

SACRED FOOTSTEPS

MASJID AL AQSA AND THE DEEP-ROOTED
EMOTIONAL BOND WITH PALESTINE



I am so pleased that you will join this incredible journey to explore the awe-inspiring Masjid Al Qibly and The Dome of the Rock, which form part of the Masjid Al Aqsa area. Discover the significance of this sacred site in this book.



A DAZZLING TALE OF FAITH AND COURAGE

Al Masjid Al Aqsa glimmers as a true symbol of Islamic history, blending together the threads of faith, solidarity, and endurance. Our journey will take us through ages past, the significance of the prophets to the monumental events of 1917.



THE TIMELESS AL MASJID AL AQSA

Al Masjid Al Aqsa (**Bayt al Maqdis**) has a long and intriguing history, filled with both victories and challenges that have spanned centuries. However, the story of this amazing mosque does not end there. It is situated in the heart of **Al Quds** (The Holy Land or Purity), Jerusalem.

Regardless of age, the legends of Al Masjid Al Aqsa reveal the essence of Islam and the values of unity and peace. So, keep this enchanting place and its rich history in mind, and help preserve its beauty.

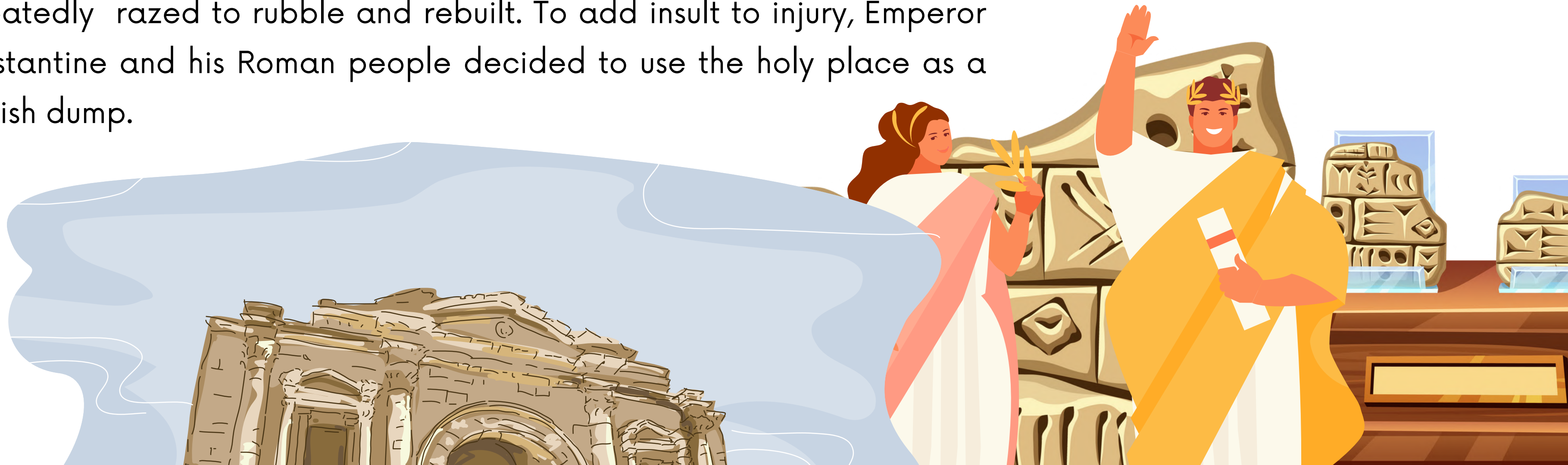


A FLASHBACK IN TIME:

THE BABYLONIANS, PERSIANS, AND ROMANS

Al Masjid Al Aqsa has had a bumpy ride through history. When the Babylonians (601 BCE) took over Jerusalem, they didn't take care of it. Thankfully, the Persians came to the rescue and restored it to its former glory.

Sadly, this was just the beginning of the mosque's troubles. It was repeatedly razed to rubble and rebuilt. To add insult to injury, Emperor Constantine and his Roman people decided to use the holy place as a rubbish dump.



THE PROPHETS

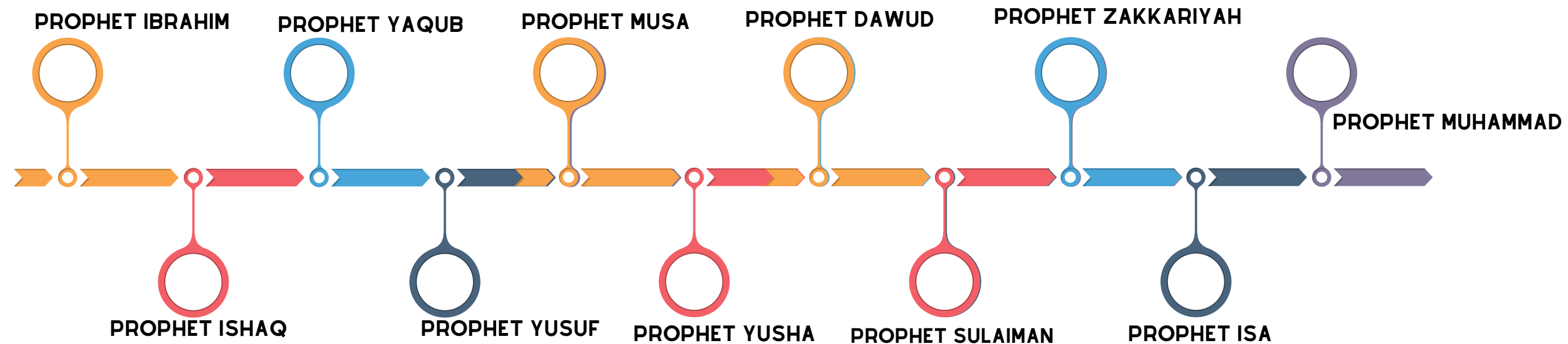


EXPLORING THE TIMELINE OF PROPHETS IN PALESTINE

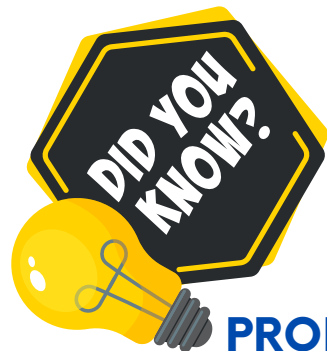
Say (O Muslims),

"We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qub (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and 'Īsa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (Muslim)."

(2:136)



PEACE BE UPON THEM ALL



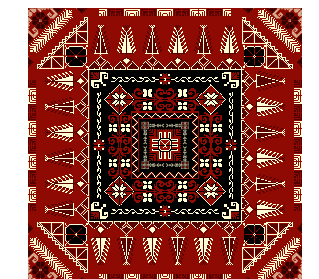
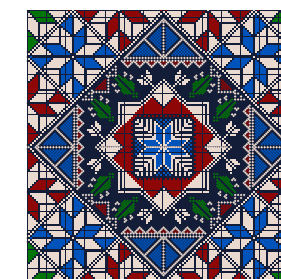
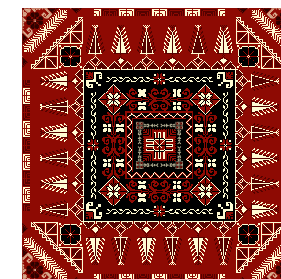
PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) IS FROM THE LINEAGE OF PROPHET ABRAHAM THROUGH PROPHET ISMAAIL (PEACE BE UPON THEM).



THE NATIVE PEOPLE

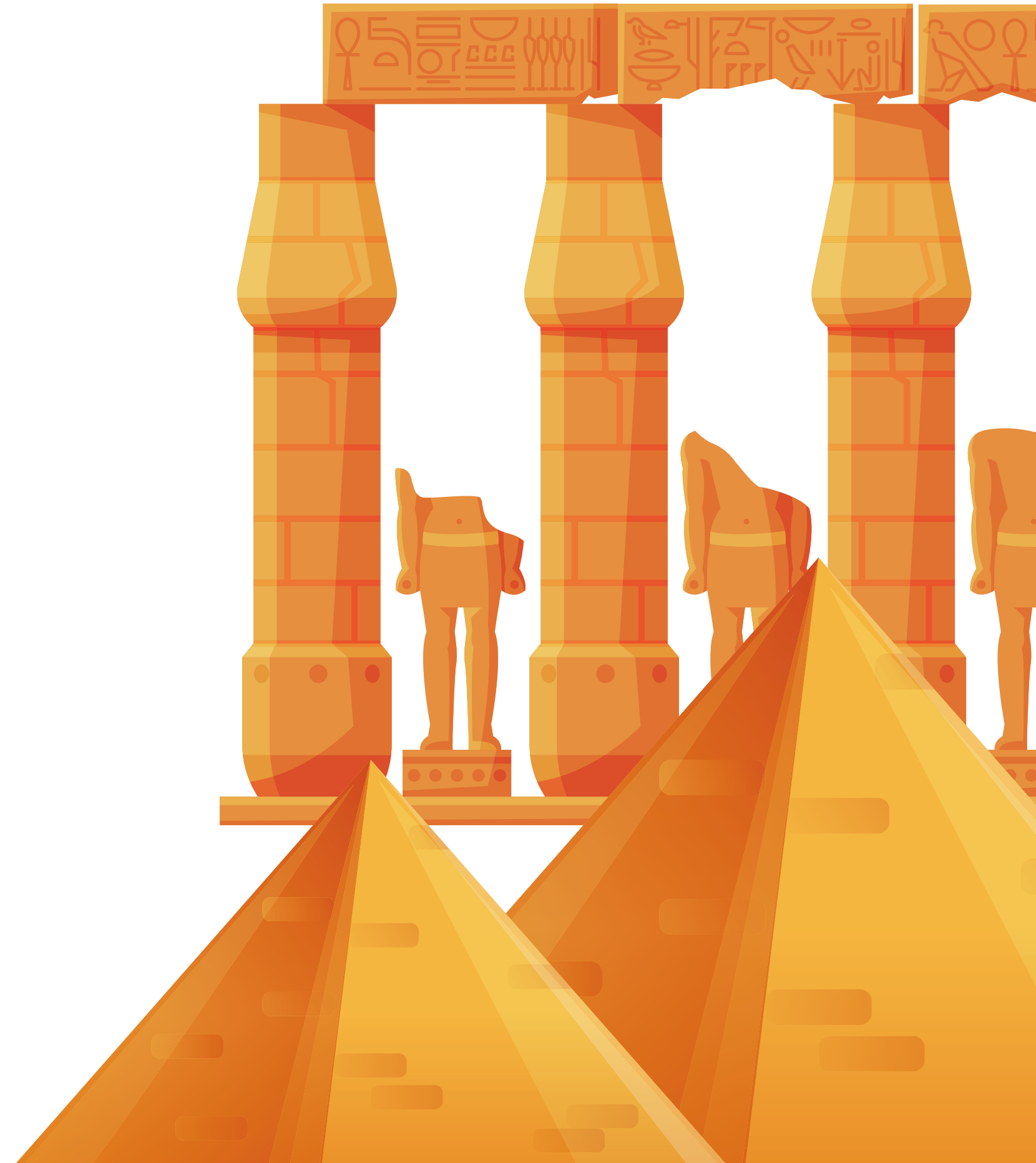
*Then, when they came in before Yusuf, he took his parents to himself and said: "Enter Egypt, if Allah wills, in security."
(12:99)*

Long ago, it was a beloved place for Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), his son Prophet Ishaq (peace be upon him), and his grandson Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him). When Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) rose to power in Egypt, he invited his family to join him and escape poverty some say, in Palestine. This led to a fascinating journey of some people, including Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him), settling in Egypt. During this time, care for Al Masjid Al Aqsa was entrusted to the **Palestinians, the native people of the land.**



CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (BANI ISRAEL)

Take Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) for example, he spent many years in Palestine, with his sons: Prophet Ishaq and grandson Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him). Yaqub is also referred to as Israel, and he had 12 sons, including Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him). But, life wasn't all that easy as Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) ended up in Egypt, along with his family. As part of destiny and Gods' greater plan, the Children of Israel moved to Egypt but later ended up as slaves. Until as per Allah's wise plan, He sent Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) to save the day! The miracle of parting of the Red Sea was a way out for them and off they went to the Sinai desert.



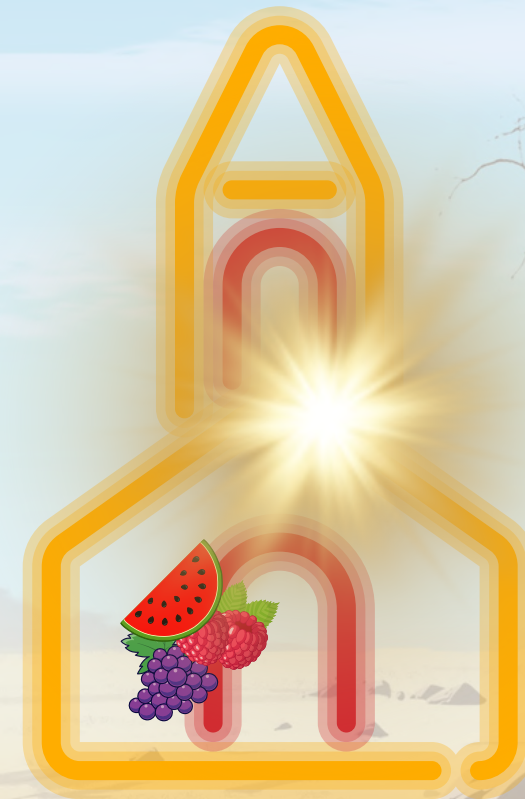
THE PLIGHT OF THE PROPHETS

Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) led his people through the Sinai desert for 40 years with the hope of reaching the Holy Land. However, he passed away before that could happen. Prophet Yusha (peace be upon him) took over Musa's mission and conquered the land with a devoted army. Later on, Prophet Dawud (peace be upon him) became the king and prophet of Palestine, followed by Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon him). During his reign, Masjid Al Aqsa fell into disrepair, but Sulaiman ordered it to be rebuilt. The Holy Land also saw the presence of other prophets such as Zakariyyah, Yahya (John), Prophet Isa and his beloved mother Maryam. Truly, this is a land that has been graced by the footsteps of so many prophets!



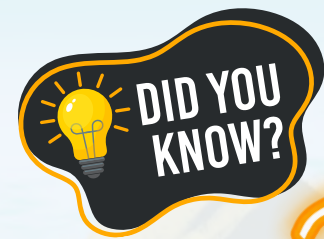


*“So her Lord (Allah) accepted her with goodly acceptance.
He made her grow in a good manner and put her
under the care of Zakariya. Every time he entered al-mihrab (prayer
chamber) to (visit) her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said:
"O Maryam! From where have you got this?" She said, "This is from Allah."
Verily, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit.” (3:37)*



MARYAM AND PROPHET ISA (JESUS) ARE FROM PALESTINE

Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (peace be upon them), is a towering figure in the Islamic faith. As Muslims, we hold her in high esteem, admiring her unwavering faith, her struggles, and the noble life she led. The Quran pays special tribute to both mother and son, referring to Maryam as a remarkable woman in Islam. Her unwavering devotion and courage continue to inspire humanity, even in the face of intense persecution - from the miraculous birth of baby Isa to the cruel accusations that sought to undermine her righteousness.



MARYAM GAVE BIRTH TO PROPHET ISA (PEACE BE UPON HIM) BENEATH THE SHADE OF A DATE PALM TREE. THE SWEET, JUICY DATES GAVE HER THE ENERGY SHE NEEDED TO GET THROUGH THE BIG MOMENT. TALK ABOUT INSPIRING AND INDEPENDENT!

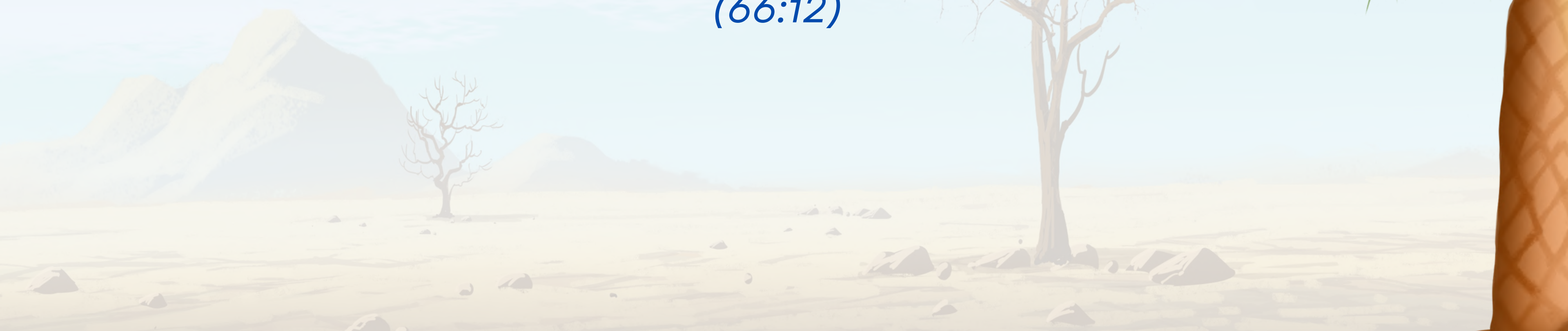




MARYAM

“There is also the example of Mary, the daughter of Imrân, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her womb through Our angel Gabriel. She testified to the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was one of the sincerely devout.”

(66:12)



THE PLIGHT OF THE PROPHETS

Although we are well-versed in the story of **Prophet Isa**, it's crucial to recognise that other prophets have experienced comparable challenges. During Prophet Isa's lifetime, many people didn't believe in him and plotted to kill him. Nevertheless, Allah intervened and saved him, with the assurance that he would eventually come back to the earth. All of this happened in Palestine.





And they (disbelievers) plotted to kill Isa, and Allah plotted too.

And Allah is the Best of those who plot.

And (remember) when Allah said: "Isa! I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you [of the forged statement that Isa is Allah's son] of those who disbelieve, and I will make those who follow you till the Day of Resurrection. Then you will return to Me and I will judge between you in the matters in which you used to dispute."

(3: 54,55)



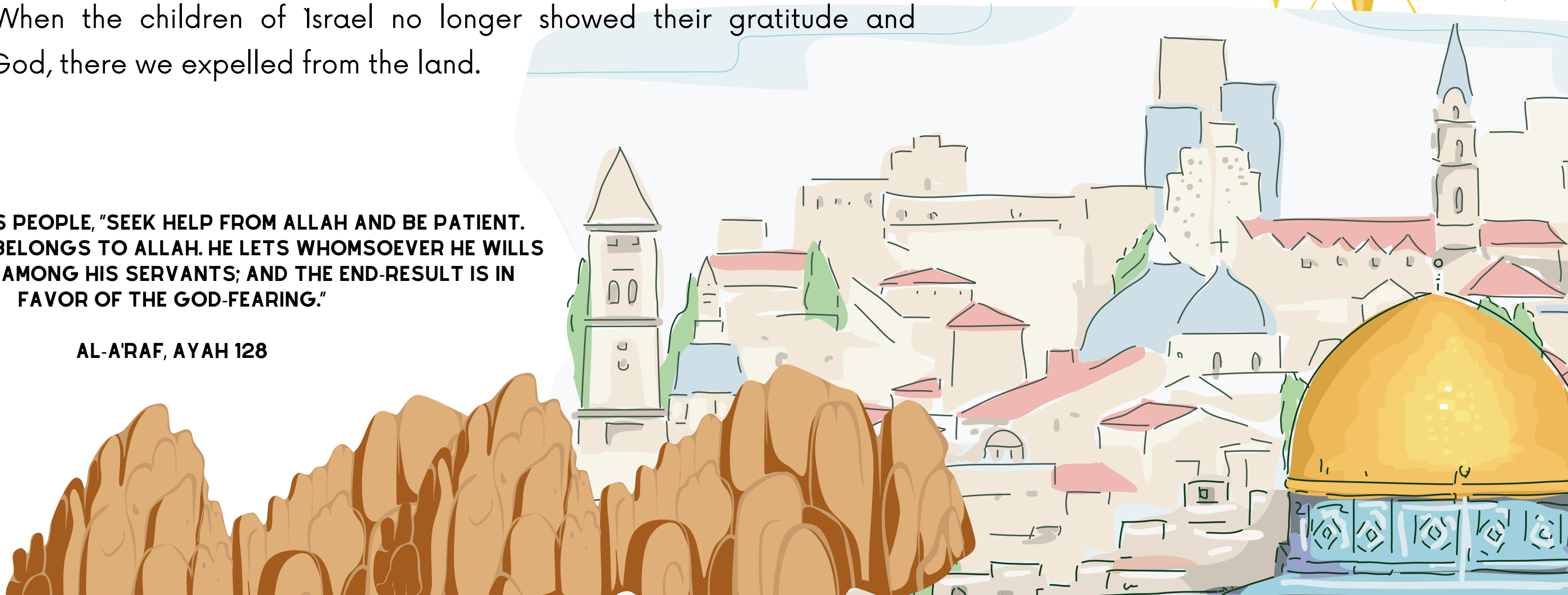
THE PROMISED LAND.

Muslims recognise that the Children of Israel were special and God showered them with blessings, when they were obedient. However, the Quran emphasises the importance of following God's commandments rather than staking a claim on a particular piece of land. The Quran cherishes the uniqueness of people and their homelands, promoting harmony among all. In the Quran, the Holy Land is the one where devoted followers of Allah wholeheartedly give themselves to Him in His Obedience. When the children of Israel no longer showed their gratitude and obedience to God, they were expelled from the land.



MŪSĀ SAID TO HIS PEOPLE, "SEEK HELP FROM ALLAH AND BE PATIENT. SURELY, THE LAND BELONGS TO ALLAH. HE LETS WHOMSOEVER HE WILLS INHERIT IT FROM AMONG HIS SERVANTS; AND THE END-RESULT IS IN FAVOR OF THE GOD-FEARING."

AL-A'RAF, AYAH 128



A ONE-OF-A-KIND JOURNEY



THE NIGHT JOURNEY

In the sacred city of Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had the most remarkable experience. One night, something extraordinary happened that would go down in history, known as the Night Journey.

As the stars shone brightly above, Angel Gabriel visited Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), accompanied by a magical creature named Buraq, who could fly at an astonishing speed, they embarked on a magnificent journey.

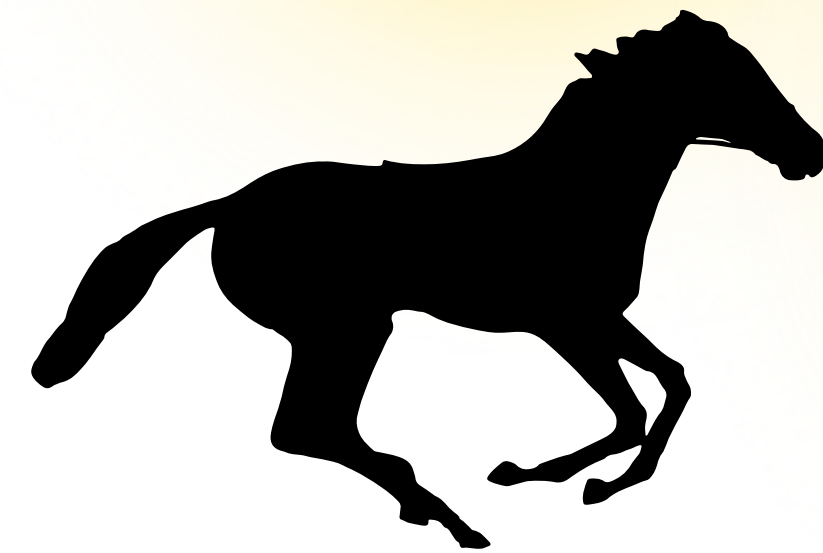


...I was then brought a white beast which is called al-Buraq, bigger than a donkey and smaller than a mule. Its stride was as long as the eye could reach. I was mounted on it, and then we went forth till we reached the lowest heaven... (Muslim)

THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION (MIRAJ AL ISRA)

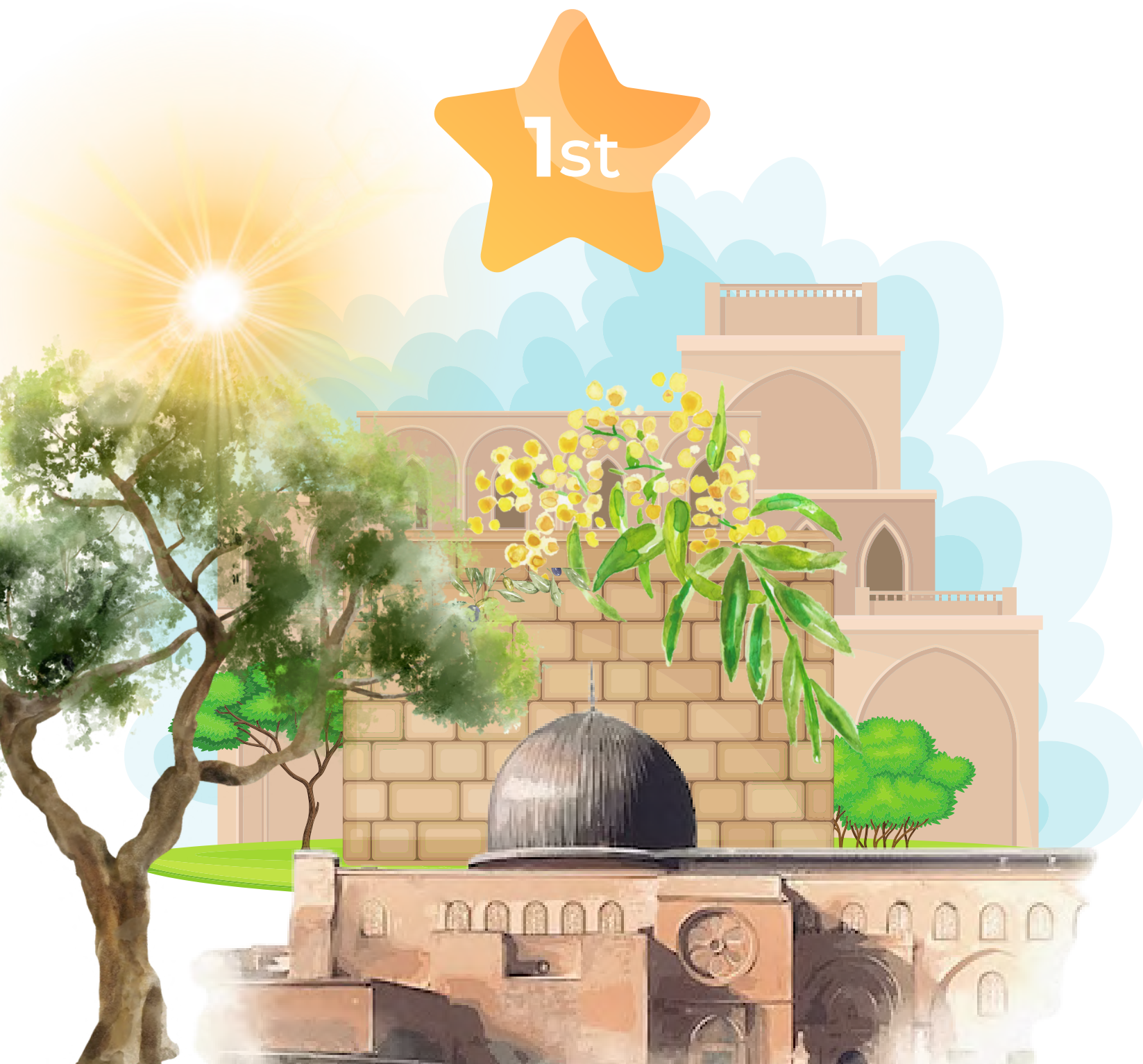
This was an incredible journey to Al Masjid Al Aqsa! This sacred site was not just any old spot, it held an extraordinary place in the Prophet's heart (peace be upon him) and was revered by other holy prophets too.

Before the second year of Hijra, he even faced this mosque during prayers. (Qibla) But, hold tight, because this really happened during the Isra and Mi'raj night journey. Riding atop a white beast named Buraq, the Prophet (peace be upon him) led a prayer session with all the previous prophets at Al Masjid Al Aqsa before soaring to the heavens. This epic journey was so extraordinary that God's divine signs forever commemorated it in the Quran.



THE FIRST DIRECTION FOR PRAYER (QIBLA)

Al Masjid Al Aqsa was the very first direction Muslims faced when praying. It was built 40 years after Al Masjid Al Haram in Makkah. Some say the wise Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), while others believe it was the legendary Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). This special mosque has been rebuilt, renovated, and expanded many times throughout history.



40 YEARS BETWEEN

Abu Dhar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

*I said, "O Allah's Messenger! Which mosque was first built on the surface of the earth?" He said, "Masjid al-Haram." I said, "Which was built next?" He replied "The mosque of Al-Aqsa." I said, "What was the period of construction between the two?" He said, "Forty years." He added, "Wherever (you may be, and) the prayer time becomes due, perform the prayer there, for this is the best thing to do. (offer the prayers on time).
(Bukhari and Muslim)*



THREE SPECIAL MOSQUES TO VISIT!

This masjid has a special place in Muslim hearts, being the second mosque built 40 years after the Kabah.

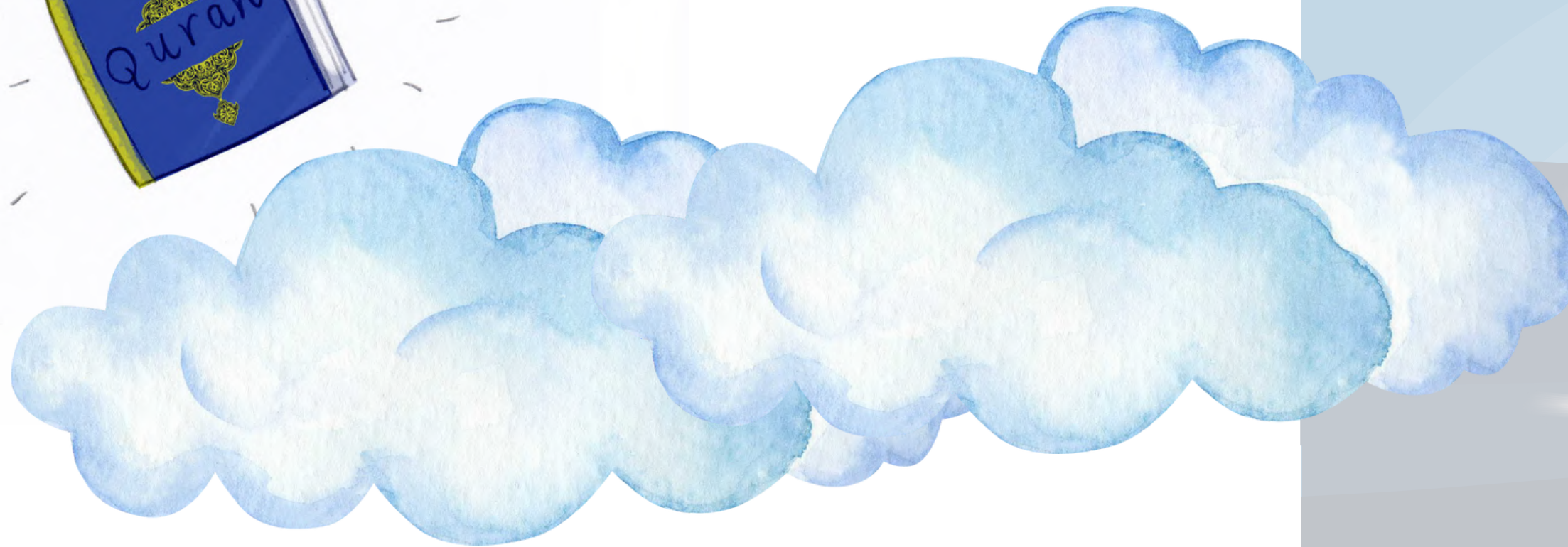
It's even mentioned in the Quran, with Allah Himself calling it "**Blessed**" and "**Holy**".

According to Islamic teachings, visiting three special mosques is recommended for every believer: Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah, Al Masjid An-Nabawi in Madinah, and Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Prayers in these special spots are mega-powerful, with worshippers getting much more times the reward of Salah performed elsewhere!



“Glorified be He [Allah] Who did take His servant for a journey by night from Al Masjid Al Haram to Al Masjid Al Aqsa, whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of our Signs. Verily He is the All Hearing, All Seeing.”

(17:1)



THE PUREST PRAY TOGETHER

Their first stop was in far-off Jerusalem. Imagine flying on a winged horse through the night sky! Once they arrived, something remarkable occurred. The Prophet (peace be upon him) led a prayer with other prophets from the past. It was like a reunion of the beautiful prophets (peace be upon them) all praying in peace and harmony together. This symbolises how all the prophets brought one key message to worship in unity the One God. It also shows us how Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the leader of the Prophets, best in character in example for mankind.

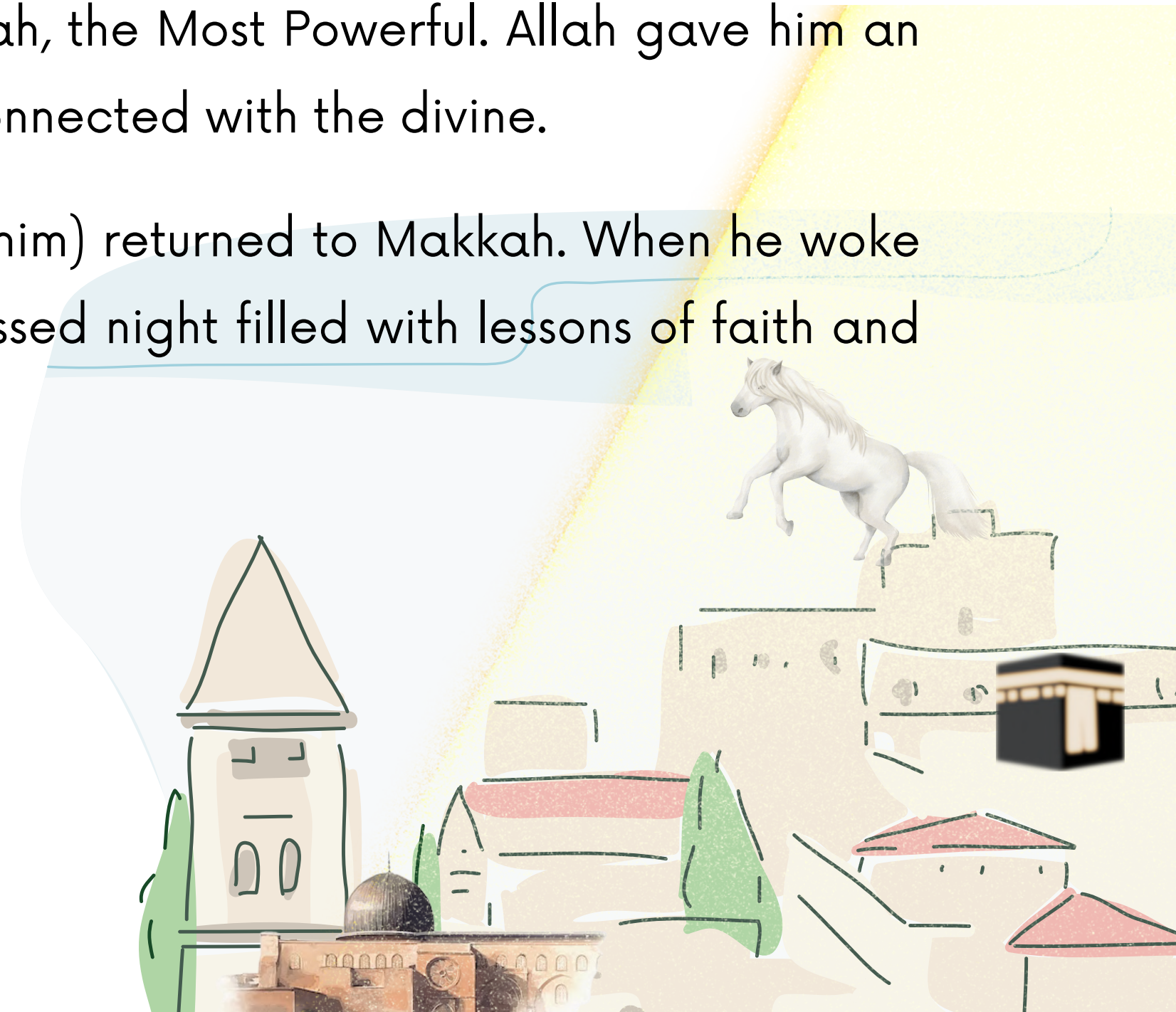
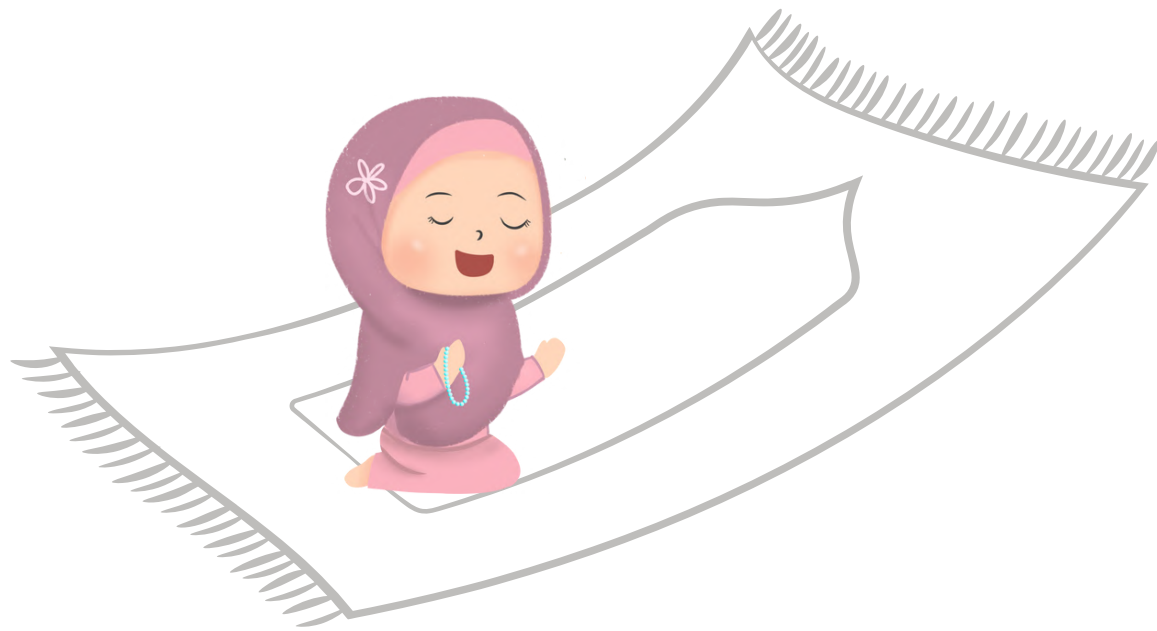


THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE HEAVENS

But the spiritual adventure didn't end there. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Gabriel continued their journey through the heavens. They visited different levels, meeting wonderful prophets like Adam, Musa, and Isa (peace be upon them all) Each prophet welcomed him with kindness and shared wisdom.

In the heavens, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) met Allah, the Most Powerful. Allah gave him an important gift—the gift of five daily prayers for everyone to stay connected with the divine.

After this incredible journey, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) returned to Makkah. When he woke up the next morning, it felt like a dream, but it was a **real** and blessed night filled with lessons of faith and love.



THE MAJESTIC PRAYER IS PRESCRIBED

Do you know how exclusive it is to have the divine privilege of praying 5 times a day? It's like a direct line connecting us to Allah Almighty, and it was gifted to us on a mind-blowing occasion, like no other. The special journey to Jerusalem was where this started.

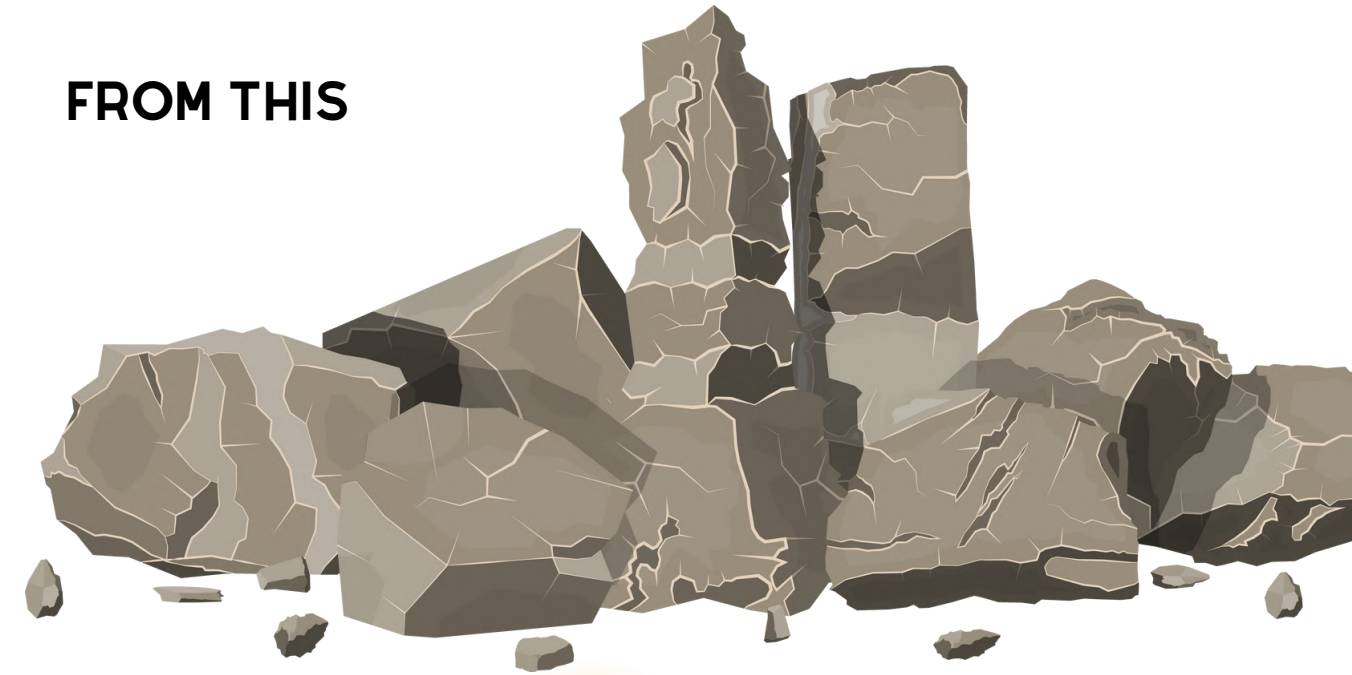


UMAR IBN AL KHATTAB - A LEGEND!

When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) passed, Umar Ibn Al Khattab was ready to step up and lead the way. In 637/638 AD, Umar and his crew of 40,000 sahaba answered the call to Jerusalem by the Christian leader. But instead of wielding weapons, they brought with them open hearts and minds, protecting lives, resources, and sacred sites.

Yet, when they arrived at the holy grounds, they were met with a **heap of rubble** left by the Romans. Well, Umar didn't shy away from a challenge! He rolled up his sleeves and got to work, clearing the debris. Soon, the reconstruction of Al Masjid Al Aqsa was underway, and both Jews and Christians welcomed the Muslims with open arms. There wasn't any war, because the people of Jerusalem surrendered to them. Umar (may God be pleased with him) also was given the key to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to this day it is held in custody of a Muslim family. he would protect the rights of Christians.

FROM THIS



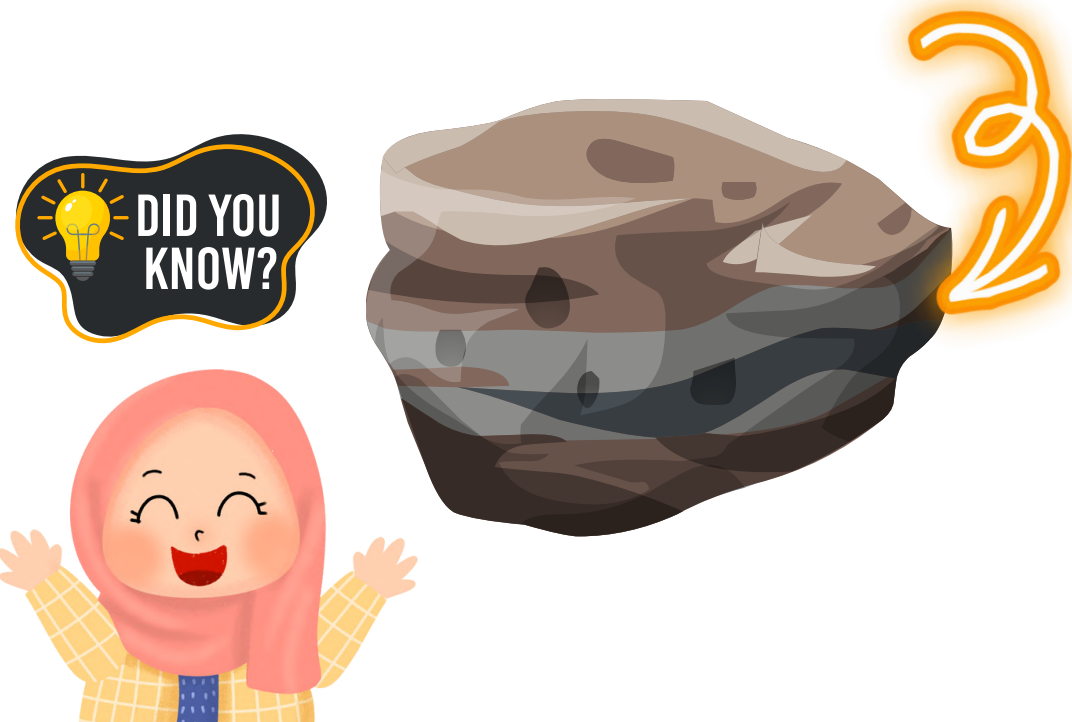
TO THIS



ABDUL MALIK BIN MARWAN

Fast forward to 691/692 AD, when Abdul Malik bin Marwan had a bright idea - he wanted to build the Dome of the Rock atop the holy rock where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had ascended to the heavens. Regardless of its significance, the rock became an essential part of Al Masjid Al Aqsa area and still stands as a symbol of faith and hope to this day.

The special rock is located inside the Dome of the Rock, where the accession occurred.



HISTORY TAKES A TURN

History took a turn for the worse when the Crusaders took over Al Masjid Al Aqsa in 1099 AD. The aftermath was a horror show as thousands of people sought safety within the walls of this holy sanctuary. The Crusaders transformed the blessed Masjid into a lavish palace, which lasted for 88 long years of Muslim absence.

But, all was not lost, as the hero of our story stepped in with a cape and a plan in 1187. Our hero, **Salahuddin Ayyubi**, was a force to be reckoned with. Like a modern-day Umar Ibn Al Khattab, he spared all innocent civilians and reclaimed Al Masjid Al Aqsa.



THE HUB OF FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

For eight centuries, Muslims ruled over Jerusalem and Al Masjid Al Aqsa, creating a time of peace, justice, and prosperity. Scholars from all over the world came to learn, and People of the Book found safety and respect.



1917



OTTOMAN EMPIRE UP UNTIL 1918

Let's take a trip down memory lane. For centuries, during the Ottoman caliphate, the city of Jerusalem and Al Masjid Al Aqsa were treated with respect, and Muslims were in charge of running the city.

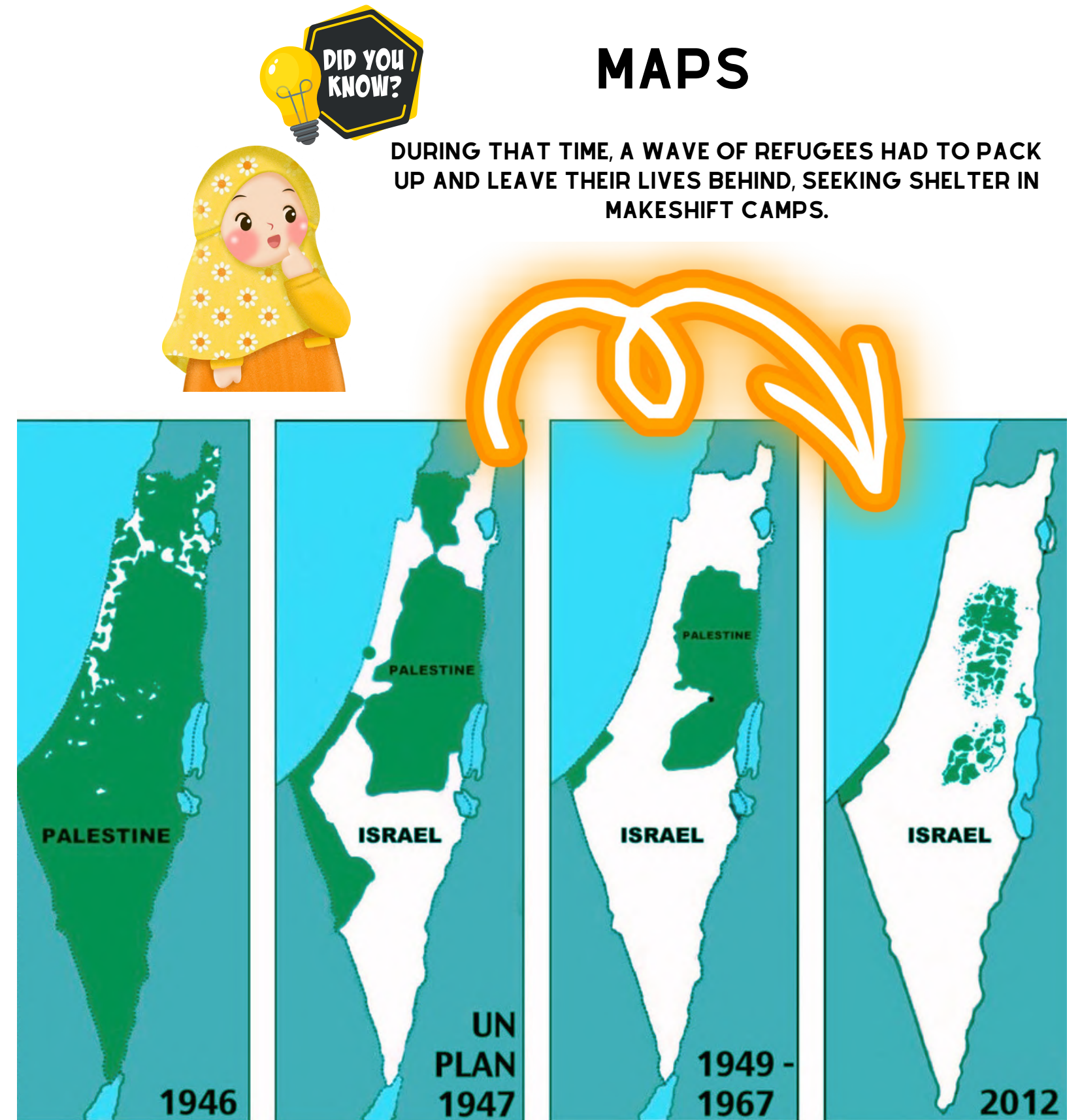
They followed the Islamic law which also ensured religious freedom and security for the Jewish and Christian minorities. But then came the **Zionist** movement, which had an aim to create a Jewish state in Muslim Palestinian land, and was supported by the British. There was an important letter called the **Balfour Declaration** which explains what happened.

During World War 1, the British captured Jerusalem and ended eight centuries of Muslim rule. Upon their arrival in Palestine in 1917, they found a land that was mostly populated by Arabs, with a tiny population of Jewish Arabs. They lived in co-existence until the Zionist movement took power.



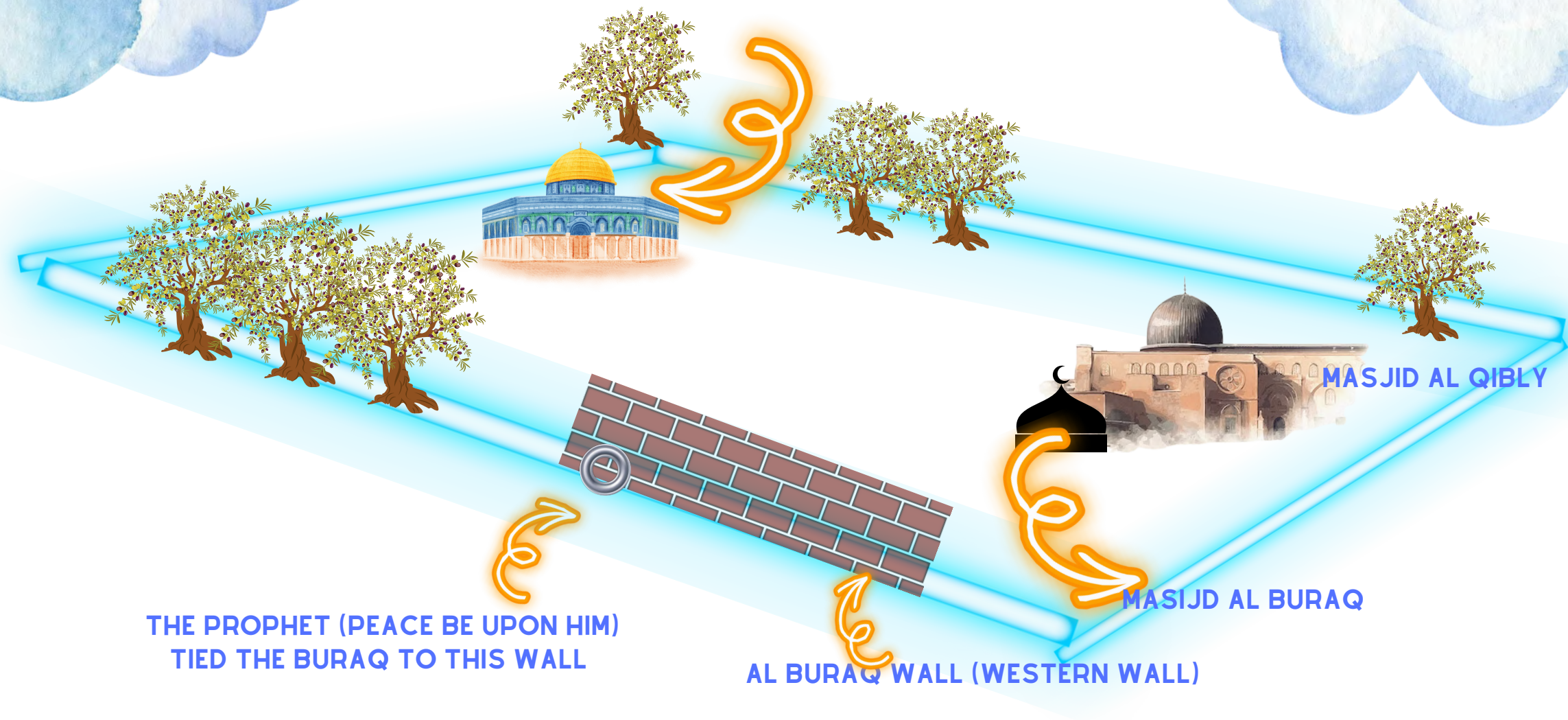
THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

Situated in the Middle East, Palestine was once known as Canaan, as referenced in stories of the prophets earlier. However, this region has become less visible on maps over time. Naturally, Palestinians objected to the occupation and this has led to many wars in the region. Today, we see a conflict in Gaza which is based upon a long history as described. There is much more detail on the topic but this resource stops at this point.



THE BLUE BOUNDARY IS THE AREA OF MASJID AL AQSA.

THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM)
MADE ACCESSION FROM THE ROCK INSIDE
THE MASJID



THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM)
TIED THE BURQA TO THIS WALL

AL BURAQ WALL (WESTERN WALL)

MASJID AL QIBLY

MASIJD AL BURAQ

THIS IS A MODEL AND MAY NOT BE TO EXACT DIMENSIONS AND
DISTANCE



IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER

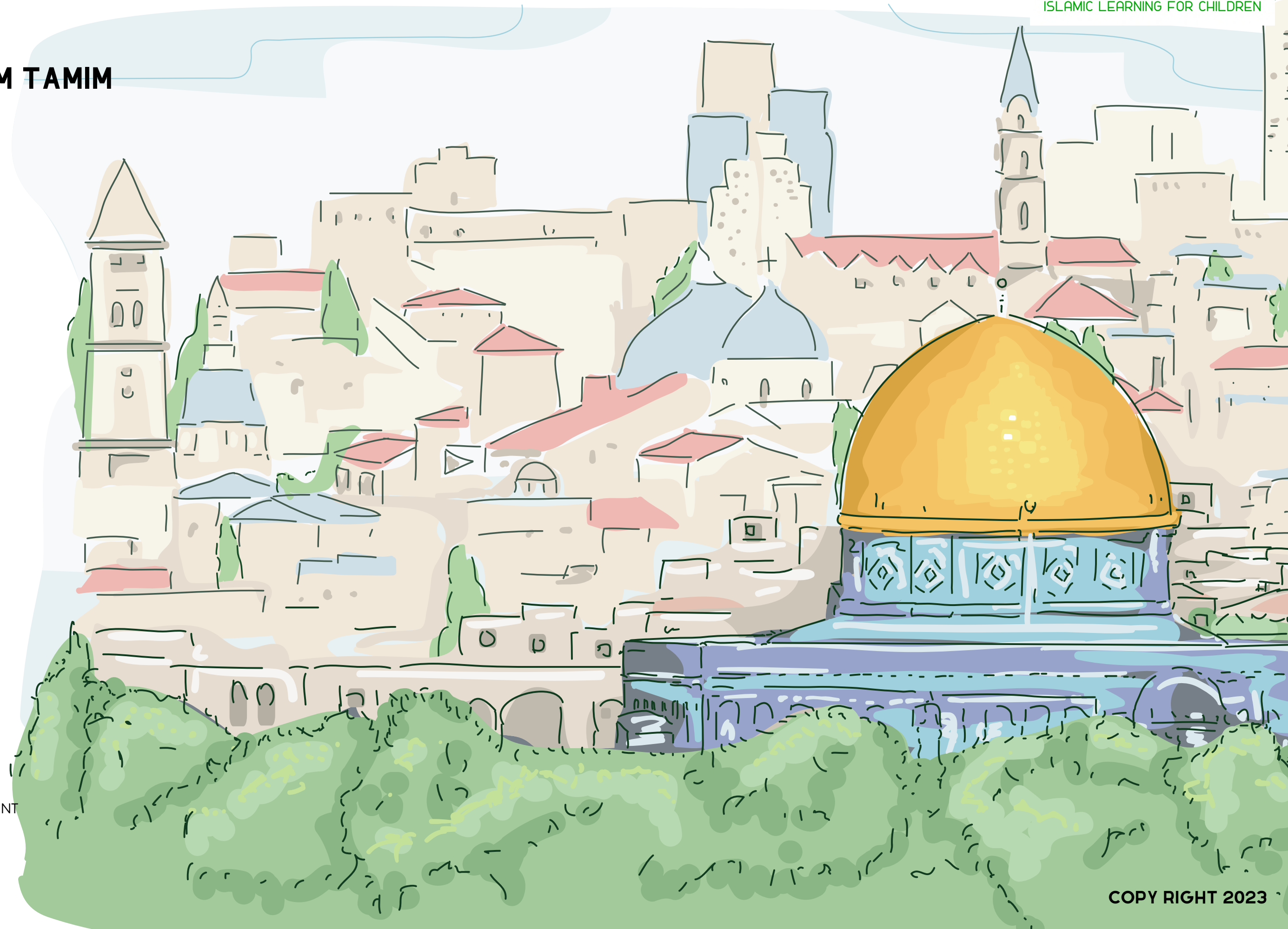
The journey of Al Masjid Al Aqsa is truly magnificent and full of resilience, inspiring generations and reminding us of the everlasting spirit of faith and courage. The echoes of its history still ring in our hearts, connecting us through time and space with a sacred bond that can never be broken. I hope you have enjoyed this book and I encourage you to learn more.



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APPROVED BY SHAYKH HAYTHAM TAMIM

PROOFED BY AYESHA KHAN



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