

‘Imam of Peace’ says Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock is an ‘obstacle to peace’

Mohammad Tawhidi, also known as the “Imam of Peace,” shared his conviction that the Dome of the Rock presented an obstacle to peace that could be overcome in a recent discussion with Israeli Middle East expert, Dr. Mordechai Kedar.

Tawhidi asked Kedar, who is one of Israel’s leading Middle East scholars and an expert on Arab society, where he believed the third temple would be built.

“It’s a conversation that’s been going on for a while, but I get many questions about it,” Tawhidi began. “I know that it’s significant, it will happen in the future. That’s fine,” he continued. “□But I’m going to share something if I may. If you can see this, so is this the region where the Temple Mount is imagined to be constructed in the future?”

“Will it take some of the homes of the area?” he asked, pointing to an aerial view of the Temple Mount. “How will it work? Is this the area that’s believed to be the place for the Third Temple?”

“To tell you the truth, I have no idea,” Kedar responded. “All I know is where was the location of the two first temples,” he said, explaining that the first and second temples historically stood more or less where the Dome of the Rock stands today.

“The third temple, we believe... will descend from heaven complete, and God, who is Almighty, will do it by Himself, without any human effort,” continued Kedar. “And this is why we do nothing against the Dome of the Rock and against the mosque, which is in the southern part,” he said,

differentiating the golden dome from the silver-tipped Al-Aqsa mosque.

A Shiite cleric born in Qom, Iran, Tawhidi is an Australian citizen but spends much of his time in Canada, where he serves as a governing member of the Global Imams Council. He is known for his interfaith efforts and peace advocacy and serves as an advisor on Counter-Extremism and Terrorism Affairs with TRENDS Research and Advisory.

Tawhidi has a huge following on social media but is a controversial figure, denounced as a “fake sheikh” by his detractors.

Earlier in his conversation with Dr. Kedar, Tawhidi relayed his opinion that the land of Israel was not Muslim land, but that the true indigenous people were the Palestinians, who were once Jewish but converted to Islam centuries ago. He stands against those who seek the destruction of Israel and has dedicated his life to peace advocacy.

“I travel around the world, and I speak, and I write articles, and none of my views are hidden,” claimed Tawhidi. “The fact that I haven’t been expelled, I haven’t been disciplined... Nothing has happened to me. □I haven’t been sanctioned. I haven’t been warned. I never received a complaint from the governing board. That shows you that there is no lie,” he insisted, after presenting his beliefs.

When Tawhidi asked if the building itself had significance to Jewish people, or just the location, Kedar responded that Jewish people cannot currently approach the actual temple area according to Jewish law.

"Since we cannot purify ourselves in the way which would enable us and allow us to go into the temple, if we go there, we go only around the walls," he explained. "We are not entering the centre of the court, because this is actually where the temple was in that place."

"Okay, because what I was thinking was that there is no issue, there is no clash whatsoever for a temple to exist beside the mosque," said Tawhidi, "because it's nowhere near it... If we just say that God is going to reveal a temple, then no believer can disagree. God's going to do it. God will do whatever he likes. For many people, they think that it's going to be built, that it will exist. The issue is wiping out any Jewish presence because they think it's Muslim land," he objected.

"This entire place is not holy in Islam. This Dome of the Rock is an obstacle. It's a historical issue, in the way of peace," declared Tawhidi.

"You know how you have a theory about the emirates, how the Palestinian areas could be ruled like the emirates?" he asked Kedar, addressing his suggested solution to lasting peace with the Palestinians. "This is one of my theories."

"This is not a holy building," he stated, emphasizing that the Dome of the Rock is not a mosque, despite the common misconception. "Many Muslims think this is the mosque... They think it's the Al Aqsa mosque."

"So, a temple can exist here, peacefully, right beside the mosque. No problem." Tawhidi asserted.

"I know the planner of the place," Kedar responded, referring to God, "And when God decides to send down the third temple, he will put it in the right location, believe me."□

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