

The Mystical Significance of Jerusalem in Islam

- I) Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem during the living of Prophet Muhammad
- II) Spiritual Rise of the Prophet in Jerusalem
- III) Slides on the town of Jerusalem

Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem

- In year 612, Muhammad inaugurated his preaching in Mekka.
- The revelations attacked the richness of the Mekkan Leaders and denounced idols.
- The Hegira or the emigration to Medina in 622

The Life Time of Muhammad

- For Jews, Muhammad was a strange character.
- Muhammad did not accept that God chose the nation of Israel.
- Muhammad recognized Jesus as an authentic Prophet.

The Life Time of Muhammad

- The Christian monks did not pay any attention to him.
- Muhammad did not call Jesus Son of God.
- He rejected the concept of Trinity.

The Life Time of Muhammad

- The physical relation of a father and a son is a human concept.
- The Muslims must not attribute anthropomorphic concepts to God.

Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem

- Abraham sent to Mekka his elder son Ishmael.
- Abraham founded a temple in Mekka for his elder son Ishmael, as he founded a Temple in Jerusalem for Isaac.
- Ishmael was sacrificed symbolically at Mina close to Mekka.

Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem

- Jewish piety considers the Temple to be the center of the universe.
- Muslim piety considers Mekka as the center of the earth.
- The change of *qibla* (direction of prayers) from Jerusalem to Mekka

Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem

- The change of Qibla made it possible to the Prophet to distinguish his followers from the others.
- In this City, seventy thousand Prophets died, Abraham founded a Temple, Muhammad stopped there during his night journey (*isra'*) and rise (*mi'raj*).

Symbolic Importance of Jerusalem

- The Rock of Jerusalem and the Black Stone of Mekka as coming from the Sky and belonging to the Paradise
- On the Day of judgment, a wall will be erected to separate good from evil people.

The Dome of the Rock

- Was built in 691 by the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik
- The heritage of Islam and its triumph over Judaism and Christianity
- Invites the Christians to adhere to the Qur'anic principles decorating the Dome

Rise of the Prophet

- The night journey from Mekka to Jerusalem (*isra'*)
- The *mi'raj* where he rises to the seventh sky
- Muhammad left the print of his foot on the Rock of Jerusalem like Abraham on the Ka'ba and Jesus at the Chapel of Ascension.

Rise of the Prophet

- For Ibn Ishaq (d. c. 773):
- A major sign of his mission
- A manifestation of the Power of God
- A proof for the human intellect
- A gift of Mercy

Rise of the Prophet in Jerusalem

- The experience of the Prophet is used as model
- The night of the journey recalls that Jerusalem which was the first *qibla* will be also their last, that is is for their mystics, the City of supreme Hegira.

Jerusalem

- Jerusalem is for Islam what Rome is for Christianity.
- The place of origin and the place of return to God
- Three degrees of divine intervention:
 - I) a seizure
 - II) an ecstasy
 - III) a transforming union

Rise of the Prophet

- The sacred Mosque of Mekka represents the station of the heart.
- The one who is at this station perceived the signs of the Lord.
- The Mosque of al-Aqsa of Jerusalem represents the station of Spirit.
- The one who is on this level understands the real meaning of the divine signs.

Rise of the Prophet

- According to Haydar Amuli, a Sufi Shi'ite of the XIVth c., the Prophet succeeded in reaching the divine Essence like Abraham who reached the same spiritual station.
- The Mosque of Mekka signifies the heart of reality which is *haram*, that is forbidden to the others to enter.

Rise of the Prophet

- The significance of the most distant Mosque in Jerusalem is the presence of the spirit.
- The Mosque of Mekka, which symbolizes the heart, is the *qibla* of the Muslims as the heart is the *qibla* of all the physical limbs and inner organs.

Rise of the Prophet

- The first internal organ to appear in the formation of the embryo is the heart;

similarly the Ka'ba was the first House established on earth.

- The al-Aqsa Mosque which is his Spirit has been added to him as Allah confirms:

“And breathed into him my Spirit (XV: 29)”

Rise of the Prophet

- The Spirit in the station of al-Aqsa is in the highest station of witnessing and unveiling as 'Ali (d. 661) said:
"and my heart lives by the knowledge of You and my spirit by my witnessing of You."
- The Spirit is also the *qibla* of the heart of the man just as the heart is the *qibla* of all the body.