

# Jerusalem: A Legacy Of Freemasonry To Islam

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WHEN the first European Crusaders entered Jerusalem, says Prof. Mahmud Brelvi of Pakistan, they were stupefied by the magnificence and the artistic beauty of the Mosque of Umar, which is revered by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike. The point of attraction inside the Mosque of Umar in Jerusalem is the sacred rock on the center, covered by a huge dome, which is the old altar of King Solomon's Temple. It must be remembered that it is on this rock, believed to be the top of Mount Mauraya where Prophet Abraham has intended to sacrifice his son, Ishmail. On this same rock Solomon and Dav'd were said to have worshipped Jehovah; where the image of Christ was brought by the Crusaders. According to Islamic tradition, it is this same rock that was used as a stepping-stone by Prophet Muhamamad in his flight to Heavens (Mi'raj).

This observation is interesting not so much on its historical significance but more on the moral lesson that Freemasonry bestows upon the world: *Tolerance*. The principle of brotherhood of all man-

kind is impossible of attainment without tolerance. Unity of all religionists under the Fatherhood of God is a mockery without man's tolerance. The means to avoid war on the basis of sincere negotiation for world peace is a farce without the moral lesson of tolerance that Freemasonry offers to the world. Aside from Masonic lodges wither-soever dispersed, it is only in Jerusalem, the Holy City of the Muslims, Christians and Jews alike, that we can find tolerance in its pristine parity. . . . Masonic tolerance.

It is difficult to find a Muslim sincerely delivering a lecture on Easter Sunday or Maundy Thursday before a group of Christians or Jews or Buddhists except in the Jolo Lodge. It is even impossible to find a Christian leading a prayer for the Muslim faithfuls if it is not in a Lodge. Masonry does the impossible and readily makes easy what is difficult for men of varying creeds.

For in Sulu with more than 90 per cent Muslim population, Freemasonry offers us the real brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood

of God. The Masonic lodge in Jolo has about one-half Muslim membership. Under the present leadership of Worshipful brother Cenon C. Moreno Sr. and Venerable Master Charles Bengtu Tan, Freemasonry is attracting more and more membership. But there is a single obstacle to modern Muslims in Sulu in their desire to join this most ancient and Honorable Institution.

Islamic history tells us of Masonic lodges that existed in Muslim Egypt in the tenth century under the leadership of Hassan Sabbah among the Ismaelites. These lodges were intended for the destruction of legitimate government of Egypt which the Muslims hate. They have also their Masters, fellows and Dais or emissaries. These lodges were later followed by some parts of Europe in later period. And these are false, spurious and clandestine lodges and could have been the right objects of Pope Clement's Bull of 1738. Muslims or men of ordinary intelligence in Sulu are aware of this Islamic history. The sad and unfortunate lack of Masonic books in our Jolo lodge do not sufficiently put most of the members in a better position if asked by outsiders on this score. This is not serious, however, though

a remedial measure can improve the lodge's intellectual outlook on the beautiful lessons of Freemasonry for Muslim Filipinos.

As a Muslim, I had nurtured certain doubts as to the principle of Freemasonry. My interest, being stronger however overwhelmed me. My curiosity drove me to enter upon a field of research. . . . to travel and search for the truth even prior to my raising to the sublime degree and to my present degree. One important essence of the Brotherhood of men and Fatherhood of God in Masonry struck me impressively now. And that is the tolerance exemplified in Jerusalem, in the Mosque of Omar. As a new traveller, I am still expecting to re-discover for myself added essence of Freemasonry that supplies the missing link towards the real understanding among brethren in the field of partisan politics in Sulu and other Muslim provinces. But as of this moment, I shall deeply treasure one interesting lesson I have learned. Jerusalem is a legacy of Freemasonry to Islam and Christianity because it is the cradle of perfect tolerance required in true brotherhood.



I pray you with all earnestness to prove and know within your hearts that things lovely and righteous are possible for those who believe in their possibility, and who determine that for their part they will make each day's work contribute to them. Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close. Then let every one of these short lives leave its pure record of some kindly thing done for others, some goodly strength of knowledge gained for yourselves. So, from day to day and strength to strength, you shall build up an edifice of which it shall be said, "See what manner of stones are here," but "see what manner of men." —JOHN RUSKIN