

Temple Mount

The Temple Mount, known in Hebrew as Har HaBayit (**הַר הַבַּיִת**) is the holiest religious site in Judaism. It is located in the ancient Jewish city (known as the “Old City”) of Jerusalem, the holiest city in Judaism. It is the site of both the First and Second Holy Temples and has been a Jewish religious site for thousands of years.

This site is also holy to Muslims; in fact, it is the third holiest place in Islam. The First and Second Jewish Temples resided here more than 2,000 years ago. However, the Muslim Al-Aqsa Mosque currently sits at this site.

When Israel took back control of the Temple Mount in 1967, it allowed the Muslim Waqf - an Islamic extremist organization - to control this holy site in the hopes that it would bring peace. However, unfortunately, the Waqf encourages anti-Semitic and violent incitement on the Temple Mount and forbids Jews from praying at their holiest site.

Most Common Myths about the Temple Mount:

1) The Temple Mount is not holy to Jews and 2) Jews want the Al-Aqsa Mosque destroyed and a third Temple built (this myth is perpetuated by the PLO and Hamas, a US-designated terrorist organization).

However, here are the facts:

This site is holy to Jews and has been for thousands of years. See *the overview above for details.*

No major Israeli leader has ever stated a desire to eradicate the holy mosque. Furthermore, Israel has never made a single attempt to remove it.

- Israel is proud of its religious diversity and is home to Jews, Muslims, Christians, and other religious groups, all of whom are granted full rights and full legal representation. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that grants religious freedom to all its citizens.

Palestinian-Arab leaders perpetuate the myths outlined above, which are blatant anti-semitic and hateful lies. These myths incite violent hatred of Jews throughout Palestinian-Arab-controlled areas and are disseminated throughout the media and the schools.

- Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas demonized “filthy” Jews visiting the Temple Mount, stating “The Al-Aqsa [Mosque] is ours... and **they (Jews) have no right to defile it with their filthy feet**. We will not allow them to, and we will do everything in our power to protect Jerusalem.”¹
 - Further inciting violence, he praised Palestinian-Arab terrorist activity: “**We bless every drop of blood that has been spilled for Jerusalem**, which is clean and pure blood, blood spilled for Allah, Allah willing. Every Martyr (*Shahid*) will reach Paradise, and everyone wounded will be rewarded by Allah.”²
- The PA Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in the *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* news outlet (the official daily newspaper of the Palestinian Authority) on April 14, 2014:

*“The Ministry disclosed that for more than two years it informed all Muslims and Arabs...about the nature of the Judaization plan at the Al-Aqsa Mosque ...The Israeli government has been carrying out this plan on a daily basis, and the rate of escalation and repression against Al-Aqsa is increasing...towards dividing it (the Temple Mount) geographically and according to time, **destroying it and building what is referred to as ‘the Temple’ in its place.**”³*

- Sheikh Muhammad Al-Tawil, a teacher at Al-Aqsa Mosque School, called Jews who visit the Temple Mount “assistants of monkeys and pigs” on official PA TV (September 27, 2013).⁴

These accusations are untrue. Israel has never stated a desire to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque, nor has it taken action toward doing so.

Taken together, the Palestinian-Arab leadership’s incitement to violence and false propaganda about Israel’s intentions on the Temple Mount sparks Palestinian-Arab hostility and violence at the site. The following are two of many examples:

- Palestinian-Arab protesters stockpiled weapons including homemade explosives, firecrackers, and wooden boards inside the Al-Aqsa mosque to attack Jews on Tisha B’Av in July 2015. On this solemn fast day, Jews merely peacefully assembled for prayer at the Western Wall to mourn the destruction of the first and second Jewish temples.⁵
- Palestinian-Arab rioters bombarded police officers with pipe bombs, Molotov cocktails, fireworks and rocks on the Temple Mount in September 2015.⁶

¹ Palestinian Media Watch, Abbas: We won't allow Jews' "filthy feet". Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik. Sept. 17, 2015.

² Ibid.

³ Palestinian Media Watch, *PMW Bulletins: PA Foreign Ministry libel: Israel plans to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque*, May 19, 2014.

⁴ Palestinian Media Watch, *Demonization of Jews/Israelis, Case Study: Portraying Jews as “Apes and Pigs”*

⁵ Times of Israel, *Palestinian Rioters Attack Police on Temple Mount*. July 26, 2015.

⁶ Times of Israel, *Palestinian Leaders Warn Temple Mount ‘Provocations’ Could Stoke Violence*. Tamar Pileggi. April 13, 2016