

HERE I SURRENDER:

May not be extra-ordinary for some – what you'll see inside about a divine city.

Jerusalem: The holy city, the city of gold, the city of peace - one of the oldest cities in the world; since centuries it has been conquered and re-conquered, destroyed and ruined, then built and re-built to its present shape. Every stone has a story, every olive tree a history, and every mountain keeps different name, depending on who you ask.

Jerusalem is the largest city in the region. Today it is a vibrant mosaic of both ancient and modern; the ethnic landscape reflects the diversity of its population, a growing melting pot of Arab-Israeli society. Despite its charm, Jerusalem carries bitter disputes. It is a divided city, part Arab, part Jewish, but jointly owned by all kinds of worshipers, as ever – however, not only surviving with honour - but continues to glow, gleam and glimmer on the horizon of multi-religious culture, as ever too.

The ultra-Orthodox community constitutes about a third of Jerusalem's Jewish population, and as such wields plenty of power over local life – in fact this commune is very closed and insulated against the outside world. The men dress in traditional 19th Century religious garb and devote their lives to [holy] Torah's study, while the women are required to dress very modestly and are mainly responsible for child-bearing and supporting the household.

AND the same is true for Muslims and Christians who prefer to live in the same primordial, primitive and pre-historic fashions and approach. However, the city's secular population is decreasing now; many complain that the city is becoming too religious, and resent the ultra-Orthodox families in their neighbourhoods; large numbers of secular Jews are leaving for more liberal places like Tel Aviv. Youngsters wish there were more entertainment spots, more places open on Fridays & Saturdays.

The BBC's Erica Chernofsky, in her report of **30th October 2014**, takes a closer look at **why this city is so important to Christianity, Islam and Judaism**, the three religions which trace their shared origins back to the biblical figure of Prophet Abraham AS – with centuries of shared though little disputed history. While it has often been the tales of division and conflict amongst people of different religions, they are united in their reverence for this holy ground.

Being one of the oldest multi-layer cities in the world, every layer of its surface reveals a different piece of the past. At its core is the Old City, a maze of narrow alleyways and historic architecture that characterises its four quarters - Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Armenian. It is surrounded by a fortress-like stone wall and home to some of the holiest sites in the world.

Each quarter of the Old City symbolize its population. The Christians have two, because **Armenians** are also Christians, and their quarter is one of the oldest Armenian Centres in the world. It is unique in that their community has preserved its own particular culture and civilisation inside the **St James Church** and monastery.

A QUESTION OFTEN ASKED that Who are the Israelites and what is Israel's TRUE history.

Nabi Abraham AS's grandson - Prophet Jacob [in *Arabic* Yaqoob AS]'s name was changed to Nabi **ISRAEL** AS under the God's command in his mid-life span. Nabi AS's twelve sons are fully named in holy Biblical book **Genesis**, along with his only daughter - Dinah. The twelve sons became the progenitors of the twelve **Tribes of Israel**. The generations of Prophet Jacob AS were so dear to God that He addressed them **exactly twelve times** in the **holy Qur'an** calling them as '**Bani-Israel**' [Israelites].

Nabi Jacob's one son LEVI had settled himself apart while Nabi Joseph AS had gone 'missing' and finally appeared in Egypt as its ruler. Prophet Jacob AS's twelve sons and one daughter

were from his two wives, **Leah and Rachel**, and from their maidens Bilhah and Zilpah.

Nabi Jacob AS, after a severe drought in Can'an, moved to Egypt with his family while his 'missing' son Nabi Joseph AS was viceroy there. **After 17 years in Egypt, Nabi Jacob died - he had lived for 147 years.** Nabi Joseph carried back Prophet Jacob's remains to the land of Can'an, and gave him a stately burial in the same **Cave of Machpelah** in Hebron [now in Palestine] as were buried Prophet Abraham AS, Sarah, Nabi Isaac AS, Rebecca, and prophet Jacob's first wife, Leah there. The offspring of Nabi Jacob's sons became the tribes of Israel following **the Exodus** – thus settled in the lands of Canaan and Judea making together as ISRAEL of today.

In ISLAM: Nabi Jacob AS is recognized in Islam as a prophet and acknowledged as a patriarch of Islam. Muslims believe that he preached the same monotheistic faith as his forefathers Prophets **Abraham AS, Issac AS, Ishmael AS** used to spread. **Nabi Jacob is mentioned 16 times in holy Qur'an.** As Nabi Jacob was on his deathbed, he asked his twelve sons to testify their faith before his soul departed [**Al-Qur'an** 2:132]. Each son testified that they would promise to remain Muslim (*in submission to ONE God*) until their last day.

Some western religious scholars have tried to target the humanity by adding new explanations in the name of secular researches and voluntarily opted to distract their readers and students of comparative religious studies by attempting to prove that ISLAM is [perhaps] the religion of extremism – totally baseless as **NO GODLY RELIGION PREACHES FANATICISM OR HATRED.**

They must know the basic fact that:

'IN ISLAM ALL THE PROPHETS & RUSULS ARE INNOCENT & BLAMELESS – NO EXCEPTION.

MUSLIMS ARE BOUND TO EXTEND EQUAL RESPECTS TO EACH OF THEM – OTHERWISE ONE CEASES TO BE A TRUE MUSLIM.

- & this is the message for all my global friends who believe in INTER-FAITH broad-mindedness, tolerance and acceptance.

A TRIBUTE: At the end I want to offer heartiest gratitude, appreciation and thankfulness to three noble characters; without their help I could not have taken this project. First name is **SARWAR MUNIR RAO**, the former Director General of PTV, the prime media institution in Pakistan. Mr Rao instigated me to set off on this arduous task and guided me through the elapsed facts of sacred history as to the divine religions.

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