

THE WESTERN WALL, HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE – COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISLAMIC AND JEWISH THOUGHTS

*Dr. Zahid Latif**

*Dr. Tanweer Qasim***

Baitul Maqdas and its vicinity are considered sacred both by the Muslims and the Jews. Al-Aqsa and Western Wall have been a source of discontent between Judaism and Islam since long. It has been a spot of pilgrimage amongst a number of Prophets. It's a proof of its historical importance. This historical illuminous, famous and sacred place would one day create an armed conflict between the followers of these two religions. Who is the legitimate heir of this miraculously constructed place? What is the root cause of this discontent? All the details are discussed in this article. The entire world would suffer because of this prospective great conflict. There are a number of prophecies that exist in both the religions that predict such a conflict and the savior of both the religions would make it their final abode.

The Western Wall is also called Wailing Wall and in Hebrew (*Ha kotel Ha Ma'aravi*) and in Arabic (*Tareeq-ul-buraq*) or Al-Buraq Wall. The Western Wall and its vicinity is sacred in accord with Islamic point of view. Allah has mentioned its sanctity at different places in his holy book.

In Surat-ul-Isra, He says:

“Glorified is He who took his slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from *Masjid Al-Haram* to *Masjid Al-Aqsa* (in Jerusalem), the neighborhood whereof we have blessed, in order that we might show him (Muhammad) of our *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, signs, etc)”(1)

In another place, Allah says.

“And we rescued him and Lut (Lot) to the land which we have blessed for the *Alamin* (Mankind and Jinn)” (2)

The air used to do Hazrat Sulaiman's bidding and blow under his direction towards this Holy Land. So Allah says:

“And to Suleiman (Solomon) (we subjected) the wind strongly raging, running by his command towards the land which we have blessed” (3)

Al-Aqsa before Islamic Age

* Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, UET. Lahore.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, UET, Lahore.

The Western Wall is remnant of destroyed temple of Suleiman and the Jewish pilgrims used to visit it and weep there. It's the reason it is called Wailing Wall. According to Muslims it is that place where Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of Rock is situated. It is usually pronounced as Baitul Maqdis, Baintul Muqaddass and Al-Aqsa which means a home where one can receive benedictions and get rid of his sins. (4)

In first century B.C. when Romans occupied it, it was called Jerusalem, but after that it became known as Ilea under divine injunctions of Hazrat Yaqoob founded this Aqsa Mosque. After him Hazrat Suleiman renovated the mosque and city in 961 B.C and that was why Jews called it Temple of Suleiman (Solomon). No doubt, it is so much awesome inspiring and amazing technological, artistical and archeological place of Jerusalem that even after passing a long era, the remains of mosque (temple) evoke wonder and awe. Transportation and cutting of so much big and high stones was not less than a miracle. In fact, it were the Jinns who constructed it. There are a number of other similarly surprising buildings which are connected to Hazrat Suleiman and which are a source of great surprise for the people.

As the Holy Quran says:

"They (Jinns) worked for him as he desired, (making) high rooms, Images, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed"(5) (in their places).

This was such a marvelous building consisting of large stones kept on such a great height that no parallel example in the field of construction was ever witnessed by the people. That was why people were surprisingly shocked.

Temple of Solomon was demolished by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. He enslaved one million Jews and herded them to Iraq. The Persian conquered it in 539 B.C. and they allowed the Israelites to return to their Holy Land. They reconstructed the Temple of Solomon. The second destruction visited the temple in 70 A. D. under the hand of Roman General Titus. He completely demolished and destroyed the city and temple. (6)

In Islamic Era

The roman exiled the Jews from the Palestinian's land. In fourth century A.D. as a result of spread of Christianity amongst the Romans, they constructed a church in the Holy Land. During the

divine ascension, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) led a prayer of all the prophets at the place where Hazrat Yaqoob had constructed the Mosque. The Holy Prophet's fast moving conveyance, *Al-buraq*, stayed at a rock situated near the mosque from there it left for its journey along with its sole rider (Muhammad) (7). The Muslims conquered the Holy Land in the reign of Hazrat Umar. They were able to identify that rock because of the symbols described by the Holy Prophet. As a remembrance of the incident, a dome was constructed at that rock which came to be known as Dome of Rock. This rock is completely unbalanced and beneath it, is a space where one can say his prayer. The dome is marvelously constructed by the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan. The mount where the dome is located is called *Al-Maraqi*. Today, the Zionist Jews claim that temple of Suleiman was exactly beneath the Dome of Rock. In sixteen century, they started performing their religious rites here.

On 23 September 1926, the Zionist Jews for the first time visited the Western Wall in a very different manner. They installed a banner on which Hebrew scripture was inscribed. They blow the trumpet; this was the first condemned act. It was tantamount to unwarranted interference in the religious right of Muslims. In august 1929, the Zionist Jews once again repeated the same condemned act. As a result, the Palestinian started a movement *Al-Buraq* rebellion. The Muslims called this wall *Al-Buraq* Wall.(8)

The Zionist Jews have been excavating the surrounding area of Al-Buraq Wall (the Western wall) in order to find some remnants of the temple of Solomon, so that they can show it to the world as a proof of their claim over the specific part of the Holy Land. But all their plans ended in smoke rather they found remnants related to the Muslims. As a result of the excavation of Zionist Jews, near the Western Wall, a number of Muslim memorials are under threat of extinction, e.g. Foundations of Imam Shaf Centre, *Gosha-e-Mukarram* have been completely shaken, even the archeologist claim that the entire foundations of *Al-Aqsa* mosque have been completely shaken and there is a severe danger that the mosque might collapse. *Al-Buraq* Wall is a Western Wall of al Aqsa Mosque so there are number of Muslim buildings toward this western part of the mosque like Al-Kahlidia library, Al-Tankiria school and Islamic court. There are thirty five homes of Muslims accommodating two hundred and fifty Palestinians on the side of

Western Wall. This area is known as western locality (*Al-mghrabia mohallah*). Salahuddin Ayyubi dedicated it to Moroccan mujahideen. The courtyard of the Western Wall and the mount of *Abu-Ganim* have become the part of Jewish colony as *Har-homa*. Here, there were a number of places and buildings which belong to the Muslims like mosques, cemetery, library and a number of Muslim heritage buildings have been converted to Jewish residential colonies, parks and hotels.(9)

In short, the Islamic heritage of Holy Land has become extinct under Zionist onslaught. After the Roman king, Constantine embrace Christianity, his mother got constructed two churches, Church of Resurrection and Church of Nativity. Although Christianity spread rapidly but it could not move the hearts of the people. As soon as the light of Islam rose on the heaven, the Holy Land started sparkling as a result. The Muslims conquered this city without any resistance. The priest, Sopranos himself invited the second caliph Hazrat Umar to come to the city and he surrendered the entire city to him. This agreement was called (*Ahd-AL Umria*). Under this agreement the Muslims allowed the Christians to live in their homes peacefully and gave them complete religious liberty.

The author of *Jerusalemopedia.com* is distorting the facts regarding the history of Western Wall in such a callous manner that we cannot see a parallel example (e.g.).He writes,

“During more than one thousand years Jerusalem was under Muslim rule, the Arabs often use the wall as a garbage dump, so as to humiliate the Jews who visited it.”(10)

History is evident to the fact that when Hazrat Umar conquered Jerusalem, this place was hub of filth and garbage and Umar himself got it clean cleaned with his own hands. So who was responsible for this filth and garbage, before the arrival of Muslims while it was the début of Islam in that land? The author is a victim of paradoxes in his same essay, so we find him saying,

“This is the bigger site to the Muslims also called *Al-Haram-al Qudsi Al-Sharif* (the noble sanctuary).” (11) It is surprising that the people who consider it the most sacred place how could they convert it into hub of filth and garbage.

Hafiz Ibne-Kathir throws light into the history of Western Wall and depicts the reality in his valuable book where he writes,

“After conquering *Bait-ul-Maqdis*, the Caliph, Hazrat Umar, decided conditions of truce agreement with the Christians. He

performed *Tahhiyat-ul-Masjid* at arch of Dawood after entry in *Bait-ul-Maqdis*. The rock which was dump of filth and garbage was cleaned by him with his own stoll and other Muslims also participated in it. Roman Christians were deliberately dumping garbage here for the fact that it was the Jewish place. The extent of hatred and enmity against the Jews was such that the Christian women used to throw away their dirty un-pious rages there. This was for the reason that Jews were considered to be the prime master minds of Crucification of the Christ. This place was called *Qumama* (filth and garbage). The Christian constructed a church here which came to be known as Qamama. (12)

Court of Reality and Indisputable Evidence

What will be the future of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque? Actually, this is a great problem of the most dangerous conflict in the world. According to Biblical prophecies, a chosen nation of Allah will worship here forever and Al-Aqsa mosque will remain sacred for ever. Though the history of Al-Aqsa mosque is so long but a brief discussion of its construction is necessary.

According to Sahih Bukhari Hadith, it is the second mosque after Bait-Ullah (Masjid-e- Haram) was constructed on the earth. So Hazrat Abu Zar asked the prophet, "Oh, Messenger of Allah. which mosque was first placed on earth?" He answered that the sacred mosque (Masjid-e-Haram). Then I asked which came next. He replied that the Al-Aqsa mosue. I asked how much time it was between the founding of the two. He answered that forty years.(13) When Hazrat Suleiman was granted kingdom, this mosque reached its pinnacle of greatness, so he utilized both human and Jinns to built it. Then after its preparation he preyed to Allah, saying "May any man who leaves his house desiring only to pray in this mosque leave behind his sins like the day his mother gave birth to him".(14)

According to the claim of Jews, Temple of Solomon lies beneath it, or in its vicinity. They are excavating land for many years even after removing tons of buried artifacts; they never found any trace of the supposed temple. Is it not the denial of Allah's promise to Solomon that this (temple) will remain consecrated forever? So it is not possible that house of Allah (Al-Aqsa mosque) remained demolished for centuries. So we find Allah promising Suleiman in their own scripture:

"I have consecrated this house which you have built to put my name there forever, and my eyes and heart will be there perpetually. (15)

It is a blessing of Allah that a Jewish Rabbi also accept this reality open heartedly mentioning facts from Talmud, this is not Temple of Solomon for which Jews are hopeful.

So, Rabbi Ben Dov makes this abundantly clear in his book,

"There is a tradition that the temple's western wall remained standing (after the Roman/Jewish war of 66 to 73. A. D.). He continues, "This is not a reference to the Western Wall of the temple mount [the present wailing wall of Haram]. All of its walls have survived to this day. The Western Wall about which it was prophesied (by Jews in the Talmudic period) that it would never be destroyed, and in the course of time, it (the Western Wall of Herod's temple) was razed to the ground completely. (16)

Jewish Tradition and the Wall

The temple mount in Hebrew is *Har Habayit*. According to Jewish school of thought king Solomon built the first temple almost 3,000 years ago. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B. C. but 70 years later Jews returning from exile built the second temple on the same site. King Herod refashioned it into an edifice of great splendor. (17)

It is thought by Jews to be the most sacred of places, because the temple itself was thought to be the place where God resides on earth. Praying at the Wailing Wall signifies being in the presence of the Divine. Jews from all countries, and as well as tourists of other religious backgrounds, come to pray at the wall, where it is said one immediately has the "ear of God." Those who cannot pray at the wall can send prayers or ask for the *Kaddish* to be said for departed loved ones. Prayers sent in are placed into the cracks of the Walls and are called *Tzetzels*. There is usually a small charge for this service.

The name "Wailing Wall" is actually a Christian term. The Jews refer to the wall as the Western Wall or *Kotel HaMaaravi*. Though the Wailing Wall has been considered the holiest of places on earth for Jews, it has also been the source of grief and war.

Struggle for use of the Wailing Wall continued through the 20th century, with bitterness among both religious groups. Islam holds some claim to the religious site, as does Judaism, because it is

often believed that the prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven either near or at the Wailing Wall.

For the solution of this conflict, the British set up a committee of inquiry and consequently an international committee (consisting of a Swedish, a Swiss, and a Dutchman) was appointed by the League of Nations to resolve. The commission concluded that the Muslims had absolute ownership of the Wall. However, the Jews had the uncontested right to worship and to place seats in the street, though not to blow the shofar there. (18)

According to a Jewish author (Hillel Halkin) the wall facing the space traditionally used by Jews for prayers is only 58 meters long while the whole Western Wall is of 485 meter long. According to him, even after the destruction of the Temple: *Sakina* god's presence in the world) never leaves the Western Wall. (19)

Gates, Tunnels and Famous Surrounding Areas

Some famous areas surrounding the Western Wall are as follows:

1. Western Wall Plaza

Plaza was created as an area for prayer when Israel captured the old city in 1967. Since that time people gather here.

2. Barclay's Gate

This gate is known as Kiponus gate. Explorers have discovered it in 19th century the L-shaped passageways inside the gate is still preserved but not accessible.

3. Prayer Place

Prayer place at the front side of the wall is considered as the most holy place accessible to Jewish community. Prayers are offered up at this wall three times a day (morning, afternoon and evening) taking their foreheads and wrists at the wall and wearing white and blue shawls.

4. Wilson's Arch

This area was discovered by a British explorer in 1860 considered as originally constructed by Herod. The area is 25 feet high while the central valley was much deeper. This section is now serves for men prayer.

5. Largest Stone

A miraculous thing of this arch is the largest stone of the western and southern stone of this Wall. On the western side there are four largest stones in this wall are found is called master course'. The largest of this is of 570 tons and 44 feet long and 12-16 feet deeper

while the stone in the great pyramid was considered as largest stone of the world weighing 11 tones.

6. Robinson's Arch

According to Jewish claim, another arch was also discovered, located close to the southern end of the Western Wall, is known as Robinson's Arch. This arch was discovered in 1938 and named after its discoverer American researcher Edward Robinson. The women's prayer group: women of the Wall was offered Robinson's arch in may 2000 as an alternative to the kotel. But in April, 2003, Jewish Supreme Court refused to allow women of the Wall to continue their prayer.

7. Man Made Arches

As I have mentioned it already that Jews are excavating beneath the temple from a long time and shaking the basis of Al-Aqsa mosque. This truth has now has been accepted by their own as we find Israeli foreign minister writing in an article titled: The Temple Mount and it's Tunnels:

"From the point of Wilson's Arch, another arch was dug slowly of 300 meter long. In the same way another of 20 meter long is also being dug leading outside Muslim quarter."(20)

Some more names, surrounding areas and gates.

The Rock

Dome of Rock.

Dome of joseph (yousuf)

Dome of mooses

Dome of prophet

Dome of Solomon (sulaiman)

Solomon,s stables.

Dome of Elijah(al-khidr or Hazrat Ilyas)

Dome of spirits

Dome of ascention.

Pulpit of nur-ul-din

Seat of Mohammad(PBUH)

Seat of Solomon

Dome of Sulaiman Pasha

Fountain of Sultan sulaiman.

Fountain of Ala-ul-din Al-Basri

Fountain of Shaikh al Budair

Fountain of Sulaiman Pasha.

Madrassa al-Jawiliya.

Madrassa al-Khatoonia
Madrassa al-uthmania.
Madrassa Al-arghunia
Madrassa al-Fakhria
Western porch
Northern porch
Minaret of Israel
Minaret al-ghawanimia
Minaret of gate of chain
Double gate
Triple gate
Single gate
The golden gate
Gate of tribes
Gate of forgiveness
Dark gate
Gate of inspection
The Iron gate
Cotton market gate.
Gate of peace
Gate of Maghribins.

Conclusion:

Israelis are striving to make them as a blessed and chosen nation of Allah in accord with the prophecies enshrined in Bible. God has shown great appreciation for the nation dwelling in Jerusalem. In order to evict the Palestinian from that sacred land and to make their entry possible the Jews have no other excuse and justification just to declare the Western Wall as Wailing Wall. In the same way, a number of places were their in West Bank which Jews considered sacred. The difficulty which Jews faced was the Arab majority in Gaza and the West Bank. In order to overcome this difficulty and to increase the concentration of Jewish people there, Israel started desecrating the sacred places there no matter whether they belong to Muslims or Christians.

It is clear that all those areas which were occupied by Israel in 1967 Arab Israel war were declared as "Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Western Wall was the only a sacred place of the Jews for which they justified their onslaught of the Palestinian territories. In 1948 war, the doom that fell upon the Palestinians caused their eviction from the Holy Land which included not only

the Muslims yet the Christians as well. A number of mosques, churches, graveyards, etc were converted into restaurants clubs, casinos and recreational places. The continual excavation near the Western Wall could not help the Jews find anything relevant to their religion. The increasing obstinacy of the Jews in the Holy Land would one day result in a horrible scenario whose repercussion would last forever.

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