

# Discover the Middle East with

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أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ  
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي  
فِي الصُّدُورِ

Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn  
wisdom... (22:46)



# CAIRO



## Sayyidatinā Nafeesa

Sayyidatinā Nafeesa was the daughter of al-Hassan al-Anwar ibn Zaid al-Ablaj ibn Imam Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. It is reported she was born in Makkah on 11 Rabi Al Awwal 145 A.H.

She relocated with her father to Medina when he was appointed governor of the city. She was well known for her piety and the people of Medina loved her dearly. She memorized the Holy Quran at a young age and studied fiqh in depth.

Her father used to take her by the hand to the grave of Nabi Muhammad (saw) on a regular basis and say *“Ya Rasool’Allah, O beloved Prophet (saw), I am pleased with my daughter, Nafeesa”*. He continued these visits regularly until Nabi Muhammad (saw) appeared in a dream one night saying, *“Ya Hassan, I am pleased with your daughter because you are pleased with her, and Allah is pleased with her because I am pleased with her.”*

She married Is-haq al-Mutamin ibn Imam Jafar al-Sadiq, himself a descendant of Nabi Muhammad (saw). She had 2 children; a son named Qasim and a daughter named Umm Kulthum. She emigrated with him from Al-Hijaz to Egypt. Sayyidatinā Nafeesa along with Sayyidatinā Ruqayyah and Sayyidatinā Zaynab bint ‘Ali are traditionally considered the patron saints of the City of Cairo.



## Sayyidatinā Zainab

Sayyidatinā Zainab was the third child of Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra), the forth Caliph, and his wife Sayyidatinā Fatima (ra), the daughter of Nabi Muhammad (SAW).

She was born in Medina in 5 A.H. The name Zainab means ‘the adornment of her father’.

Her mother died when Zainab was 7 years old, which gives us an understanding of the special relationship she formed with her brothers, al-Hassan and al-Husayn.

Zainab accompanied Imam al-Husayn to Kufa and was part of the Battle of Karbala.



When her nephew, Zaynul 'Ābidīn, was about to be killed she threw herself over him, embracing him saying *"If you going to kill him, you will have to kill me along with him"*. This action saved the life of Zaynul 'Ābidīn. He was the only son of Imam al-Husayn who survived the Battle of Karbala.

## Sayyidatinā Ruqayyah

Sayyidatinā Ruqayyah is the daughter of one of the wives of Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra) and is traditionally known as one of the patron saints of the City of Cairo.



## Imam Shaafi (Muhammad Idrees ibn Ash Shaafi)

Imam Shaafi was born in Gaza, Palestine from a very noble lineage but grew up under poor conditions. His father died in Syria when Imam Shaafi was very young.

His mother who was originally from Yemen had many relatives in Makkah. She feared that Imam Shaafi's noble lineage would be wasted and decided to move to Makkah so that he would be better cared for there. Imam Shaafi had memorised the entire Quran at 7 years old and had memorised at least one version of the Muwatta of Imam Maalik at the age of 10.

One of the outstanding qualities of Imam Shaafi was that he had an exceptionally good memory.

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As a child he lived with a Bedouin tribe to learn classical Arabic where he also learnt horse riding and archery.

When he was 13 years old, his mother sent him to Medina to learn from Imam Maalik. It is said that his mother told him *"I'm going to send you to Imam Maalik; I want you to*



learn his character before you learn his knowledge."

Later in his life he would say *"My focus, my love, my preoccupation is in 2 things; archery and knowledge. I was so good in archery I would hit the target 10 times out of 10". As a result of his humble nature, he never mentioned anything about the knowledge he had acquired in his life. A man, who was present on one occasion, said "By Allah your knowledge is more accurate than your archery".* Imam Shaafi travelled to

Yemen, Baghdad and back to Makkah before spending the last years of his life in Egypt where he dedicated his knowledge to his students.

Many agree that because his students documented his work, his legacy could continue to this day.

In Egypt he met Sayyidatinā Nafeesa (bint al-Hassan al-Anwar ibn Zaid al-Ablaj ibn Imam Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib) who was also tutored there.

## Amr ibn al-As Masjid

This masjid was the first in Africa, built as the centre of the newly founded capital, Fustat, in AD 641-642. It is located on the site of the tent of the commander of the Muslim army, general Amr ibn al-As.







## Al Azhar Masjid

This masjid was founded in AD 970 as the centrepiece of the newly created Fatimid city. It was the first masjid in Cairo, a city with the nickname of 'The city of a thousand minarets'.

A madrassa was established here in AD 988, growing into a university that is the world's second-oldest educational institution (after the University of Al Kairouine in Fez, Morocco). At one time the university was one of the world's preeminent centres of learning, drawing students from Europe and all over the Islamic empire. The large modern campus (due east) is still the most prestigious place to study Sunni theology.



## Husseni Masjid

This masjid was built in AD 1154. It was built on the cemetery of the Fatimid Caliphs, though unknown at that time. The oldest complete manuscript of the Quran is kept in this masjid. The masjid is, however, famous because the head of Imam



al-Husayn (the grandson of Nabi Muhammad (saw) is buried there. The head was originally buried in Ashkelon (a coastal city in the Southern District of Israel on the Mediterranean coast, 13 km north of the border of the Gaza Strip) for about 250 years. al-Zafir then ordered the transfer of the head to Cairo. When the blessed head of Imam al-Husayn was taken out of its casket in Ashkelon it is said that fresh blood was still visible of the head and there was a strong fragrance of musk.

## Pyramids

A visit to Egypt won't be complete without a visit to the pyramids, which is on the list of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The pyramids were constructed to house the remains, or mummies, of the deceased Pharaohs who ruled over Ancient Egypt. The pyramids now no longer house these mummies. All Egyptian antiquities, including the mummies, are now kept in the Museum of Cairo.



## Museum of Cairo

The Museum of Cairo is the home of an extensive collection of Ancient Egyptian antiquities. Many of the mummies can be found in the Museum, especially the famous Pharaoh Ramses II, who many believe is the pharaoh referred to in the Quran.



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# ALEXANDRIA

## Imam al-Busiri

Imam al-Busiri wrote under the patronage of the famous Mamlūk minister Ibn Hinna, who served under the legendary Sultan Barbys. Art often suffers when the artist is freed from suffering and only comes to life when calamities call. This was so when Imam al-Busiri woke up one day to find he was paralysed in half his body. The man who was elevated to the prince of poets of his time was suddenly reduced to a person who couldn't even rise from his own bed. This state of affliction stirred him to write the Qasīdat al-Burda, an ode of praise for Nabi Muhammad (saw), who is said to have cured the poet of paralysis by appearing to him in a dream and wrapping him in a mantle or cloak.

Shadhali brotherhood led by Shaykh Abu Hassan Ash Shadhili. Al-Abbas accompanied Shaykh Abu Hassan Ash Shadhili when he moved to Alexandria. At that time more and more Spanish Muslim scholars moved to Alexandria as Muslim Spain was gradually falling under the domination of the hostile Christian forces.

Shaykh Al Shadhili was fond of Imam al-Mursi; he was one of Shaykh Al Shadhili's best students and later went on to marry his daughter with whom he had two daughters and a son. Imam Mursi lived and taught as a Muslim teacher in Alexandria for 43 years until he died.

## Sayyidinā Luqman Al-Hakeem (Luqman the wise)

Luqman was described as a perceptive man; he loved watching animals and plants in his surroundings. One day while sleeping under a tree, an angel came to him and told him that Allah (SWT) wanted to bestow a gift upon him; either wisdom or to become a king. Luqman chose wisdom, and when he woke up from his slumber, he was aware that his senses and understanding had sharpened. He felt in complete harmony and could understand the inner meaning of things. He bowed down to thank Allah immediately.

Luqman was captured and sold as a slave. The man who bought him was a good, intelligent man. On one



## Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi Mosque

In 1775 the Algerians built a mosque over the tomb of the thirteenth century Andalusian saint Ahmed Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi who had joined the



occasion, he ordered Luqman to slaughter a sheep and to bring him the worst part of the sheep. Luqman slaughtered the sheep and brought the heart and the tongue. On receiving it his master smiled, fascinated by Luqman's choice. A few days later his master asked him again to slaughter a sheep and to bring him the best part of the sheep. Luqman slaughtered the sheep and brought the same parts the heart and the tongue. His master, filled with amazement, asked him how the heart and the tongue could both be the worst and best part. The wise Luqman said that the heart and the tongue are the sweetest parts if its owner is pure and it becomes the worst if the owner is wicked. Allah (SWT) speaks about the wisdom of Luqman in Surah Luqman (chapter 31), verse 12 to 20.







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# PALESTINE



## Masjid al-Aqsa (The farthest Mosque)

Masjid al-Aqsa, also known as Bayt Al-Maqdis, is the third holiest site in Islam and is located in the Old City of Jerusalem. While the entire site on which the Mosque is built, along with the Dome of the Rock, seventeen gates and four minarets, was itself historically known as the al-Aqsa Mosque, today a narrow definition prevails, and the wider compound is referred to as al-Haram Ash-Sharif.

Nabi Muhammad (saw) was transported by night from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to Masjid al-Aqsa. This is called Al-Israa in the Qur'an. Masjid al-Aqsa was the first qibla for Muslims until Allah directed Nabi Muhammad (saw) to turn towards Makkah when praying.

## Dome of the Rock

The masjid was built in the seventh century by Abdullah al-Malik ibn Marwan. It is believed that Nabi Muhammad's (saw) ascension to heaven, accompanied by the arch angel Jibreel (as), started from the rock at the center of the structure.

## Nabi Ebrahim (as)

Nabi Ebrahim was born in the kingdom of Babylon to a family of idolaters. His father sculptured the idols that the people of the kingdom worshipped.

As a young boy, Ebrahim rejected the senseless concept of worshipping man-made statues. He became angry towards the people, who didn't realise that the idols were made of stones and could neither harm or benefit them.

Soon a new life started for Ebrahim; his mission was to call people to the truth.

He started with the person dearest to him, his father. He asked in the softest and kindest voice "O father, why do you worship that which doesn't hear, doesn't see and cannot avail you in anything? O father, I have knowledge which you have not, so follow me. I will guide you to the straight path" His father replied angrily, "Do you reject my Gods, O Ebrahim? If you don't stop, I will stone you. Get away from me before I punish you." Ebrahim said *"Peace be on you! I will ask forgiveness of my Lord for you."*

Allah (SWT) speaks about Nabi





Ebrahim (as) in the following verses of the Quran:

Al Baqara: v124-140, v258-260	Ebrahim: v35	Al-Ankaboot: v16,v31	An-Najm: v37
Al Imraan: v33, v65-v68, v95-97	Al-Hijr: v51	Al-Ahzaab: v7	Al-Hadid: v26
Al Nisa: v54-v55, v125, v163	An-Nahl: v120-123	As-Saaffaat: v83,v102-109	Al-Mumtahana: v4
An-aam: v74-83, v161	Maryam: v46-58	Saad: v45	Al-A'laa: v19
At-Tawba: v70,v114	Al-Anbiyaa: v51-69	Ash-Shura: v13	
Hud: v69-76	Al-Hajj: v26,v43, v78	Az-Zukhurf: v26	
Yusuf: v6, v38	Ash-Shu'araa: v69	Adh-Dhaariyat: v24-31	

Verses mentioning Nabi Ishaq (as) in the Holy Quran:

Al Baqara: v133, v136, v140	Al-An'aam: v84	Ebrahim: v39	Al-Ankaboot: v27
Al-Imraan: v84	Hud: v71	Maryam: v49	As-Saaffaat: v112-v113
An-Nisaa: v163	Yusuf: v6, v38	Al-Anbiyaa: v72	Saad: v45

## Nabi Yunus (as)

Nabi Yunus (as) is mentioned a few times at various incidents in the life of Nabi Muhammad (saw).

Ten years after receiving revelation, Nabi Muhammad (saw) went to the city of Ta'if to see if the leaders would allow him to preach there instead of in Makkah. The people of Ta'if pelted him (saw) with stones and cast him (saw) out of the city. He took shelter in the garden of two members of the Quraysh tribe Utbah and Shaybah. They sent their Christian servant, Addas, to serve him some grapes for sustenance.

Nabi Muhammad (saw) asked Addas where he was from to which the servant replied Nineveh. *"The town of Nabi Yunus(as) the just, son of Amittai!"*, Nabi Muhammad (saw) said. Addas was shocked because he knew the pagan Arabs had no knowledge of Nabi Yunus (as). He then asked how Nabi Muhammad (saw) knew of this man. *"We are brothers"*, Nabi Muhammad (saw) replied. *"Nabi Yunus (as) was a Prophet of God and I, too, am a Prophet of God."*

Verses mentioning Nabi Yunus (as) in the Holy Quran:

Verses mentioning Nabi Yunus (as) in the Holy Quran:

Al-Qalam: v48 - 49	An-Nisa: v163	Al An'am: v86	As-Saffat: v139-148.
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## Maqam of Nabi Musa (as)

This location signifies the Maqam of Nabi Musa (as). It is also the name of a seven-day religious festival which was celebrated by Palestinian Muslims annually, beginning on the Friday before Good Friday in the Old

Orthodox Greek calendar. The festival centred on a collective pilgrimage from Jerusalem to what was understood to be the Maqam of Nabi Musa (as) near Jericho. This was a stopping point for people making their way to Makkah for

## Nabi Ishaq (as)

Nabi Ishaq was the son of Nabi Ebrahim (as) and his first wife, Sarah. Nabi Ebrahim is believed to have been 100 years old when he received glad tidings of a son with his wife Sarah. They had practically lost all hope of having any offspring at this advanced age when the angel came to Nabi Ebrahim (as) with the happy news of the birth of a wise son, who was to be named Ishaq and was to be a prophet of Allah (SWT). Nabi Ishaq married

Rukeya. They had two sons, Esau and Yaqub. Yaqub had two wives; Zia with whom he had many children of both genders, and Rohsie with whom he only had two sons, Yusuf and Benyamin. Yusuf and Benyamin were both good, obedient children with Yusuf too becoming a prophet of Allah (SWT). All of the great prophets, including Nabi Muhammad (saw), are descendants of Nabi Ebrahim (as).



pilgrimage. From here they would be able to see across the Jordan valley of Mount Nebo where, as suggested in the Hebrew bible, the tomb of Nabi Musa (as) is located (And Allah knows best).

### Salman Al-Farsi (ra) (Salman the Persian)

Salman (ra) was the first Persian to embrace Islam. The first 16 years of his life was devoted to studying to become a Zoroastrian priest. At the age of 19, he met a Nestorian Christian group and was so impressed with them that he left his family to join them in the pursuit of drawing closer to the truth; this was against the wishes of his father.

He travelled the entire Middle East in search of the truth. In Syria he heard of Nabi Muhammad (saw), whose coming was predicated by his last Christian teacher on his death bed. During his journey through the Arab Peninsula, he was betrayed and sold to a Jew in Medina.

After meeting Nabi Muhammad (saw) he recognized the signs that the monk had described to him and converted to Islam. Salman was, however, still a slave and Nabi Muhammad (saw) advised that he ask his master to free him. His master agreed, but with certain conditions; one of it being that Salman needed to plant 300 date trees for him. The Muslims of Medina all helped Salman to achieve this with Nabi Muhammad (saw) himself planting some date trees after the



ground had been prepared. Abu Hurairah is said to have referred to Salman as the father of two books. i.e. the Bible and the Quran. He was also the master mind behind the idea of digging the trench when the Muslims were on the verge of being attacked in Medina. This battle become known as 'The Battle of the Trench'.

### Rabia Al-Basri (Queen of the Saintly women)

She was the fourth daughter and was therefore named Rabia, meaning the fourth. She was born free in a poor respected family. Rabia's parents were so poor that there was no oil in the house to light a lamp, nor a cloth to wrap her with. Her mother asked her father to borrow some oil from the neighbour, but he had resolved to never ask for anything from anyone except the Creator. He pretended to go to the neighbours door and returned home empty handed.

One night, Nabi Muhammad (saw) appeared to him in a dream and told him *"Your newly born daughter is a favourite of the Lord, and shall lead many Muslims to the right path. You should approach the amir with a letter in which should be written this message: 'You offer durood to the Holy Prophet (saw) 100 times every night and 400 times every Thursday night. However, since you failed to observe the rule the last Thursday, as a penalty you must pay the bearer 400 dinars'."*

After the death of her father, a famine overtook Basra and Rabia parted from her sisters. History has it that while she was accompanying a caravan it fell into the hand of robbers. The chief of the robbers took Rabia captive and sold her as a slave.

Rabia's new master used to make her do hard labour after which she would pass the night in prayer. She spent most of her days observing fast. One

night her master woke in the middle of the night and heard Rabia praying. She was supplicating, saying *"Lord! You know well that my keen desire is to carry out Your commandments and to serve Thee with all my heart, O light of my eyes. If I were free I would pass the whole day and night in prayers. But what should I do when you have made me a slave of a human being?"* The next morning her master told her that he was willing to free her from her bondage and that he would serve her instead. She, however, decided to leave to worship Allah.

One of Rabia Al-Basri famous quotes was: *"O God! If I worship you for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell and if I worship you in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise, but if I worship you for your own sake/pleasure deny me not your everlasting beauty."*





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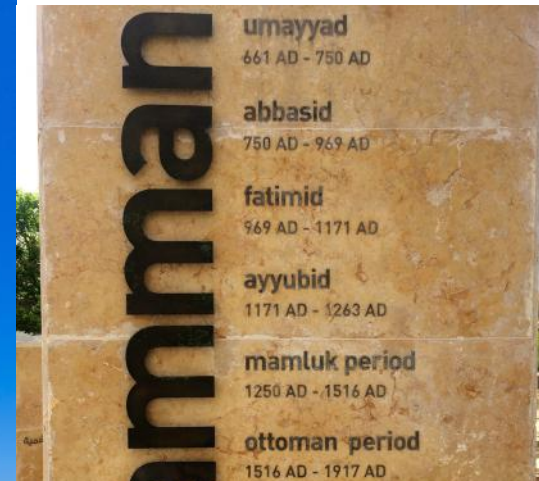
# JORDAN



## Amman

Amman is both the modern and ancient capital of Jordan. In fact, Amman is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Originally, spread over seven hills, Amman now covers nineteen hills.

Towering above Amman is the Citadel where excavations revealed remains from the Bronze age through the Arab Islamic age. On this hill, you will discover the ruins of the Temple of Hercules, an Umayyad Palace dating back to AD 720 and a Byzantine Church from the 6th century. At the foot of the Citadel, you will find a well preserved 6 000 seater Roman Theatre.



## al-Husseini Masjid

The Ottoman styled Masjid was rebuilt by His Majesty the Late King Abdullah bin al-Hussein in 1924.

## King Abdullah Masjid

This beautiful Masjid was built in memory of His Majesty the Late Majesty King Abdullah bin al-Hussein and was completed in 1990. It is often referred to as the Blue Dome Masjid because of its sky blue exterior.

## Abdul Rahman bin Awf Al Zuhri (ra)

This esteemed companion is one of the 'Blessed Ten' to whom Nabi Muhammad (saw) promised paradise in their lifetime. He was of the muhajireen who migrated to Medina. He took part in all the major battles and campaigns in the early days of Islam, including the Battle of Uhud, Al Khandaq, the conquest of Makkah, Hunayn and Badr where he was wounded. He was a signatory on behalf of the Muslims at the Treaty of Hdaybiyah where a Compromise between Nabi Muhammad (saw) and the Makkah leaders were made in which Makkah gave political and religious recognition to the growing community of Muslims). He was also one of the signatories at the conquest of Jerusalem.

Abdul Rahman bin Awf (ra) was a very successful business man who shared his wealth. Once he freed thirty slaves, on another occasion he gave a caravan of seven hundred camels loaded with food to charity and upon his death he made a charitable will of one thousand horses and fifty thousand dinars.

## Cave of the seven sleepers

This historical landmark reminds us of the greatness of Allah (SWT) and how Allah (SWT) is able to do anything without the help of any force.

A group of youths took refuge in this cave in order to escape the tyranny and idolatry of the local community at the time. To preserve them, Allah (SWT) put them to sleep and revived them 309 lunar years later. When they awoke from their long slumber they thought they had only been asleep for a day or part of a day. Christianity was wide spread then and when they were discovered, Allah (SWT) put them to rest forever in the cave.

The Story of the Companions of the Cave is referred to in Surah 18 (v9-26) of the Quran.

## Mount Nebo

Mount Nebo is considered as one of the most revered sites in Jordan. From this vantage point you have a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, a panoramic view of the mountains and the crowning heights of Jerusalem are visible in the distance.

On the summit of Mount Nebo is where Nabi Musa (as) looked over the Jordan River towards Palestine. Mount Nebo is generally acknowledged as the final resting place of Nabi Musa's (as) after leading his people from Egypt across the Sinai Desert towards the Promised Land. There is no, however, no actual tomb to mark the exact spot. The life and mission of Nabi Musa (as) is described in detail in the Quran.



Nabi Musa (as) is in fact the most mentioned prophet in the Quran.

## The Battle of Mu'ta

One of the most significant and fiercest battle fought by the companions during Nabi Muhammad (saw) lifetime was the battle of Mu'ta in AD 629. This battle, the first outside the Arabian Peninsula, was against a combined Byzantine/Ghassanid army and claimed the lives of some of his (saw) closest companions.



## Zaid bin Harithah (ra)

Nabi Muhammad (saw) adopted son, the esteemed companion Zaid bin Harithah (ra), led the army during the Battle of Mu'ta. Zaid (ra) fought in a matchless spirit of bravery until he was fatally stabbed. He is the only companion mentioned in the Holy Quran by name: *"Then when Zaid had dissolved (his marriage) with her, We joined her in marriage to thee, in order that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the Believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved (their marriage) with them. And Allah's command must be fulfilled."* (S33: v37)

## Jafar bin Abi Talib (ra)

Jafar (ra), the cousin of Nabi Muhammad (saw), was the deputy commander of the army that marched to the Battle of Mu'ta. He took the banner after the martyrdom of Zaid (ra). He is often known as 'The Flying Jafar' because he lost his hands during the battle and continued to hold the banner. Jafar (ra) is known to be similar to Nabi Muhammad (saw), both in features and in character. He was renowned for his kindness towards the needy and for narrating hadith directly from Nabi Muhammad (saw).

Jafar (ra) was given the honour of heading the group that migrated to Abyssinia. The non-believers sent a delegation headed by Amr bin Al-As to bring the Muslims back to Makkah. A debate took place in the presence

of the King of Abyssinia where Jafar (ra) proved to be indomitable and unflinching in elaborating the Muslim view point on the opinion of Jesus (PBUH) and his mother Mary. The king of Abyssinia was content with his answer and allowed the Muslims to stay.

## Abdullah bin Ruwahah

This esteemed companion took charge of the army after Zaid (ra) and Jafar (ra) was martyred. Abdullah was well known amongst the companions for his piety, obedience and patience. Furthermore, he was a loyal and dedicated soldier. He was a famous poet of his time and became Nabi Muhammad (saw) poet.

Abdullah (ra) before being martyred in the Battle of Mu'ta recited the following as his army faced an overwhelming number of Byzantine and Ghassanid Arab troops: *"O my soul! If you are not killed, you are bounded to die anyway. This is the fate of death overtaking you. What you have wished for, you have been granted. If you do what they (Zaid (ra) and Jafar (ra)) have done, then you will be rightly guided."*

## Nabi Nuh (as)

Nabi Nuh (as) was sent as a prophet to his people after they started worshipping idols. He was the first prophet sent solely for the purpose of inviting people to the oneness of Allah. It is said that Nabi Nuh (as) was 50 years old when he became a prophet. His story, like many of



the other prophets, gives us a true understanding of patience, dedication and commitment.

## Nabi Lut (as)

Nabi Lut (as) immigrated with his uncle Nabi Ebrahim (as) from Ur to Iraq. He went to live in a region just south of the Dead Sea. He fled the destruction of his village, Sodom, which Allah (SWT) destroyed due to the immoral

practices of its inhabitants, by taking refuge in a cave with his daughters. It is said that Allah (SWT) turned his wife in a pillar of salt for disobeying Allah's (SWT) command not to look back at Sodom as it burnt.

Verses in the Quran where Nabi Nuh (as) is mentioned:

Al Imraan: v33	Yunus: v71	Maryam: v58	Ash Shu'raa: v105-v116	Al Ghaafir: v5-v31	Al Qamar: v9
An Nisa: v163	Hud: v25-48	Al Anbiyaa: v76	Al Ankaboot: v14	Ash Shura: v13	Al Hadid: v26
Al Anaam: v84	Hud: v89	Al Hajj: v42	Al Ahzaab: v7	Qaaf: v12	At Tahrim: v10
Al Araaf: v59-69	Ebrahim: v9	Al Mumi- noon: v23	As Saaffaat: v75-v79	Adh Dhaari- yat: v46	Nuh: v1, v21-v26
At Tawba: v70	Al Israa: v3-v17	Al Furqaan: v37	Saad: v12	An Najm: v52	

## Abu Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah (ra)

Abu Ubaydah (ra) was one of 'The Blessed' ten given the glad tidings of paradise by Nabi Muhammad (saw) during their lifetime. This esteemed companion was a relative of Nabi Muhammad (saw) and one of the first converts to Islam. He was amongst the early Muslims that fled to Abyssinia. Abu Ubaydah (ra) participated in all major events in the early years of Islam. He was the supreme commander of the army that conquered the Greater Syria.

Nabi Muhammad (saw) called him 'the trustee of the nation' because of the knowledge he acquired. He was amongst the candidates to become Caliph after the death of Nabi Muhammad (saw). He believed Abu Bakr (ra) was to lead the Muslims and become Caliph as Nabi Muhammad (saw) asked Abu Bakr (ra) to lead the salaah upon his death. He died from a plaque that had spread through the Greater Syria at the age of 58 years.

## Mu'aath bin Jabaal (ra)

The handsome, generous and esteemed companion Mu'aath (ra) entered into Islam at the age of 18. He was one of six given the honourable opportunity of compiling the Quran during the life of Nabi Muhammad (saw). Nabi Muhammad (saw) said Mu'aath (ra) was the most knowledgeable on what is allowed and what is prohibited in Islam and that Mu'aath (ra) would be at the forefront of all scholars on the day of Judgement. Before accompanying Abu Ubeida (ra) on his conquests and later succeeding him, Nabi Muhammad (saw) sent Mu'aath (ra) as a counsellor to the people of Yemen. He also took part in the Aqaba Allegiance convention between Nabi Muhammad (saw) and his supporters from Medina. He died having spent his short life teaching the deen and the Quran at the age 38.

## Shurahbil bin Hasanah (ra)

This esteemed companion was amongst the early Muslims who fled to Abyssinia. He was reputed for his strong faith, intelligence, bravery and successful administration. He actively participated in the Battle of Yarmouk and the conquest of Jerusalem. When the Caliph Abu Bakr (ra) sent the Muslims to Greater Syria, he was in command of the army assigned to the conquest of Jordan. Later, the Caliph Umar bin Al Khattaab (ra) appointed him as the governor of a province in the Greater Syria, where he distinguished himself for his fair dealings with his subordinates. He died from the plaque on the same day as the esteemed companion Abu Ubeida (ra).

## Amir bin Abi Waqqas (ra)

This esteemed companion was the maternal cousin of Nabi Muhammad (saw) and the eleventh man to convert to Islam. He was devoted to his faith. His mother Himnah, daughter of Abi Sufyaan, swore to stay out in the burning sun until he renounced the religion of Islam.

He migrated to Abyssinia and fought in the Battle of Uhud and was later entrusted with carrying the messages from the commanders of the Muslim army to the Caliph in Medina. He was the deputy of the esteemed companion Abu Ubeida (ra) in his governorship of the military district of Syria.



## Derar bin Al-Azwar (ra)

This esteemed companion was a poet and fierce warrior who loved combat. He took part in the conquest of the Greater Syria along with his distinguished sister, Khawlah bint Al-Azwar. He too fell victim to the Great Plaque in 18 A.H.



## Nabi Shu'aib (as)

Within a modern masjid in Wadi Shu'aib (as) lies the shrine of Nabi Shu'aib (as), the Midianite father in law of Nabi Musa (as) and with whom Nabi Musa (as) took refuge after he fled from Egypt. He preached to his people regularly about monotheism and abandoning their corrupt practices such as under weighing and under measuring the commodities they sold.

Nabi Shu'aib (as) is mentioned in the following verses of the Quran:

Al-Araf: v85 - 93	Hud: v84 -95	Al Hijr: v78 -79	Ash-Shuara: v176 -190	Al-Ankaboot: v36 -37
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## Petra

The unique Nabataean (Thamud) city of Petra is Jordan's greatest treasure and was declared one of the World's Wonders in 2007. The Thamud or Nabataeans were known for hewing their homes into mountains. Petra and Mada'in Saleh are the ancient ruins of this civilization.

Mada'in Saleh is in Saudi Arabia and is known in the European literature as Hegra derived from Al-Hijr. Petra was the capital of the Thamud Kingdom. The people of Thamud, who were from Arab origin, became rich by their

monopoly on the trade of incense and spice. Nabi Salih (as) was sent to the Thamud. The Holy Quran says *"The Thamud rejected the messengers. When their brother Salih said to them: will you not be righteous! I am sent to you as a trusty Messenger."* (S26: v142-144)

The Thamud were destroyed by an earthquake because of their arrogance and mischief. Allah has saved these ruins for us so that we can draw lessons from them.



More verses in the Quran mentioning the story of the Thamud:

Al-Araf: v74-77	29: v42-45	7: v101-102	Al-Ankaboot: v38-39
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## Expedition of Tabuk

This was a military expedition initiated by Nabi Muhammad (saw) in 8 A.H. (AD 630). Following the rumours of a Byzantine invasion, Nabi Muhammad (saw) lead an army of 30 000 to Tabuk, north of Medina. After arriving at Tabuk and camping there, the Muslim army prepared to face the Byzantine invasion. The Muslims spent 20 days at Tabuk, scouting the area, making alliances with local chiefs, and with no sign of the Byzantine army, Nabi Muhammad (saw) decided to return to Medina.

## The Battle of Khaybar

This battle was fought in 6 A.H. (628 AD) between the Muslims and the Jews living in the oasis of Khaybar, located north of Medina. The Jewish community of Northern Arabia was one of the largest Ancient Jewish communities in the history of the Jewish people. For almost a 1 000 years Jews lived in the area of Teyma, Khaybar and Yathrib (later know as Medina).

The Muslim army ranged from ±1400 – 1800 men and ±100 – 200 horses, which was miniscule when compared to Jewish army of 10 000 men. The Muslim contingent was small; it gave them an advantage, allowing them to move swiftly and arrive at the city in only 3 days catching the Jews by surprise. As a result, the Jews failed to mount a centrally organized defence, leaving each family to fend for themselves.

The following was reported by a companion of Nabi Muhammad (saw): *"We met the workers of Khaybar coming out in the morning with their spades and baskets. When they saw Nabi Muhammad (saw) and the army they cried out, "Muhammad with his force", and turned tail and fled. Nabi Muhammad (saw) said "Allahu Akbar" Khaybar is destroyed. When we arrive in a people's area it is bad morning for those who have been warned."*

The besieged Jews managed to get organised and transferred people and their treasures from one fortress to another as needed to make their resistance more effective. The Jews of Khaybar finally surrendered after seeing no way out and were allowed to live in the area on the condition that they would give one-half of their produce to the Muslims. Jews continued to live in the area for several years until they were expelled by the Caliph Umar bin Khattab (ra).





## Notes

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## Images





## **Ebrahim Diedericks**

Ebrahim is a family man first; husband to Lamiz who he met and married at the age of 16, father to three beautiful children, Azraa, Azaad and Arfa.

Ebrahim grew up with his father's parents, Ebrahim and Rugaya Diedericks, in Bo Kaap. The formative years spent with his grandparents instilled a strong Islamic ethos in him. Ebrahim's grandmother passed away when he was just 11 years old. Her death created a void in his life as they had shared an exceptionally close bond. After his grandmother's death, Ebrahim moved back in with his parents, Ismail and Asma. Ebrahim developed a love for travelling, more specifically in the Middle East, while undertaking the beautiful journey of Haj with his wife in 2010. He has devoted many years to researching and attaining in-depth knowledge of the history of the Middle East since then. He uses this extensive knowledge during the many Middle East tours he has been on since

2010. Ebrahim has also used this knowledge in drafting this book, which will provide the traveller with important details of many of the ziyaraat places the traveller might visit in the Middle East. This book represents but a small glimpse into the history of the majestic Middle East. It will, however, serve as a beautiful reminder of memorable travels that were undertaken.

## **Acknowledgments:**

Ebrahim honours his parents for their continuous support and for being the pillar of strength in his life. He praises his wife for her unconditional love and compassion that inspires him to aspire to greater heights in all aspects of his life. He credits his teacher and life coach, Rukeya Akoojee, for her insight and the knowledge she so readily imparts on him. Ebrahim would further like to extend his appreciation to Madenia Cozyn and his business partner, travel buddy and friend, Zubeir Jacobs, for their time and effort spent on making this book a reality.

Ebrahim beseeches the reader to make duah for his grandparents; that Allah (SWT) place light in their kabr, that He (SWT) grant them the loftiest of abodes in Jannatul Fierdous; for his parents, that Allah (SWT) grant them good health, increase their love for each other and increase their love of and closeness to Allah (SWT); and for the Ummah at large, that Allah (SWT) restores the unity amongst all Muslims. Ameen.