

PALESTINE

Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Dr. Tareq M. Suwaidan



Palestine

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Prologue



Prologue

Since the dawn of history, the Palestinian issue has been the focal point of national and international conflicts in the Middle East. However, the historical realities of Palestine in general, and of Jerusalem in particular, have been manipulated, adulterated and even hijacked for one specific reason or another.

The various accounts of events, taken out of their historical context and used for political, ethnic, religious and sectarian purposes, have spread confusion and uncertainty in contemporary culture, to such an extent that people today view the socio-historic situation of Palestine as fraught with insurmountable hurdles that prevent a correct understanding of the “Palestinian Problem”.

In the two years of lectures I have given on Palestine, I have verified that, by presenting history “from the outside looking in”, in a logical, chronological sequence, one can gain a better understanding of historical realities, because it enables one to analyse historical facts reliably and impartially. By applying this methodology, I have rearranged the content of the above-mentioned lectures in this book, so as to put within reach of the average reader a well-documented, and comparatively comprehensive treatise.

This book contains two distinct parts—the first deals with the history of Jerusalem, from the dawn of time to well into the modern age; that is, up to the time of the Ottoman empire. In contrast, the second part focuses on demographic and political events from the fall of the Ottoman empire, and the subsequent colonial invasion, to the present time; in other words, from the end of the First World War to the death of Yasir Arafat in late 2004.

The aim of this book is not merely to provide an account of historical events in a region that is the focus of world attention, but to explain—through data, facts, documents and the biographies of prominent figures who have played a leading role in shaping Palestine—the undeniable realities that should be taken into account in building the future of Palestine on the basis of law and legality, and not on the basis of ethno-political claims tainted by fanatical or dogmatic stances.

I hope that this compendium fulfils the objectives I have outlined, which are intended solely to lay bare the unmasked realities of the Palestinian situation to those readers interested in knowing what is happening in that part of the world.

December 2005
Dr. Tareq M. Suwaidan
Author

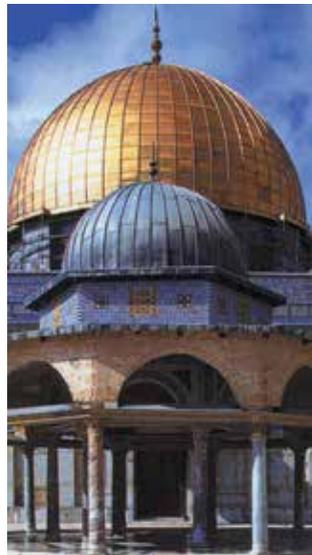


The importance of Palestine in the life of a Muslim

The excellence of the place where Jerusalem is sited has been proven not only historically but also in numerous texts of the Koran (or Qur'an) and the Sunna (Prophetic tradition). This excellence undoubtedly goes back to ancient times because it was where many prophets grew up and died. It was where they received inspiration and where many messages were revealed to them that would mark the course of most events in ancient history.

The Koran (Textual Revelation)

1. The Koranic text emphasizes the sacred nature of this land and its great importance throughout the course of history. The blessing bestowed upon it extends not only to the Al-Aqsa Mosque but also to its surroundings. (*Al-Isra', 1*)
2. The Holy Land referred to in the Koran covers the whole of Palestine, including Jerusalem, formerly known as "Iliya", or the Land of God (*Al-Ma'ida, 21*). The Koran underlines the holy or sacred epithet understood not only as exaltation, blessing and great importance, but also as a place of spiritual purity.
3. There are many passages in the Koran that narrate Abraham's emigration from the land of the Chaldeans in Iraq to as far as Syria. (See *Al-Anbiya', 71*)
These passages tell how God saved Abraham from being burnt at the stake and ordered him to emigrate to the land of Syria where the Holy Land is located. According to Qataadah's version, Abraham was in Iraq and God, who sent him to Syria, saved him. It was then said that it would be the land of the Congregation and Resurrection of men and where Jesus Christ would be resurrected and the Antichrist would die.



4. Many interpreters of the Koran understand that the blessed land is Syria. (*Al-Anbiya', 81*)

Historians are also most concerned about understanding the borders of the former Syria. Some extended them from Turkey in the north as far as the Arabian Peninsula, including Iraq. Others narrowed them down to only Palestine and its surroundings. In any case, Jerusalem is located within the greater Syrian territory, according to all historians and scholars. This is the most common version in the majority of the texts and accounts.

5. The allusion of the Koran to the change in the *qibla* – the direction which Muslims face to say their prayers – from Jerusalem to Mecca (*Al-Baqara, 144*), or from Al-Masjidu-l-Aqsa (the Sacred Mosque of Jerusalem) to Al-Masjidu-l-Haram (the great Mosque of Mecca), has been ratified repeatedly by numerous hadiths, or sayings of the prophet Muhammad.

This means that the orientation towards Jerusalem lasted almost fourteen months. During this time, the Prophet multiplied his additional prayers and his pleas to God so that he could be directed towards the Kaaba, which is Abraham's *qibla*. God attended his prayers and ordered him to go towards the old building. It is said that the first prayer he uttered facing the direction of the new *qibla* was Al-Asr (the afternoon prayer), as given in As-Sahihayn, two outstanding and reliable sources of prophetic traditions in Sunni Islam. More than one exegete confirmed that the reorientation of the *qibla* was revealed to the Prophet when he had just completed half of the midday prayer at the Bani Salmah mosque, later known as the Masjidu-l-Qiblatayn (the mosque of the two *qiblas*, which was built first in Medina). As for the people of Qobaa', the news did not reach them until the dawn prayer the following day, as stated in As-Sahihayn.

6. We should remember that there are numerous verses in different chapters of the Koran that emphasize the excellence of the Holy Land and its surroundings. The fact of stressing the direction of prayer towards Jerusalem before this was changed highlights its great importance and its holiness.



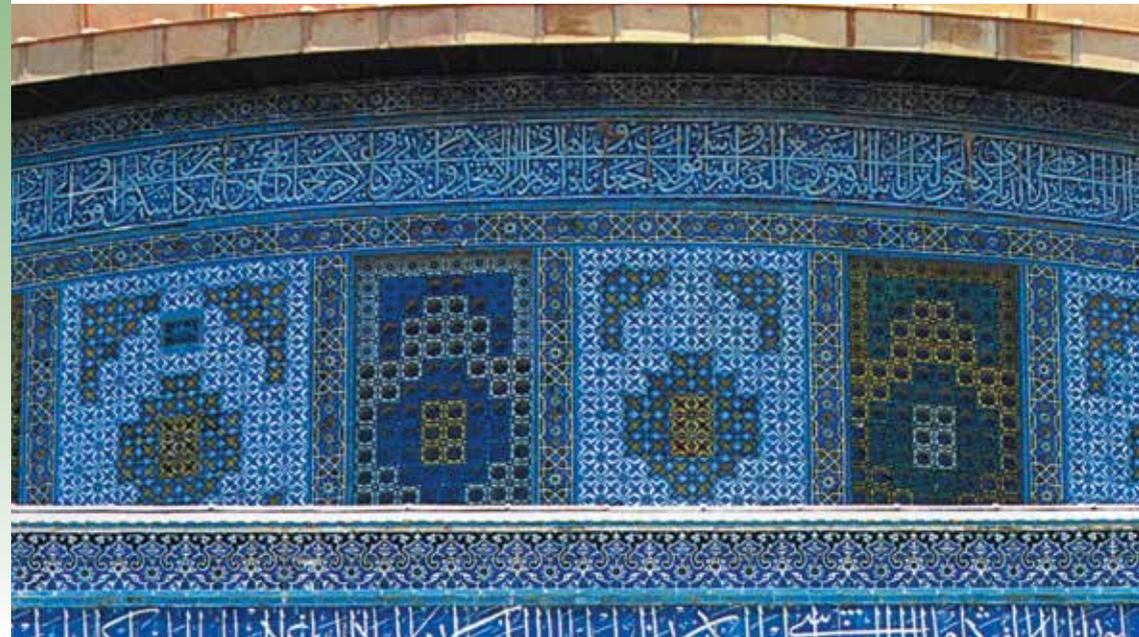
"The *qibla* is the direction which Muslims face to say their prayers."



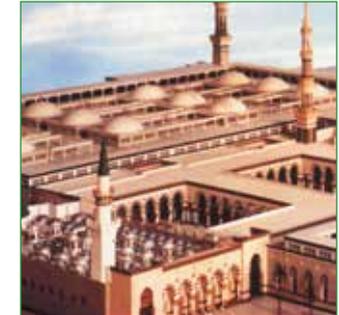
The Sunna (Conceptual Revelation)

The Prophet himself often alluded to the excellence of the Holy Land. He said: “The places that are worthy of pilgrimage are: Al-Masjidu-l-Haram (the Great Mosque of Mecca), my mosque of Al-Medina and Al-Masjidu-l-Aqsa (the Mosque of Jerusalem)”.

1. Tradition holds that the reward for worshipping at the three mosques multiplies according to their rank. Praying at the Great Mosque of Mecca is equivalent to one hundred thousand prayers. At the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina it is equivalent to one thousand prayers and, at the Mosque of Jerusalem, five hundred. So God placed the latter in third position and multiplied the divine recompense.
2. The Mosque of Jerusalem is the second place of worship built on Earth after the Great Mosque of Mecca.



3. Zayd Ibn Thabit recounted that he heard the Prophet say: “Blessed be Syria ... Blessed be Syria!” They asked him: “Why are you praising Syria?” He said: “Because the angels have spread their wings over Syria”.
4. Al-Bukhari and Muslim mention that it was Al-Baraa’ Ibn ‘Azib who said: “We prayed with the Prophet facing Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months, and then we changed towards Mecca”.
5. Jerusalem was the goal of the Prophet’s night-time trip and the starting point of his ascension to heaven.
6. In his invocation to God, Moses exalted Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and on his deathbed he asked God to bring him closer.
7. They are many quotations (hadiths) by the Prophet that beseech God’s blessing for Syria.
8. Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi quote Salim Ibn ‘Abdillah as saying he heard the Prophet state: “Fire will come from Hadramaut; that is to say, at the end of time, the doors of hell will open and the people will congregate”. We said: “God’s messenger—so, what are your orders?” He replied: “You must go to Syria”.
9. Numerous exegetes and scholars, including Al-Qurtubi and Ibn al-Juzi, agreed on the exegesis of the Koranic verse that reads: “Listen on the day the town crier calls from somewhere nearby” Qaf (41). It was Israfil, standing on the rock of Jerusalem, from where the Prophet’s Ascension began, calling the people to go to the final judgment. That is where all the dead would start to congregate and that is what Imam Ahmad says in his collection, when he quotes Maimunah Bintu Saad, the Prophet’s wife, who said: “Prophet of God! Is our end in Jerusalem?” The Prophet answered: “Land of the congregation of the dead, and of their Resurrection”.
Some Muslims exaggerate by venerating the Rock. Its exaltation, accor-





Palestine

ding to Ibn Taymiyyah, is considered to be a heretical invention, as there is no text that justifies its consecration. Even some people believe that it is suspended in air without any support and this is not the case. In fact, there is a cave underneath it and whoever goes inside it gets the sensation that the rock is hanging.

10. Many of the Prophet's companions, such as the scholars and the devout, visited Jerusalem. They prayed within its boundaries, thus heeding the call made by Muhammad in this respect. Among the companions who visited Jerusalem were: 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Abu Ubaydah, Amir Ibn al-Jarrah, the mother of the believers and wife of the Prophet Safya bint Hayi, Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Khalid Ibn al-Walid, Abu Dharr al-Ghafari, Abu Ad-Dardaa', Salman al-Farisi, Amr Ibn al-'As and Said Ibn Zayd of the ten foretold to be going to Paradise besides Abu Hurayra, together with Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn al-'As, among others.



PART ONE

Palestine before Islam

CHAPTER ONE

The Ancient History of Palestine

CHAPTER TWO

The Israelites in Palestine

CHAPTER THREE

The Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans in Palestine



PART ONE
Palestine before Islam

CHAPTER ONE
The Ancient History of Palestine

1. The first inhabitants
2. The origin of the name of Palestine



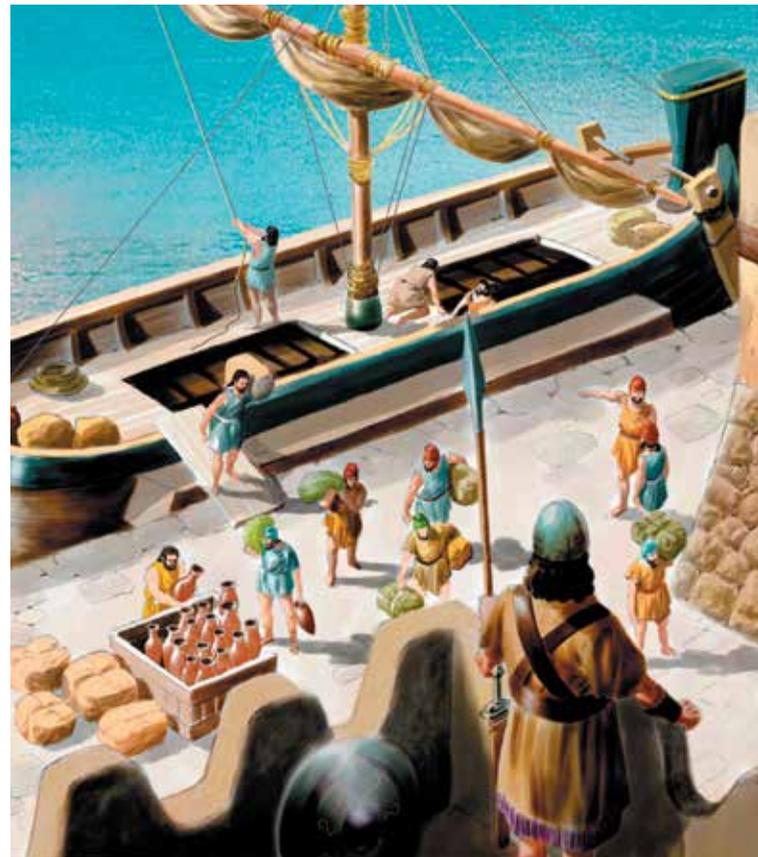
The Ancient History of Palestine

"The first inhabitants of Palestine were tribes that moved there from Arabia."

1. The first inhabitants

Nobody knows exactly when the land of Palestine was first inhabited and there is no proof allowing a date to be determined. However, initial indications and archaeological remains lead us to believe it was the *Natoufiyyun* who settled in Palestine in the 10th Century BC. They were a group of tribes whose vestiges speak about them. But does anyone know who they were or where they came from?

Jericho
Dating from the 8th Century BC, the earliest archaeological data reveal vestiges of a city that is currently called Jericho. Some researchers believe it is the oldest city in the world. Before then, people led a nomadic life, roaming in search of fertile land and water. Nevertheless, the sedentary life that began in antiquity left its first traces in Jericho, but we do not know who its original inhabitants were or where they came from.



The Canaanites

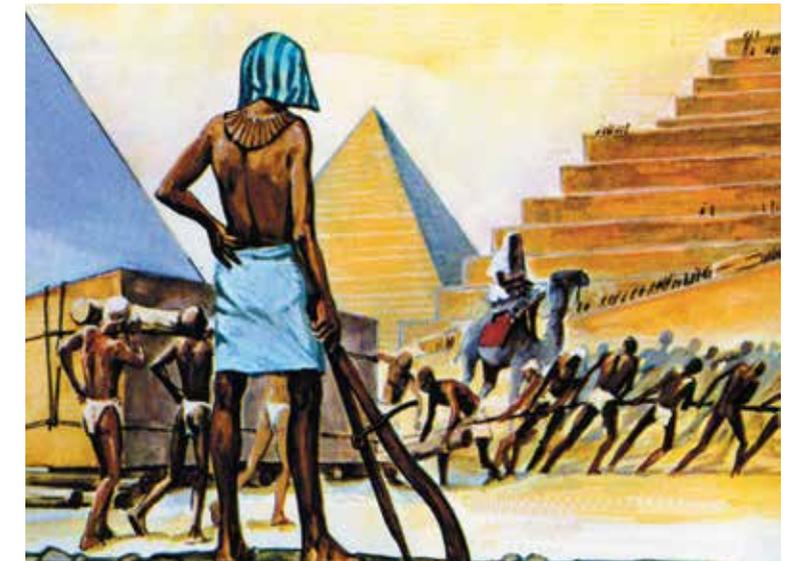
The first known archaeological discoveries in Palestine date back to the Canaanites and the Amorites. These two people were tribes that emigrated from Arabia towards the north and settled in the land of Sham (Syria) and, specifically, in Palestine. This is clearly demonstrated in the history of Palestine and not only the eastern but also the western historians confirm this. Therefore, the initial historical recording about the first inhabitants of Palestine dates back to the Arab Canaanites and the Amorites. As for the Jews, there was no reference to them here. Even more, they first appeared on the scene very much later—several centuries later—as shall be demonstrated with correlative historical evidence.

The Jebusites

There are numerous Arab tribes from the Arabian Peninsula who emigrated towards the north. There, they dispersed between Syria and Iraq (Mesopotamia). Some of them moved to Egypt. Among them were the Canaanites, who settled in the valleys of Palestine. Others, the Jebusites, established themselves in the Al-Quds area (Jerusalem), before it was built. Other people broke away and settled in the mountains. They were called the Phoenicians and the Amorites. This is how the land of Palestine was divided among these tribes. History books based on archaeological documents and on evident reality mention the names of all these people according to their geographical distribution in the habitat of Palestine.

"Palestine is known among archaeologists as the land of Canaan, in reference to the Canaanites."

The "Land of Canaan" is clearly mentioned in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, as well as in the history books of that time, but there is no explicit reference to the Israelites.





PART ONE

Palestine before Islam

"The origin of the name of Palestine dates back to the people who lived in the Baalist area, in southern Palestine."

Map of Jerusalem made out of mosaics found in the city of Ma'daba, in Jordan.

2. The origin of the name of Palestine

Baalists

The name of Philistine is attributed above all to people who hailed from Mediterranean islands, especially Crete. It seems that the people from these islands suffered from famine or some specific circumstances that forced them to repeatedly attack the coasts of Syria and Egypt. They were first driven back by Ramses III in the famous battle of Luzin that took place in Egypt. Ramses did not want them to settle in Egypt. Following negotiations, they ended up emigrating to Palestine. There, Ramses ordered them to settle in the south, in a region called Baalist. This is recorded in history books and Holy Scriptures, where the name Baalist is mentioned. Hence, the people who lived there belong to the lineage of *Al-balistiniyyun* (Philistines). The name of Palestine comes from here because it was then known as Baalistine. Over time it changed to Palestine. However, these people became neighbours not only of the Canaanites but also of the *Yabusiyun* (Jebusites) who were the first inhabitants in that region.

From there, their languages interchanged and mixed, and they merged with the original people who were also the most numerous and civilized. In time, the Philistines intermarried with the "Canaanites". This removed distinct signs of their original identities, therefore leaving no historical reference.

This information reveals why, up until then, there is not even one single mention of the Jews. Where were they in that epoch? How did they get to the land of Palestine? All the archaeological documents, history books and Holy Scriptures, in addition to western books, corroborate that the original inhabitants of Palestine were the Canaanites and the Jebusites.



PART ONE

Palestine before Islam

CHAPTER TWO

The Israelites in Palestine

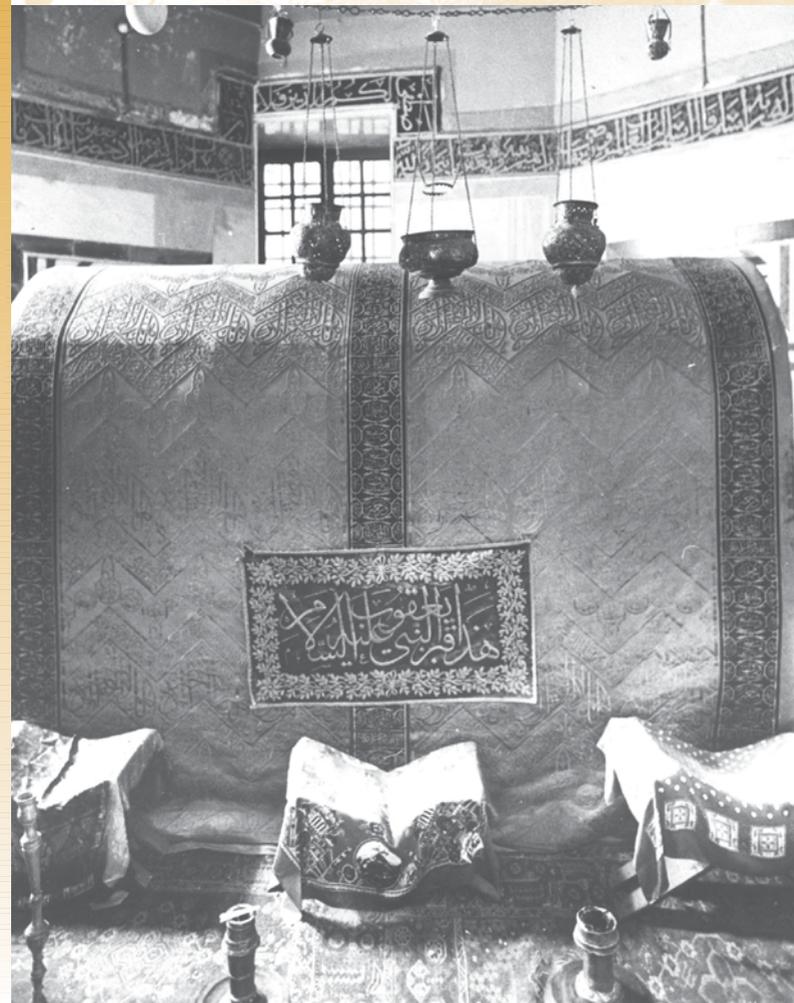
1. Emigration of the Israelites to Palestine
2. Moses and the Israelites
3. The Israelites after Moses
4. The era of David and Solomon



The Israelites in Palestine

Tomb of the prophet Abraham and the prophet Jacob, at the Sanctuary of Abraham in Hebron, Palestine.

1. Emigration of the Israelites to Palestine



Jacob
History tells us that Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, were born in Palestine. Nevertheless, they came from an emigrant family and did not belong to the well-settled residents. Jacob, who was also called Israel, was the son of Isaac. Joseph was among his children. The Koran refers to Joseph as a man who came to Egypt as a slave, until God provided him with wisdom and the capability to interpret dreams. He became a viceroy of Egypt holding the position of finance minister for the country. This was when he sent for his father and all his family so that they could join him in Egypt. (*Yusuf, 23*)

This is how Jacob gathered all his family and children together and finally settled in Egypt. Their long journey from Palestine put an end to their status as emigrants. It therefore goes without saying that Jacob belonged to the

Palestinian race or at least that is where he originated. History and all the books agree in confirming the accuracy of these facts. Jacob's descendants did not live for even one generation in Palestine. So, how can the Israelites claim that Palestine is their land and use Jacob's residence there for a certain time as a pretext?

Moses

Another emigration to Palestine by the Israelites was that of Moses when, together with his people, the children of Israel, he emigrated from Egypt, fleeing from the Pharaoh and his soldiers. So we see that the Israelites only went into Palestine as emigrants. As for the true inhabitants of Palestine, they were the Canaanites. As far as I could verify, not in Arab sources but in sacred and western books, the Israelites emigrated mainly from Egypt to Palestine. This was because Palestine was administratively dependent on Egypt and also politically and historically since the temple founded by Jacob was built there. In that period the Pharaohs had started expanding into that land and had occupied Palestine, specifically the area under the rule of the Hyksos. When it was taken over by Egypt, it never became clear that the Israelites made it their land, nor that they settled there for a long period of time. They were short emigrations, but what is absolutely definitive is that the land first belonged to the Canaanites and the Jebusites.

Let's return to Moses' flight from Egypt and God's intervention to save the Israelites by drowning the followers of the Pharaoh and his soldiers in the sea. This episode provides a position and a consideration in revealing who the Israelites actually are, in respect of their history with their prophet Moses—I aim to provide examples and advice for anyone who wishes to discover the falsehood of their cause and see them as they really are.

"The Israelites were not the original inhabitants of Palestine, but were always sporadic emigrants."

Pharaoh.





2. Moses and the Israelites

Moses in Egypt

The appearance of Moses on the scene took place in Egypt. Such an event goes back to 1250 BC. God helped him with many impressive miracles. It began when his mother was inspired to throw him into the open water and from hence to be raised in the house of the tyrant Pharaoh, who was oppressing the people of Egypt. The Koran relates that, when he grew up, Moses mistakenly killed an Egyptian and took refuge in Madian, escaping from the Pharaoh and his council of dignitaries. Then he was inspired by a mission that God ordered him to fulfil so that the people would stop worshipping the Pharaoh and only worship God, and in order for the children of Israel to leave Egypt where they were suffering the oppression of the Pharaoh, reinforcing his cause with miracles. One of these miracles was that of the staff that was transformed into a snake and that of the white hand, thus demonstrating his great magical skills. The story is very well known. Moses defied the Pharaoh in front of a multitude of Israelites and before the assembly of his people. The Pharaoh called for his sorcerers to confront the

The people of the Pharaoh and his soldiers drowning in the sea.



challenge. As a result, many Israelites and many sorcerers believed in his mission and in the Lord of Moses and Aaron, and ceased believing in the Pharaoh and his following. Then God revealed to Moses that Pharaoh was going to deceive them, so they fled from Egypt in the direction of Palestine. Pharaoh pursued them and was on the verge of catching them on the banks of one of the Red Sea inlets, the western one to be precise. There, God parted the waters for Moses and his followers to cross over on dry land. When Pharaoh and his soldiers reached the water, they were drowned. This is how God granted safety and peace to Moses' people, after having been persecuted and terrorized.

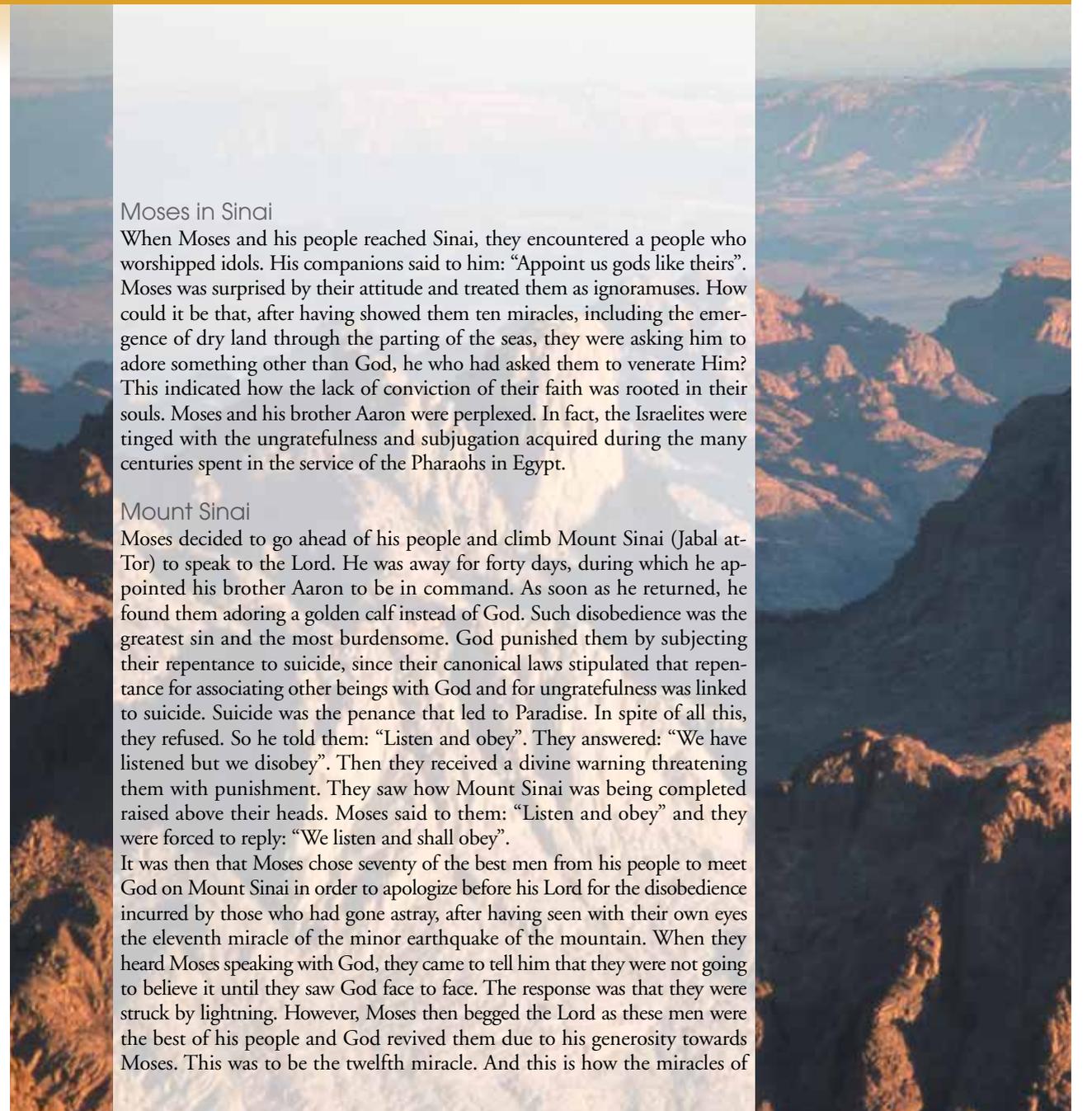
Moses in Sinai

When Moses and his people reached Sinai, they encountered a people who worshipped idols. His companions said to him: "Appoint us gods like theirs". Moses was surprised by their attitude and treated them as ignoramuses. How could it be that, after having showed them ten miracles, including the emergence of dry land through the parting of the seas, they were asking him to adore something other than God, he who had asked them to venerate Him? This indicated how the lack of conviction of their faith was rooted in their souls. Moses and his brother Aaron were perplexed. In fact, the Israelites were tinged with the ungratefulness and subjugation acquired during the many centuries spent in the service of the Pharaohs in Egypt.

Mount Sinai

Moses decided to go ahead of his people and climb Mount Sinai (Jabal at-Tor) to speak to the Lord. He was away for forty days, during which he appointed his brother Aaron to be in command. As soon as he returned, he found them adoring a golden calf instead of God. Such disobedience was the greatest sin and the most burdensome. God punished them by subjecting their repentance to suicide, since their canonical laws stipulated that repentance for associating other beings with God and for ungratefulness was linked to suicide. Suicide was the penance that led to Paradise. In spite of all this, they refused. So he told them: "Listen and obey". They answered: "We have listened but we disobey". Then they received a divine warning threatening them with punishment. They saw how Mount Sinai was being completed raised above their heads. Moses said to them: "Listen and obey" and they were forced to reply: "We listen and shall obey".

It was then that Moses chose seventy of the best men from his people to meet God on Mount Sinai in order to apologize before his Lord for the disobedience incurred by those who had gone astray, after having seen with their own eyes the eleventh miracle of the minor earthquake of the mountain. When they heard Moses speaking with God, they came to tell him that they were not going to believe it until they saw God face to face. The response was that they were struck by lightning. However, Moses then begged the Lord as these men were the best of his people and God revived them due to his generosity towards Moses. This was to be the twelfth miracle. And this is how the miracles of





Moses occurred before his people without forgiveness for their arrogance and ungratefulness.

Moses in the Holy Land

When the people of Moses reached the gates of Palestine, he notified them that God had ordered them to enter Jerusalem. Their reply was that the people there were mighty and they were not going to go in until they had left. Moses and Aaron advised them to enter all the same, as God had guaranteed their victory. They continued to refuse and told Moses that he and his God should fight for them as they had no intention of complying with God's commands. (*Al-Ma'ida, 24*). That attitude cost them severe divine punishment in life and on the final judgment day. Their sentence was to wander for forty years, during which they had to live miserably, without knowing what direction to take. (*Al-Ma'ida, 26*)

The story of the Israelites' Cow

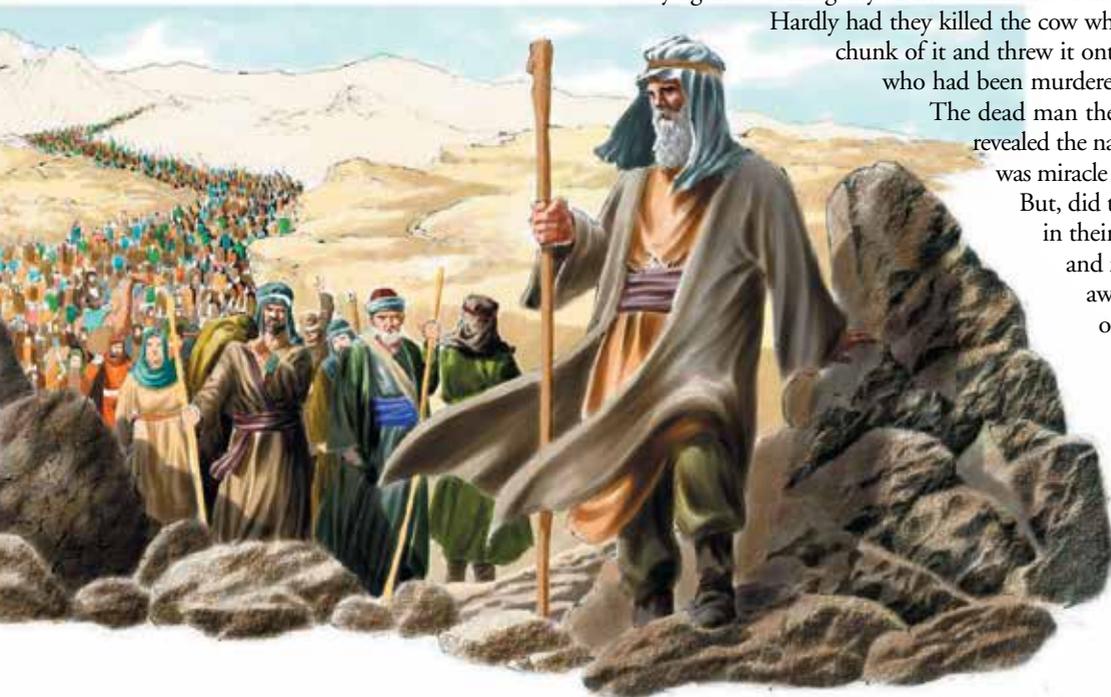
During their long journey, the story of the cow they were ordered to slaughter took place. They started repeating one question after another, rebelling tenaciously against fulfilling any divine commands transmitted via their prophet.

Hardly had they killed the cow when Moses took hold of a chunk of it and threw it onto the corpse of someone who had been murdered by an unknown hand.

The dead man then came back to life and revealed the name of his murderer. This was miracle number thirteen.

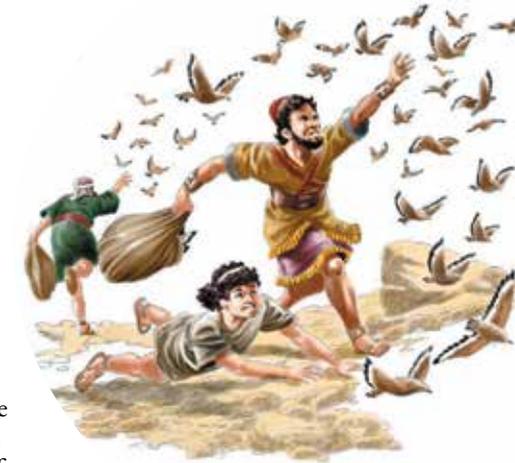
But, did this make an impression in their hearts, moving them and making them more aware of worship and more obedient? No in the least. Rather, to the contrary. Their hearts turned to stone or to something even harder. (*Al-Baqara, 74*)

The Israelites on their journey to Palestine.



Exodus

For forty years they disobeyed God's orders. God then sent the angel of death to Moses, their prophet, for the purpose of making him choose between life and death. He chose death near the holy places. Thus, a stone's throw away from Jerusalem, where a dune of reddish sand had been formed, the angel of death fulfilled his duty and took his soul. Nevertheless, his people did not choose the right path and continued to go astray, incapable of coming out of the desert and the wilderness. After wandering for forty years, God guided them through the mediation of Moses' disciple, the prophet entrusted to take them to Jordan. The following stories shed light on Moses' torments and worries about his people.



Israelites catching partridge.

"The fact that the Israelites lived for forty years wandering in the wilderness served to end the generation of unfaithful rebels and for another generation to appear, educated under the influence of the prophets."

Israelites gathering maná.





3. The Israelites after Moses

Joshua

At that time Joshua was leading them to the Holy Land. They went to Palestine but not to Jerusalem, according to the most reliable versions. Actually, they went to Jericho, where they fought a battle against the powerful giants mentioned on several occasions in the Koran who were Canaanites. The Israelites conquered Jericho and settled there. History books and hadith stress this fact, as does the Koran. (*Al-Baqara, 58*)

The fall of Jericho to the Israelites after a period of wandering in the desert.

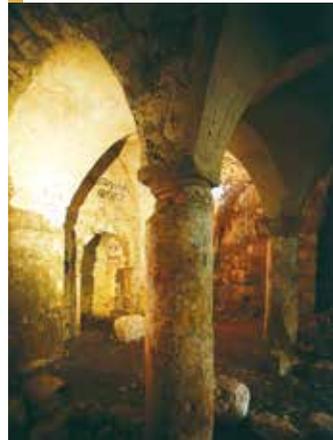


Enter the town

Their prophet ordered them to enter the town and to eat whatever they wanted on condition that they crossed the gate on their knees saying: "Forgive us" (*hettah*), that is to say: "Lord, forgive us our sins". Nevertheless, immersed in their rebelliousness, and out of arrogance and pride, they confused the word by saying *hentah* or "wheat". They deceived Joshua and said they were victorious thanks only to their strength. (*Al-Baqara, 59*)

The conquest of Jericho.



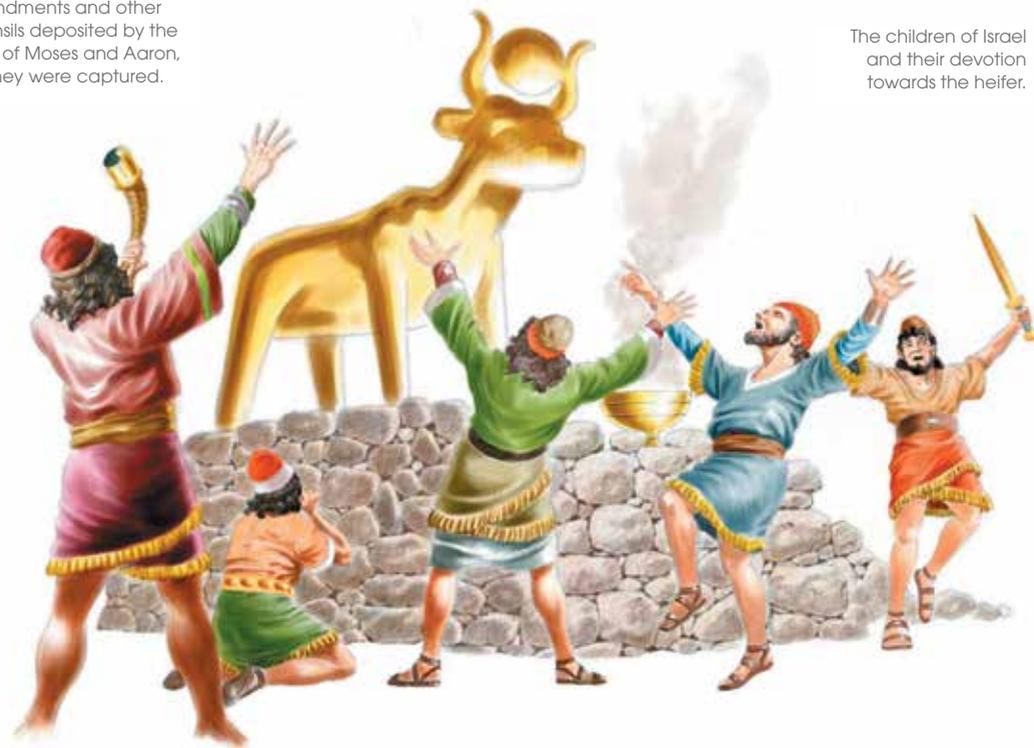


The Temple of Shiloh, where the Israelites kept the Ark of the Covenant, housing the Ten Commandments and other holy utensils deposited by the followers of Moses and Aaron, before they were captured.

The Israelites Go Astray

The Israelites settled in Palestine, where Jericho was their capital until the death of Joshua. After that they became divided and made war among themselves. They had many prophets—more than any other people. At times there were up to three in a single town. “No sooner did one prophet die than another appeared”, said the Prophet Muhammad. The Koran even explains how, when the people rejected two prophets sent to them by God, he then sent them a third. (*Yasin, 13-14*) Most of them disobeyed the prophets and even went on to murder them. (*An-Nisaa’, 155*)

Infidelity and arrogance became entrenched in their rebellious hearts, and they grew accustomed to associating God with other beings living in sin. They continued to defy the prophets, whom they disobeyed and even murdered. Having slaughtered those who were of their own faith and lineage, they ceased to hold anyone in regard. As a result, they drew the wrath of God on themselves. (*Al-Baqara, 61*)



The children of Israel and their devotion towards the heifer.

Oppression of the Israelites

In Jericho the Israelites were oppressed by the Canaanite giants, who submitted them to all manner of punishment, humiliation and slavery. They deprived them of their sacred possessions and their belongings, including the holiest of all—the Ark of the Covenant—where the tablets of the Law were housed. (*Al-A’raf, 145*)

However, a group of rebellious priests later produced replicas of the tablets, and word spread that only two of the original ten remained in the Ark, together with Moses’ staff and the garments of his brother, Aaron. (*Al-Baqara, 248*)



Israelites carrying the Ark.



Israelites awestruck as the Ark descends from heaven.

Saul, the new king

This situation endured until the time when the Philistine king Goliath ruled Jerusalem. The Israelites, who had become a defeated, divided, dispirited nation, had no ruler to reunite them. They then called on their prophet to restore their former glory and grandeur, to raise them out of their humiliation and to appoint a king who would lead them to victory. The prophet asked that, with their history of wicked deeds, if God were to grant their petitions, could they be trusted to be obedient and submissive, and not contravene his orders. They replied: “Why shouldn’t we obey, when we are now being humiliated? Why should we disobey his orders when it is His wish to restore our former glory and grandeur?”

They were then informed by their prophet that God had appointed a king for them—his name was Saul. They lost no time in voicing their disapproval of this choice, as Saul was not from the customary bloodline of Israelite kings. They regarded others as more entitled to bear the royal title and flatly rejected God’s decision. (*Al-Baqara, 247*)

Recovery of the Ark

When the prophet told them about the king’s designation, he said that God would give them a sign as proof of it. This was to be the return of the Ark, borne by angels. (*Al-Baqara, 248*) Despite seeing it being transported by angels, they were unwilling to believe their eyes until it was safe in their hands. They then opened it and verified that it was indeed the lost Ark. The people celebrated its return and decided to accept Saul as their new king.

Archaeological finds have revealed the remains of drawings and other images depicting the Ark being transported by winged angels. This episode is documented in Jewish history and books. In fact, they did not actually see the angels. Far from it—they imagined the scene and produced drawings of it. The feat is well known among them, but, did this miracle lead them to show allegiance to their king?



Saul, the new king.

Their disobedience to Saul

Once again they apostatized and objected tenaciously. Nothing more than a limited group of those who had faith and resources went out to fight with their king. The king led the faithful Israelites, who passed by a river on their way. He ordered them not to drink any water from it. He warned them by saying that whoever drank from that river would have nothing more to do with him, and that whoever abstained from drinking its waters would continue with him. It was a way of testing their patience and their will to endure and resist the battle. But the majority satiated themselves, persisting in their disobedience and opposition. (*Al-Baqara, 249*)

The believing minority

In spite of everything, that limited group went into the battle that pitted them against sturdy giants. The majority who refused to take part due to their lack of courage saw how a minority of faithful Israelites were strong enough to defeat the giants who outnumbered them, thanks to God’s assistance, and this was because of their patience and prayers. (*Al-Baqara, 249-50*)



The fight between David and Goliath.



"God honoured the Israelites by granting them victory over their enemies, led by their king David. Did they appear to be grateful?"

Historians tell us about a group of seventy Israelite warriors who held out in that battle against the sturdy giants. Goliath went out to challenge them to a duel, but no soldier had the courage to accept the challenge. Only a sixteen-year-old boy dared to go out. It was David. Goliath mocked him and turned him down because of his age, and insisted on encouraging the Israelites to accept the duel. He even promised to give his daughter in marriage to whoever won this combat, so that he would become his successor in the government. Finally, seeing that no one else would take up the offer, he allowed David to confront him.

David placed a stone in his sling and went out to do battle. Goliath lunged at him, but David hurled the stone from his sling and it struck Goliath's head. This is how Goliath died, and his army ended up defeated and expelled. God granted the Israelites a resounding victory under the command of their king, David.



The tomb of David in Jerusalem.

4. The era of David and Solomon

The death of Saul

After this victory, David married Saul's daughter. Saul died in the year 1004 BC and, immediately afterwards, discord and division ensued. Some followed Saul's son. Others preferred David, thus fulfilling their late king's recommendation, who saw his son-in-law to be more entitled to reign than his own son.



King David

David subsequently consolidated his power beyond the kingdom of Judaea. His capital was Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Saul's son governed Jerusalem and its surroundings.



In the year 1000 there was a battle between David and his adversary, Saul's son, which David won. He entered Jerusalem and made it the capital of the land of the Israelites. His kingdom included a large part of Philistia, since the Canaanites continued to govern on the coast.



The Jews believe David climbed these stairs when going up to the temple in the mountain.



The first kingdom of the Israelites

We should make it clear that the first Jewish kingdom originated in Palestine in 995 BC, but we know that the Canaanites and the Jebusites were the first to settle and govern Palestine for a very long time, going back as far as 2700 BC. Indeed, its origins becomes lost in antiquity and means that those people were the inhabitants of Palestine 1200 years before the Jews arrived. Such evidence denies any entitlement of the Jews to Palestine or any claim to them having roots there, due to the fact that the period of David's rule, followed by that of his son Solomon, did not last more than ninety years. After this time the Jewish community split up and spread around the world.

Jerusalem, the prosperous capital in the time of David.



King Solomon

David died that year and was succeeded by his son Solomon as ruler of the Jewish dynasty. Stories about this period are well-known throughout the Koran. God made elements of nature—such as the wind—subject to him, and put geniuses, birds and animals at his service. They would make anything he asked of them, such as altars, statues and palaces. (*Saba*, 13) When king Solomon passed away, his dynasty disintegrated and was divided among his children.

The alleged Temple

According to some sources, it was Solomon who built the first temple, and even today the Jews are proud of its existence. What is for certain, according to the official Islamic sources, is that Solomon had renovated an original place of worship, a “Mosque” of Jerusalem, but he did not build any temple. The word “temple” came from books that were altered by the Israelites, who do not base their claim on any proof or documentation. It is therefore necessary to clarify the following points that are to be found in Jewish books in order to explain this matter of the temple:

1. Many soldiers and bricklayers were said to have built the alleged temple. They were later known as "Masons", in other words, bricklayers. That is where the word "Masonry" comes from, originally taken to mean “builders of the temple”.
2. The texts indicate that the Temple was built somewhere close to the Mosque of Jerusalem, but there is no specific date or any evidence to pinpoint its exact location. There is only a meticulous description of its interior and exterior shape in Jewish books.
3. The description of its construction in Jewish books is nearer to imagination than reality. It contains much exaggeration and padding, and talks about a fully-fledged golden palace. The Jews boast about the detailed description in their holy books of this construction, with its *mihrab* or sanctum sanctorum (Holy of Holies) that measured 10 metres long, 10 metres wide and 10 metres deep. Before it stood the great altar. All of it was lined with gold, as well as the great chains that spread in front of the sanctum sanctorum, and the statues of angels with wings the size of ten arm-lengths, equally made of gold.
4. The Ark was placed in the sanctum sanctorum, inside the Temple, amid a great feast held for that purpose, and on which an enormous number of cattle and sheep were sacrificed.
5. Historians cast doubt on the veracity of what has been stated about the Temple, because the Holy Scriptures were not written until seven hundred years after the death of Moses. During this time, these writings suffered several alterations

Building the temple, as imagined by the Jews.

