hall with open, arched sides. In Muslim civilizations, KOSHKs were usually attached to a mosque and often overlooked gardens. "Glass Rooms" or "Conservatories" evolved from koshks. One of the most famous Kiosk or koshk, CINILI KOSHK, was built in 1473 at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey.

COFFEE: An Abyssinian goat herder, about 1200 years ago discovered coffee, when his goats got an energy boost after eating some red berries. People soon began boiling berries to make coffee. MOCHA is both the name of a kind of coffee bean and the name of the port in Yemen, that was the center of coffee trade from 15th to 17th centuries.

COTTON: From India was imported to Sicily and Spain by Muslims and became a major crop. The cotton plant is called ALGODON in Spanish, from the Arabic word AL QUTN.

SUGAR CANE: Found its way to Zanzibar, Ethiopia and Spain, thanks to Muslim traders. Today some of the best sugar comes from Zanzibar, now part of Tanzania in East Africa.

The word CHECK MATE comes from the Persian word "Shahmat" which means the king is dead.

9th century philosopher and scientist AL KINDI was the first to lay down the foundations of modern day optics, by questioning earlier theories of vision. He has been called one of the "12 GIANT MINDS of history."