



The Islamic Merits of Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque in Mujir al-Din's 15th-Century History of Jerusalem and Hebron

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Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali al-Ulaymi, the chief Islamic law court judge of Jerusalem at the end of the Mamluk period in the late 15th century, wrote an extensive history of the cities of Jerusalem and Hebron, entitled *al-Uns al-Jalil bi-Tarikh al-Quds wa-al-Khalil*. That history covers the history of Jerusalem and to a lesser extent Hebron and Palestine in general, from the Creation up to Mujir al-Din's own day. In his history is a presentation of the Islamic Merits or Virtues of the al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Masjid al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem included. This article provides a translation of the section about the Islamic Merits of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and briefly examines some of its characteristics.

Mujir al-Din al-Ulaymi was born in Jerusalem in 860/1456. He was a Hanbali judge and served as the chief judge of the Islamic Law Court in Jerusalem until just before his death in Jerusalem in 927/1520, four years after the Ottoman conquest.¹ In addition to his duties as judge, Mujir al-Din was a prolific scholar whose best known work is *al-Uns al-Jalil*, which he wrote between 900/1495 and 902/1496. The most commonly cited edition of *al-Uns al-Jalil* was published in 1973,² and a new edition was published in 1999;³ for the passage translated here,⁴ the two editions are virtually identical.

The portion about the Islamic Merits of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound translated here follows a long section on the life of the Prophet Muḥam-

¹ Cf. Busse 1993; Little 1995; Schick 2005; 2012; 2014.

² Cf. Mujir al-Din 1973.

³ Cf. Mujir al-Din 1999.

⁴ Cf. Mujir al-Din 1973 edition vol. 1, 226–244 and Mujir al-Din 1999 edition vol. 1, 346–366. The pagination of the 1973 edition is marked in the translation.

mad and is followed by a section on the Caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and his time in Jerusalem c. 638 AD.

The Translation

[226]

Mention of the Merits of the Noble Masjid al-Aqṣa and What is Recorded About That in Qurānic Verses and Hadith Reports

A passage was already presented at the beginning of the book about the Chapter of al-Isrā’.⁵ Even if it had no other merit than this verse, it would be sufficient, because if around it was blessed, the blessing in it is multiplied.

God, the Exalted, said – reporting about His Prophet Moses, peace be upon him (Q. 5:20f.): »Moses said to his people, »Oh people ... enter the Holy Land««, i.e. the place of purification, and sacralization is purification. Bayt al-Maqdis is called holy because in it is purified of sins. That was presented in the passage about the names of Bayt al-Maqdis.⁶

[227] Ibn ‘Abbās said that upon Bayt al-Maqdis is the land and rain since God created the years and days. And he narrated about His, the Exalted, saying (Q. 21:71): »We delivered him and Lot to the land that We blessed in it to the worlds.« He said that it is the Holy Land that God blessed in it for the worlds. Because every sweet water in the earth issues from it from the source of the Noble Rock and then disperses in the earth.

He, the Exalted, said (Q. 21:105): »My righteous servants will inherit the earth.« It is said in one of the sayings that it is the Holy Land that the people of Muḥammad, pbuh,⁷ will inherit.

He, the Exalted, said (Q. 23:50): »We gave the two of them shelter in a high ground affording security and springs.« Ibn ‘Abbas said that it is Bayt al-Maqdis, and it is the saying of Qutādah and Ka’b.

And Ka’b said, it is the closest part of earth to heaven by eighteen miles, meaning because the high ground is the elevated place of ground.

⁵ Cf. Mujīr al-Dīn 1973 1, 5f.

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 6f.

⁷ Mujīr al-Dīn sometimes writes out this honorific »may God bless him and grant him peace« in full and sometimes abbreviates it, here pbuh = »peace be upon him«.

And He, the Exalted, said (Q. 50:41): »And listen for the day when the caller will call from a place nearby.« The caller is Isrāfil, upon him be peace. He will call from the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis about the Gathering and it is in the center of the earth. He narrated that the nearby place is the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And He, the Exalted, said (Q. 24:36), »In the houses God permitted His name to be raised and remembered in them.« He means by it Bayt al-Maqdis.

And He, the Exalted, said (Q. 57:13), »And was built between them a wall that has a gate, inside of which is mercy and outside of which, before it, is torment.« He means between the believers and the hypocrites and it is the wall between Paradise and the Fire. To it, i.e. to that wall, is a gate in which is mercy and it is Paradise and outside it, i.e. outside that wall, before it, i.e. from before that outside, is the Torment.

And from Abū al-'Awwām, who said, »I heard 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar say that the wall that God mentioned in the Quran in His saying (Q. 57:13): »And He built between them a wall that has a gate« is the east wall of Bayt al-Maqdis in the inside of which is mercy, the mosque, and outside it before it is the Torment, Wādī Jahannam.

The Imam Aḥmad, may God be pleased with him, narrated in his *Musnad* from the hadith report of Umāmah, who said [228] that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »A group of my community continues in truth, overcoming their enemy, conquering. Those who oppose them do not harm them, nor does hardship strike them until the commandment of God comes to them while they are like that.« They said, »O Messenger of God, and where are they?« He said, »Bayt al-Maqdis and the flanks of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And from Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »There are four cities of Paradise: Makkah, al-Madinah, Damascus and Bayt al-Maqdis.«

And from Mu'ādh, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »God the Exalted said, »Oh Shām, you are my best part of my country, and I am urging the best part of my servants to you. He whose place of birth was in you, but then chose somewhere else than you, he will be afflicted with a sin. And he whose place of birth was not in you, but then chose you, then with mercy from me. Oh Shām, widen for your people with sustenance like the womb widens for a child. My eye is upon you with land and rain since I created the years and days. And whoever in you lacks wealth will not lack in you the good. Oh Jerusalem you are holy with My light and in you is the Gathering and the Resurrection. I will conduct you like the bride dances to her husband and whoever enters you will not need oil and wheat.«

And from Mu'ādh, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said »O Mu'ādh, God, to Him be majesty and glory, will open to you al-Shām after me from al-'Arīsh to the Euphrates, their men, their women and their slave girls garrisoning until the Day of Resurrection. For who among you selected a coast from the coasts of al-Shām or Bayt al-Maqdis, he is in *jihād* until the Day of Resurrection.

And from Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who said that God the Exalted said to Bayt al-Maqdis, »You are My Paradise and My holiness and My best part of My country. Who dwells in you, then mercy from Me, and who goes out from you, displeasure from Me upon him.«

The Merit of Liturgical Prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis

It is narrated from the Prophet, pbuh, that he said, »Solomon, peace be upon him, asked his Lord for three things, and He gave him two and we wish that He had given him the third. He asked Him for wisdom matching His wisdom and He gave it to him. And he asked Him for sovereignty that would not be appropriate to anyone after him and He gave it to him. And he asked Him whenever [229] a man goes out of his house, wanting only to pray in this mosque, he will go out from his sin like the day his mother gave birth to him. And we wish that He had given it to him.

And from Maḥkūl, who said that whoever goes out to Bayt al-Maqdis without a reason except for prayer and he prays in it the five prayers, morning, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening, he goes out from his sin like the day his mother gave birth to him.

And from Ka'b, who said that Bayt al-Maqdis complained to its Lord the Destroyer and God inspired it, »We have filled you with ranks and prostration conducting to you the procession of eagles to their nests, who are affectionate to you with the affection of the dove to its egg.« A man said to Ka'b, »Fear God, oh Ka'b and does he have a tongue?« He said, »Yes and a heart like the heart of one of you.«

And from Anas, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »Who visited Bayt al-Maqdis seeking a reward, God will give the wage of a thousand martyrs.«

And from him, may God be pleased with him, who said that whoever visited a scholar is as if he visited Bayt al-Maqdis, and whoever visited Bayt al-Maqdis seeking a reward, God will protect his flesh and his body from the Fire.

And from Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »Whoever prayed in Bayt al-Maqdis, all his sins were forgiven.«

And from Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who went to Bayt al-Maqdis and prayed to the right of the Rock and to its left and prayed at the place of the chain and gave alms what is less or more, his petition was answered and God removed from him his sorrow and he went out from his sins like the day his mother gave birth to him and if he asked God for martyrdom, God gave it to him, and God knows best.

The Multiplication of Liturgical Prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis

It is narrated from Abū al-Dardā', may God be pleased with him, from the Prophet, pbuh, who said, »Prayer in al-Masjid al-Ḥaram has more merit then elsewhere by one hundred thousand prayers and in my mosque by one thousand prayers [230] and in the mosque of Bayt al-Maqdis by five hundred prayers. And the Imam Aḥmad, may God be pleased with him, narrated it.

The Multiplication of Good Deeds and Bad Deeds in the Mosque of Bayt al-Maqdis

It is narrated from Jarīr ibn 'Uthmān and Ṣafwān ibn 'Amru that they both said that a good deed in Bayt al-Maqdis is a thousand-fold and a bad deed is a thousand-fold.

And from al-Layth ibn Sa'd from Nāfi', who said that Ibn 'Umar said to me while we were in Bayt al-Maqdis, »Oh Nāfi', go out with us from this house, for the bad deeds in it are multiplied just as the good deeds are multiplied« and he put on the *iḥram* and he went out from Bayt al-Maqdis.

The scholars said that the meaning of that is that the punishment of someone who committed a sin in one of the three mosques is greater than of someone who committed it elsewhere due to the nobility and virtue of these three mosques. One sin in one of them is greater than many sins in other places. And for that the bad deeds are multiplied in it and its meaning: its punishment is greater. Not that a person does one sin and ten sins are written against him. And God, the Exalted, says in His noble book (Q. 6:160), »Whoever came with a good deed, to him will be ten like it and whoever came with a bad deed, he will not be recompensed except like it.« The blood money had become greater on whoever killed in the Ḥaram or in the state of consecration (*iḥrām*) or in the forbidden months or killed someone of a forbidden relationship, due to the inviolability of these things and

the glory of their place. The multiplicity means that it had desecrated the inviolability of the houses of God – and God, the Exalted, had said (Q. 24:36–38), »In the houses God permitted His name to be raised and remembered in them. He is glorified in them in the mornings and in the evenings. Men whom trading or selling do not distract from remembering God and performing prayer and giving alms. They fear a day in which the hearts and eyesights will be turned around, so that God may reward them for the best of what they did and increase for them from His grace« – and had committed disobedience in it, and this is the meaning of multiplication.

Tightening the Saddle to It

From Abū Saʿīd al-Khadrī, may God be pleased with him, that the Messenger of God, pbuh, [231] said, »The saddle is not tightened except to three mosques: the Masjid al-Ḥaram, the Masjid al-Aqṣa and this Masjid of mine.«

The Rock Hating Receiving Urine or Feces

Abū Daud, may God have mercy on him, narrated in his *Sunan* that the Messenger of God, pbuh, forbade that the two qiblahs accept urine or feces.

And from Nāfiʿ ibn ʿUmar, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »Neither one of the two qiblahs will accept urine or feces.

And forbidding that is narrated from al-Shaʿbī.

The Merit of Starting Out the Ḥajj and the ʿUmrah from Bayt al-Maqdis

From Umm Salmah, the wife of the Prophet, pbuh, that she heard the Messenger of God, pbuh, say: »Whoever starts the Ḥajj or the ʿUmrah from the noble Masjid al-Aqṣa to the Masjid al-Ḥaram, God forgave him what came early of his sins and what came later and Paradise was made obligatory for him.«

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may God be pleased with him, put on the *iḥrām* from it and then he said, »I wanted not to come to Jerusalem. And his son ʿAbd Allah, may God be pleased with him, also put on the *iḥrām* from it.

The Water and the Winds Come Out from Under the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis

It is narrated from Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, from the Prophet, pbuh, that he said, »The sweet water and the pregnant winds come out from under the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And from Ibn 'Abbās, may God be pleased with them both, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »The rivers are four: Siḥān, Jiḥān, the Nile and the Euphrates. As for Siḥān it is Balkh, and as for Jiḥān, it is the Tigris. As for the Nile, it is the Nile of Egypt, and as for the Euphrates, it is the Euphrates of al-Kūfah. All of the water that people drink is from these four and they come out from under the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And he transmitted about the merit of the water of Bayt al-Maqdis and the benefit that is in it and that whoever wanted [232] to drink water in the middle of the night, let him say, »Oh water, water of Bayt al-Maqdis, I recite peace for you«, and then he drinks, for it is security with the permission of God, to Him be majesty and glory.

Bayt al-Maqdis, the Land of the Gathering and the Resurrection

From Abū Dharr, may God be pleased with him, who said, »I said, »Oh Messenger of God, is prayer in your mosque better than prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis?« He said, »Prayer in this mosque of mine is better than four prayers in it, and how wonderful the place of prayer is the land of the Gathering and the Resurrection.

And from Ka'b, who said that the Ka'bah is on the scale of the house built in the Seventh Heaven to which the angels of God, the Exalted, go on pilgrimage. If rocks were to fall from it, they would fall on the Inviolable House. Paradise in the Seventh Heaven is on the scale of Bayt al-Maqdis. If a rock were to fall from it, it would fall on the noble Rock. And for that it is called Urushalam and Paradise is called the House of Peace.

And Muqātil ibn Sulaymān said about Bayt al-Maqdis that there is not a handspan of space except a sent prophet prayed on it or a favorite angel stood on it.

And Wahb ibn Munabbih said that the people of Bayt al-Maqdis are neighbors of God, and it is incumbent upon God to not torment His neighbors.

And from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar who said that the Inviolable Sanctuary in the Seven Heavens has its dimensions on earth and that the holy Bayt al-Maqdis in the Seven Heavens has its dimensions on earth.

The Angels are Appointed to the Masjid al-Haram and the Masjid of al-Madinah and the Masjid al-Aqsa

From Ibn Mas'ūd from the Prophet, pbuh, that he said that there are three angels: an angel appointed to the Ka'bah and an angel appointed to my masjid, and an angel appointed to the Masjid al-Aqsa. The angel appointed to the Ka'bah calls each day, »Whoever left the benefits of God has gone out of the security of God.« The one appointed to this masjid of mine calls each day, »Whoever left the sunnah of the Prophet, pbuh, his security will not return and the fullness of Muḥammad, pbuh, will not come to him. The third angel appointed to the Masjid al-Aqsa calls [233] each day, »Whoever's food was forbidden, his face was hit by his work.

The Merit of Illuminating Bayt al-Maqdis When Unable to Reach It and That It Takes the Place of Praying in It and the Merit of Building It

It was narrated from Maymūnah, the daughter of Sa'd, the client of the Messenger of God, pbuh, that she said, »O Messenger of God, give us a ruling about Bayt al-Maqdis.« And he said, »The land of the Gathering and the Resurrection. If you come to it and pray in it, each prayer in it is like a thousand prayers.« We said, »Oh Messenger of God, »And someone who is not able to travel to it?« He said, »Whoever is not able to go to it, let him give to it oil to light its lamps. If someone gave it oil, he was as if he went to it.«

And he, pbuh, said, »Whoever lights a lamp in Bayt al-Maqdis, the angels will not cease to ask for forgiveness for him as long as its light is in the masjid.«

And in the prophethood of John, upon him be peace, whoever built in Bayt al-Maqdis a building or left a good trace in it or rebuilt in it something, God increased his age by fifteen years and God increased his money and children and if he was a king God gave him it as a possession, meaning the earth.

The Description of the Anti-Christ, May God Kill Him. The Anti-Christ Will Not Enter Bayt al-Maqdis

It was narrated from al-Ḍaḥḥāk that he said that the Anti-Christ does not have a beard, an ample moustache, the length of his face is two cubits and his height in the sky is eighty cubits and the width between his shoulders is thirty cubits. His clothes, shoes, saddle and bridle are with gold and jewels. On his head is a crown inlaid with gold and the jewel in his hand is an axe and his shape is the shape of the Magian and his shield is Persian and his language is Persian. The earth is sub-

servient to him and to his associates obediently, and he subjects its meeting places and holds back its watering places except the four masjids: the masjid of Mecca, the masjid of al-Madinah, the masjid of Bayt al-Maqdis and the masjid of al-Ṭūr [Mount Sinai].

And from 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ūd, who said that the Anti-Christ will enter all of the earth except four masjids and the four towns of Mecca, al-Madinah, Bayt al-Maqdis and Ṭūr Sinā'.

[234] And like it was narrated from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ.

And Thawr narrated from Khālid ibn Ṣafwān, who said that the protection of the faithful from the Anti-Christ is Bayt al-Maqdis.

And from Rabī'ah ibn Yazīd who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »You will not stop fighting the infidels until the remnant of you fight the soldiers of the Anti-Christ in the middle of the Jordan with the river between you – you to its west and they to its east.« Rabī'ah said that the narrator from the Companions of the Prophet, pbuh, said, »I did not hear of the River Jordan except from the Messenger of God, pbuh.«

And he recited that the Prophet of God, 'Isa, upon him be peace, will take three stones from the stones of Bayt al-Maqdis. The first of them will say, »In the name of the God of Abraham« and the second will say, »In the name of the God of Isaac« and the third will say, »In the name of the God of Jacob«. Then he will go out with the Muslims who are with him to the Anti-Christ and when he sees him, he will be defeated by him, then he will overtake him at the gate of Ludd and then he will throw at him the first stone and then he will hit him between his eyes and then the second and then the third and then he will fall and our lord 'Isa, upon him be peace, will beat him and then he will kill him and he will kill the Jews until the rock and the tree will say, »Oh believer, beneath me is a Jew«, and he will come to him and kill him.«

He, pbuh, said, »Ibn Maryam will soon descend among you as an Imam, acting justly and he will break the cross and kill the pig.«

The Merit of the Call to Prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis

He narrated from Jābir, may God be pleased with him, that a man said, »Oh Messenger of God, which created being will be the first to enter Paradise?« He said, »The Prophets.« He said »Then who?« He said, »The martyrs.« He said, »Then who?« He said, »The callers to prayer of Bayt al-Maqdis.« He said, »Then who?« He said, »The callers to prayer of the Masjid al-Ḥaram.« He said, »Then who?« He

said, »The callers to prayer of my masjid.« He said, »Then who?« He said, »The rest of the callers to prayer.«

And from al-‘Alā’ ibn Hārūn, who said, »It has reached me that the martyrs will listen to the call to prayer of the callers to prayer of Bayt al-Maqdis to the noon prayer on Friday.

[235] And from Ka‘b who said that no servant has become a martyr on land or sea without him hearing the call to prayer of the callers to prayer of Bayt al-Maqdis and that he will hear the call to prayer of the callers to prayer of Bayt al-Maqdis from Heaven.

The Merit of the Ṣadaqah in Bayt al-Maqdis

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, may God be pleased with him, that he said that whoever pays the *ṣadaqah* tax in Bayt al-Maqdis of a dirham, to him is innocence from the Fire. And whoever paid the *ṣadaqah* of a loaf he is as one who paid the *ṣadaqah* with a mountain of gold.

The Merit of Fasting and Asking for Forgiveness

It was narrated from Ka‘b that he said that whoever fasted a day in Bayt al-Maqdis God has given him innocence from the Fire. And whoever asked forgiveness for the male and female believers in Bayt al-Maqdis three times, He wrote for him the like of all the good deeds of the male and female believers, and seventy pardons were entered for every male and female believer from his prayers every day and night.

The Merit of Burial in Bayt al-Maqdis

Moses, upon him be peace, asked his lord to bring him a stone’s throw close to the Holy Land and that was mentioned when he, peace be upon him, was mentioned.⁸

And from Ka‘b, that in Bayt al-Maqdis are a thousand of the prophets’ graves, upon them be peace.

And from Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, from the Prophet, pbuh, that he said, »Whoever died in Bayt al-Maqdis is as if he died in Heaven.«

⁸ Cf. Muḥīr al-Dīn 1973 1, 101.

The Merit of the Rock

It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, may God be pleased with them both, that he said that the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis is of the rocks of Heaven.

And from 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, may God be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, [236] »The Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis is on a date palm and the date palm is on one of the rivers of Paradise and under the date palm Āsiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, and Maryam, the daughter of 'Imrān, will organize the garments of the people of Paradise until the Day of Resurrection.«

And from 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, may God be pleased with him, who said, »I heard the Messenger of God, pbuh, saying, ›The lord of the places is Bayt al-Maqdis and the lord of the rocks is the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And from Umm 'Abd Allah, the daughter of Khālid ibn Sa'dān from her father that the Hour will not take place until the Ka'bah will process to the Rock and everyone will be joined to it who went on the Ḥajj or the 'Umrah there, and when the Rock saw it, it said, »Welcome to the visitor and the one visited.«

And it is recited that God, to Him be majesty and glory, on the Day of Resurrection will make the Rock a white coral and then will spread it out the width of the heavens and the earth.

The Merit of Prayer to the Right of the Rock

From Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, from Abū Sa'īd, who said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said »I prayed the night I was taken by night to Bayt al-Maqdis to the right of the Rock.«

Al-Musharrif said that two did not disagree that he ascended to Heaven from the dome that is called the Dome of the Ascension.

The Black Pavement

It is inside the north door of the Rock and that door is known as the Door of Heaven.

It is told that he saw Khaḍr, peace be upon him, praying there and God knows best. And it is said that the grave of Solomon, peace be upon him, is at that door

and what is said that his grave is in Bayt al-Maqdis in Gethsemane and that he and his father David are in one grave was presented when his death was mentioned.⁹

Oaths at the Rock

It is told about 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, may God be pleased with him, that he ordered to require the workers of Sulaymān ibn [237] 'Abd al-Malik, to take an oath at the Rock, and they took an oath except one man called Uhayb ibn Jandab who redeemed his oath with one thousand dinars, and that state did not change for them until they died, and God knows best.

The Merit of the Rock on the Night of the Earthquake

Abū 'Umayr narrated from Jandab from Rustum al-Fārisī who said, »The Earthquake (cf. Q. 7:91) came and it was said to me: ›Get up and call to prayer!‹ and I was inattentive to that. Then it came a second time and it was said to me, ›Get up and call to prayer!‹ and I was inattentive to that. Then it came a third time and it shook greatly and it was said to me, ›Get up and call to prayer!‹ Then I went to the mosque and the houses had collapsed. He said that then some of the guards of the Rock went out to me and said to me, ›Go and bring me news of my people and come so that I can inform you about the miracle.‹ He said that then I went to his house and behold it had collapsed. Then I returned and informed him. Then he said to me, ›Regardless of the affair, it did not go to it‹, and it was carried until we looked to the sky and the stars, then it was brought back, and we heard them say, ›Make it level, make it even‹ until it returned to its condition.«

And 'Ubayd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Qirmānī from Ḍamrah from Rustum narrated about the same and in it that who went out to him was one of the guards of the noble Rock and ten were at every door and in it when he informed him about his family, he said, »We did not learn in the first night except that the dome pulled out from its place until the planets were scattered for us. And when it was before you came, we heard a rustling and tightening, then we heard a saying, ›Make it level, make it even‹, three times and it returned to its state.«

And al-Walīd ibn Ḥamād narrated it from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Mansūr ibn Thābit, who said that my father reported to me from his father from his grandfather that Abū 'Uthmān al-Anṣārī was alive the night after his going away from undertaking prayer in the month of Ramadan on the Black Pavement. He said that while he was performing the prayer he heard a sound of the collapse

⁹ Cf. Muḥīr al-Dīn 1973 1, 145.

in the city and the cry of the people and their asking for aid. It was a cold dark night with much wind and rain. He said, »I heard a voice saying – I hear the voice but I do not see the person – »Raise it slowly in the name of God.« And the dome pulled out until the white of the sky and the stars appeared to us [238] and the spraying of rain hit his face until Rustum al-Fārisī called to prayer and he heard a voice saying, »Return it slowly in the name of God« and they leveled it and evened it and the dome returned to what it had been.« And this was in the first earthquake and that earthquake was in the month of Ramadan year thirty and one hundred (4 May to 2 June 748) and God, may He be glorified and exalted, knows best.

A Summary of What is Mentioned about the Merits of Bayt al-Maqdis, the Noble, the Magnificent

What Abū Hurayrah, may God be pleased with him, narrated from the Messenger of God, pbuh, has been presented that he said, »There are four cities of Paradise: Makkah, al-Madinah, Damascus and Bayt al-Maqdis.«

And al-Musharrif narrated with his chain of authorities from ‘Umrān ibn al-Husayn, who said, »I said, »Oh Messenger of God, which is the best city?« He said, »If you saw Bayt al-Maqdis.« He said, »I said, »Is it better than them?« He said, »How can it not be better than them and everyone in it is visited and they do not visit, and the spirits guide to it, and the spirit of Bayt al-Maqdis does not guide to other than it. Except that God ennobled noble al-Madinah and made it good with me and I am alive in it and I am dead in it and if not that, I would not have emigrated from Makkah and I did not see the moon in the land at all without it being better in Makkah.«

And he narrated that Moses, peace be upon him, while he was in Bayt al-Maqdis looked to the light of the Lord of Might coming down and going up to Bayt al-Maqdis.

And from Ka‘b, who said that from an open door from Heaven from the gates of Paradise the light and mercy come down to Bayt al-Maqdis every morning until the Hour arises and the dew that falls on Bayt al-Maqdis is healing from every medicine because it is from Heaven.

And from Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, that every night seventy thousand angels come down from Heaven to the Masjid of Bayt al-Maqdis, praising God and praising Him and sanctifying Him and praising Him and they do not return to it until the Hour arises.

And from Ibn ‘Abbās, may God be pleased with him, that he said that the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, [239] »Whoever wants to look to one of the parts of Heaven, let him look to Bayt al-Maqdis.«

And Ka‘b said that God looks to Bayt al-Maqdis every day twice.

And Anas ibn Mālik, may God be pleased with him, said that Paradise, desires longingly to Bayt al-Maqdis, and Bayt al-Maqdis is from Paradise and »paradise« in Syriac is »garden« and it is said »vineyard«.

And from Khālid ibn Ma’dān that Bayt al-Maqdis faces a gate from Heaven from which seventy thousand angels descend every day seeking forgiveness for whomever they find praying in it.

And ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar, may God be pleased with both of them, said that the prophets built and renovated Bayt al-Maqdis and there is no handspan of space in it without a prophet having prayed there or an angel having stood there.

And Muqātil said that God, the Exalted, provided sustenance to whoever inhabited Bayt al-Maqdis if he lacked money and whoever died resident in Bayt al-Maqdis, anticipating a reward, it is as if he died in Heaven and whoever died around Bayt al-Maqdis it is as if he died in Bayt al-Maqdis. The first land that God blessed in it is Bayt al-Maqdis and the Holy Land that God mentioned in the Quran and He said (Q. 21:71), »to the land that We blessed in it to the worlds«, it is the land of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God spoke to Moses in the land of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God forgave David and Solomon, peace be upon them both, in the land of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God returned Solomon to his rule in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God announced John to Zakariah in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God submitted the mountains and the birds to David in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the Prophets, the blessing of God and His peace be upon them, brought the sacrifices in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And Yajūj (Yagog)¹⁰ conquered all of the earth except Bayt al-Maqdis and destroyed them in the land of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And God looks every day with grace to Bayt al-Maqdis.

And Abraham and Isaac, peace be upon them both, ordered that when they died, they were to be buried in Bayt al-Maqdis.

¹⁰ Cf. Yagog and Magog in the 1999 edition 1, 361.

[240] And Adam, upon him be peace, ordered that when he died in the land of India he was to be buried in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the fruit of winter in the summer and the fruit of summer in the winter came to Maryam, peace be upon her, in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And Jesus, peace be upon him, was born and spoke in the cradle in Bayt al-Maqdis. And the table was brought down to him in the land of Bayt al-Maqdis. And God raised him to Heaven from Bayt al-Maqdis. And he will descend from Heaven to the land of Bayt al-Maqdis.

And Maryam, peace be upon her, died in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And Abraham, peace be upon him, emigrated from Kutha to Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the Prophet, pbuh, prayed for a time toward Bayt al-Maqdis and was transported by night to Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the Hijrah at the end of time will be to Bayt al-Maqdis. And the Gathering and the Resurrection to Bayt al-Maqdis and the Reckoning of the Day of Resurrection to Bayt al-Maqdis. And the Straight Path will be arranged on Jahannam to Heaven in Bayt al-Maqdis and Isrāfil will blow on the walls in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the whale, on whose back the worlds are, his head is at the place of the sunrise and his tail is in the place of the sunset and his middle is under Bayt al-Maqdis.

And whoever prays in Bayt al-Maqdis, it is as if he prayed in the Heaven of the world.

And the earth will be destroyed and Bayt al-Maqdis will be rebuilt.

And whoever in Bayt al-Maqdis patiently endures its sufferings and its harshness for a year, God will bring him His sustenance from in front of him, and from behind him and on his right and on his left and below him and above him and he will eat in plenty and will enter Heaven if God, the Exalted, wills.

The first spot built of all of the earth is the place of the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis, and the Spring of Moses will appear at the end of time in Bayt al-Maqdis.

And the Prophet, pbuh, said, »The best of my community is whoever emigrated after the emigration to Bayt al-Maqdis. And whoever prayed in Bayt al-Maqdis, after ritually purifying, completely two ruk'ahs [241] or four what was before that is forgiven to him.

The Prophet, pbuh, said to Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh, may God be pleased with him, »Seek refuge to Bayt al-Maqdis if turmoil appeared. He said, »Oh Prophet of

God, and if he did not reach Bayt al-Maḡdis?» He said, »Sacrifice and guard your religion« and in the last phrase, »Sacrifice your possessions and guard your religion.«

And ‘Alī, may God be pleased with him, said to Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, »How wonderful at the appearance of the turmoil is dwelling in Bayt al-Maḡdis, living in it like the one fighting in the way of God and let come to the people the time when one of them will say, »Bring me straw in one of the bricks of Bayt al-Maḡdis«. The most beloved of al-Shām to God, the Exalted, is Bayt al-Maḡdis and the most beloved of its mountains to Him is the Rock and it is the end of the earth ruined in forty years.« He said that it is a garden of the gardens of Heaven.

And it is recited from Yaḥya ibn Abī ‘Amr al-Shaybānī that he said that the Hour will not come until Bayt al-Maḡdis is fortified by seven walls: a wall of silver, a wall of gold, a wall of pearls, a wall of ruby, a wall of emerald, a wall of light and a wall of clouds.

As for what is said that Bayt al-Maḡdis is a bowl of gold filled with scorpions and that it is like the jungle of the lion, then inside it either peace or ruin will hit him. For that happened in the time of the Children of Israel who were working in it in disobedience to God, the Exalted. And it is said that the mentioned phrase is written in the Torah. Some scholars say that the literal meaning of the speech indicates that they – meaning the scorpions – were present at that time. And if he wanted a group of this people. He said that scorpions filled it until the future comes and God knows best. As for today, and praise be to God, in it and in its courtyards is a victorious group – as was presented.

And from Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī, who said that no one is counted among the caliphs except the ruler of the two masjids: the Masjid al-Ḥaram and the Masjid of noble Bayt al-Maḡdis. And all of the denominations have come together about glorifying Bayt al-Maḡdis except for the Samaritans who say that al-Quds is the mountain of Nablus and they differ from all the nations in that.

And the Children of Israel when they settled with them out of fear of an enemy or becoming barren they walled al-Quds [242] and made it a temple and walled its gates and its mihrabs and received the enemy in it, and God the Exalted will defeat them. And likewise in the barrenness when they walled it and received in it and the sky continued to rain upon them until they raise the temple and they were doing that in every important affair that comes upon them, and God, may He be glorified and exalted, knows best.

A Mention of What It is Necessary to Pray When Entering the Noble Masjid and the Noble Rock and the Etiquette of Entering It and Entering From Which Door

It is recommended to whoever wants to enter the masjid to begin with his right leg and end with the left while he says, »Oh God, Forgive me my sins and open to me the doors of Your mercy« and when he goes out he prays for the Prophet, pbuh, and says, »Oh God forgive me my sins and open for me the doors of Your grace.«

It is recommended to whoever wants to enter the Noble Rock to do it on his right side so that it is the opposite of the *tawwwaf* (circumambulation) around the Bayt al-Haram and to present the intention and to establish repentance sincerely with God, the Exalted. And if he wants to go under the noble Rock in the cave, then he should do so. And when he goes, it is with good manners and humility and to pray what seems good to him and with the prayer of Solomon, peace be upon him, that he prayed when he finished building it and brought the sacrifice and he said, »Oh God, if who brought it was a sinner, forgive his sin, or one of distress, so relieve his distress.« Then pray with what he wants from the good things of the world and the Other and persevere in prayer under the Rock, for prayer in that place is cut for him with an answer if God, the Exalted, wills.

And a group of scholars said that the prayers that are prayed in it have nothing special concerning that place. For the person who is commanded to pray, to him is promised the answer, based on His, the Exalted, statement (Q. 40:60), »And your Lord said, ›Pray to Me and I will answer you.« And His, the Exalted, statement (Q. 2:186), »And when My servants ask about Me, I am near, I answer the prayer of the one who prays when he prays.« And what is desired from the prayers is what is recorded in the noble prophetic sunnah.

And from that is what Anas ibn Mālik, may God be pleased with him, narrated from the Prophet, pbuh, that he said to Abū 'Ayyāsh Zayd ibn al-Šāmit al-Zarqī when he saw him praying and saying »Oh God, I [243] ask You, oh One of Praise, there is no god but You, the Benefactor, the Creator of the Heavens and Earth, oh One of Magnificence and Nobility.« And the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »Pray to God in His greatest name that if he prays using it He answers and if something is asked using it, He gives.

And of that was what 'Ubayd Allah ibn Zayd narrated from his father, that the Messenger of God, pbuh, heard a man saying, »Oh God, I ask You that You are God, the One, the Eternal, who was not born and did not give birth and like You is not a single being. Then the Messenger of God, pbuh, said, »He prayed to God in

His greatest name that if something is asked using it He gives and if he prays using it, He answers.«

And from that what is narrated from him, pbuh, that he was praying using it saying that an angel approaching, a prophet sent, or a righteous servant will never pray using it without it being from the answered prayers, Oh God with Your knowledge of the hidden and in Your power to create, cause me to live if You know that life is good for me and cause me to die if You know that death is good for me. And I ask You, afraid of You, the hidden, the testimony and the word of truth about the hidden and the pleasure. And the goal in poverty and wealth. And I ask You a benefit that will not end, refreshment of the eye that will not be cut and the return of life after death and I ask You to see Your face and the desire to meet You without harmful distress or turmoil leading astray. Oh God, decorate us with the decoration of faith and make us guided.

And he narrated that Idris, the Prophet, pbuh, was praying using this prayer and commanded that the feeble-minded should not know it and pray using it. And he said, »Oh One of glory and nobility, Oh One of length, there is no god but You, the back of the refugees and the neighbor of those seeking neighbors and the security of the fearful, oh God if You were to write me with You in the Mother of the Book unfortunate or denied prosperity or lacking in my sustenance, oh God erase with your grace my misfortune and my denial of prosperity and lack of sustenance and confirm me with You in the Mother of the Book happy, provided for, successful in the good, hidden, protected, secure from who would harm me, for You said and Your saying is the truth in Your Book brought down to the tongue of Your sent Prophet (Q. 13:39), »God erases and confirms what He pleases and with Him is the Mother of Books.«

And I read transmitted that prayer using that in the night of the middle of Sha'ban is recommended and [244] is recorded in other narratives and reports. And what is desired here is brevity. And God is the guide to the correct.

Commentary

Mujir al-Din's compilation of reports about the Islamic Merits or Virtues of the al-Aqsa Mosque Compound is one of many compilations that all draw on the same corpus of reports narrated by a chain of generations of authoritative transmitters who can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions.¹¹

Mujir al-Din does not include the full list of the chain of authorities, but rather typically cites only the first in the chain.

The various compilations copy the reports from earlier works, normally with no commentary, and can typically include sections on the Quranic verses and sound *ḥadīth* reports connected with Jerusalem; a corpus of »Israelite« traditions that cover Biblical figures and events; reports about historical events such as the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in Jerusalem or 'Abd al-Malik's construction of the Dome of the Rock; reports of significance for Islamic law; reports connected with Jerusalem in the End Times; and reports about the special virtues of Jerusalem; details about individual locations on the compound; prayers to be said on the compound; and perhaps a section about the virtues of Hebron at the end.

In this portion of *al-Uns al-Jalīl* Mujir al-Din focuses on Quranic verses and *ḥadīth* reports; the special virtues of Jerusalem and Jerusalem in the End Times, and individual locations in the Dome of the Rock, and concludes with a summary and prayers to be said, leaving for other sections coverage of the reports about events from Biblical times and the Islamic period.

All the reports in the Merits of Jerusalem literature that Mujir al-Din includes in *al-Uns al-Jalīl* can be found in one or the other of the other compilations, so none of Mujir al-Din's reports are unique to *al-Uns al-Jalīl*. Mujir al-Din repeatedly includes reports, often copied virtually word for word, from earlier two compilers in particular: al-Musharrif and the author of the *Muthīr al-Gharām*.

Al-Musharrif is Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Musharrāf ibn al-Murajjā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī (c. 430s/1030s–1040s), a scholar of *ḥadīth* reports who lived in Jerusalem and who wrote his compilation on the Merits of Jerusalem, He-

¹¹ Cf. al-'Asalī 1984; al-Wāsiṭī 1979, introduction by Hasson.

bron and Syria in the 1030s–1040s.¹² It, along with al-Wāsiṭī's compilation¹³ are the two surviving books about the Islamic Merits of Jerusalem that pre-date the Crusades.

The author of *Muthīr al-Gharām* refers to Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Maḥmūd ibn Tamīn al-Maqdisī, a long-term resident of Jerusalem, if not a native, who wrote his compilation in 1351.¹⁴ Al-Maqdisī copied his information from earlier compilations, and his book was also copied freely by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, who came to Jerusalem in 1470–1471 and wrote there another of the major compilations of the Islamic Merits of Jerusalem.¹⁵ In addition, the compilation by Ibn Firkah in 1329, the one other such compilation already translated into English,¹⁶ includes many of the same reports that Mujīr al-Dīn selected.

In this section, Mujīr al-Dīn follows the earlier compilations in using the name Bayt al-Maqdis (the house of the place purified of sin)¹⁷ to refer to the city of Jerusalem rather than the name al-Quds or al-Quds al-Sharīf (the holy or the noble holy city), which he uses elsewhere when presenting historical events. He also uses the name al-Masjid al-Aqṣa (the most-distant mosque or place of prostration, the term used in Q. 17:1) to refer to the compound as a whole,¹⁸ rather than just to the roofed congregational mosque building in the south. He uses the alternate name al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (the Noble Sanctuary), commonly used starting in Mamluk times, only when it is part of an official title, as in the government-appointed »Inspector of the Two Ḥarams« (of Jerusalem and Hebron).¹⁹

One report of interest is the one about the earthquake that Mujīr al-Dīn dates to Ramadan 130 AH (4 May to 2 June 748). That report is also included in the compilation of al-Wāsiṭī, among others, in a slightly expanded form less plagued by pronouns with unclear antecedents that tells of the dome of the Dome of the Rock being raised up and then returned to its place.²⁰ Mujīr al-Dīn refers to that earthquake elsewhere in *al-Uns al-*

¹² Cf. Ibn al-Murajjā 1995.

¹³ Cf. Al-Wāsiṭī 1979.

¹⁴ Cf. al-Maqdisī 1994.

¹⁵ Cf. al-Suyūṭī 1982–1984.

¹⁶ Cf. Matthews 1935; 1949.

¹⁷ Cf. Mujīr al-Dīn 1973 1, 6.

¹⁸ Cf. Mujīr al-Dīn 1973 2, 24.

¹⁹ E.g. *ibid.*, 225.

²⁰ Cf. Al-Wāsiṭī 1979, 79–81, nos. 133–135.

Jalil for the year 130 AH (11 September 747–31 August 788) in reference to the Abbasid caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr ordering repairs to the damage when he came to Jerusalem in 140/758.²¹ That earthquake can be identified as the major earthquake that struck Jerusalem and the wider region on 18 January 749, which was in the year 131 AH.²²

Mujir al-Din, resident in Jerusalem for most of his life, was in an unrivaled position to bring his own local knowledge to bear, but this section on the Islamic Merits of the al-Asqa Mosque is devoid of any commentary by Mujir al-Din and nothing in it reflects any special local knowledge on his part. What he wrote could just as easily have been written by anyone else with access to other compilations of reports about the Merits of Jerusalem.

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²¹ Cf. Mujir al-Din 1973 1, 282, Schick 2012, 224f.

²² For the date see Tsafir/Foerster 1994.

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