

and twenty-four feet, and on the south, nine hundred and twenty-two. It is entered by eight gates. The Mosque of Omar, commonly so called—its true name being Kubbet-es-Sukhrah, or Dome of the Rock—is the central object in this vast enclosure. It is an exquisitely beautiful building—one of the most beautiful in the world. It is in shape an octagon, each side being sixty-eight feet long, and is covered with tiles of richly-coloured porcelain,—a frieze of tiles emblazoned with passages from the Koran running around the whole building. It is entered by four portals, one at each point of the compass, and is surmounted by a superbly proportioned and most graceful dome. The interior, which is very dark, shows, when the eye becomes accustomed to the darkness, its splendid design and material. It consists of two cloisters, separated by an octagonal course of piers and columns, and within this again another circle of piers, and twelve Corinthian columns supporting the dome. The fifty-six windows of, I think the most lovely stained glass I ever saw, glitter like precious stones. The tiled walls are covered with passages from the Koran. The dome is ninety-eight feet high, and sixty-six in diameter, and the pavement is of marble.

It was wonderfully moving to stand in the dim light under this massive dome and see, fenced off by a railing from profane touch, the base rock-summit of Moriah, some sixty feet long and forty-five feet wide, the very beauty of its surroundings heightening the effect of its natural ruggedness. For this may well be the spot where the faith of Abraham stood the supreme test; it may well be the site of that threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where the destroying angel halted, in response to David's penitent prayer after his sin of pride in numbering the people; and it doubtless is the site of the Altar of Burnt Offering in the Temple, the centre and focus of the Jewish national and religious life. The rough rock rises in its highest part nearly five feet above the marble pavement which surrounds it, and about a foot at its lowest elevation. Beneath it, or rather cut into it, at its south-eastern side, is a cavern, not very large, and about six feet in height. It is connected with the top of the rock by a small circular opening, and in its floor is another much larger opening covered by a slab. These openings were most probably conduits in connection with the altar when the Temple covered this sacred spot.

The Moslem traditions connected with this rock are wild and fantastic enough. They show you the prints of Gabriel's fingers