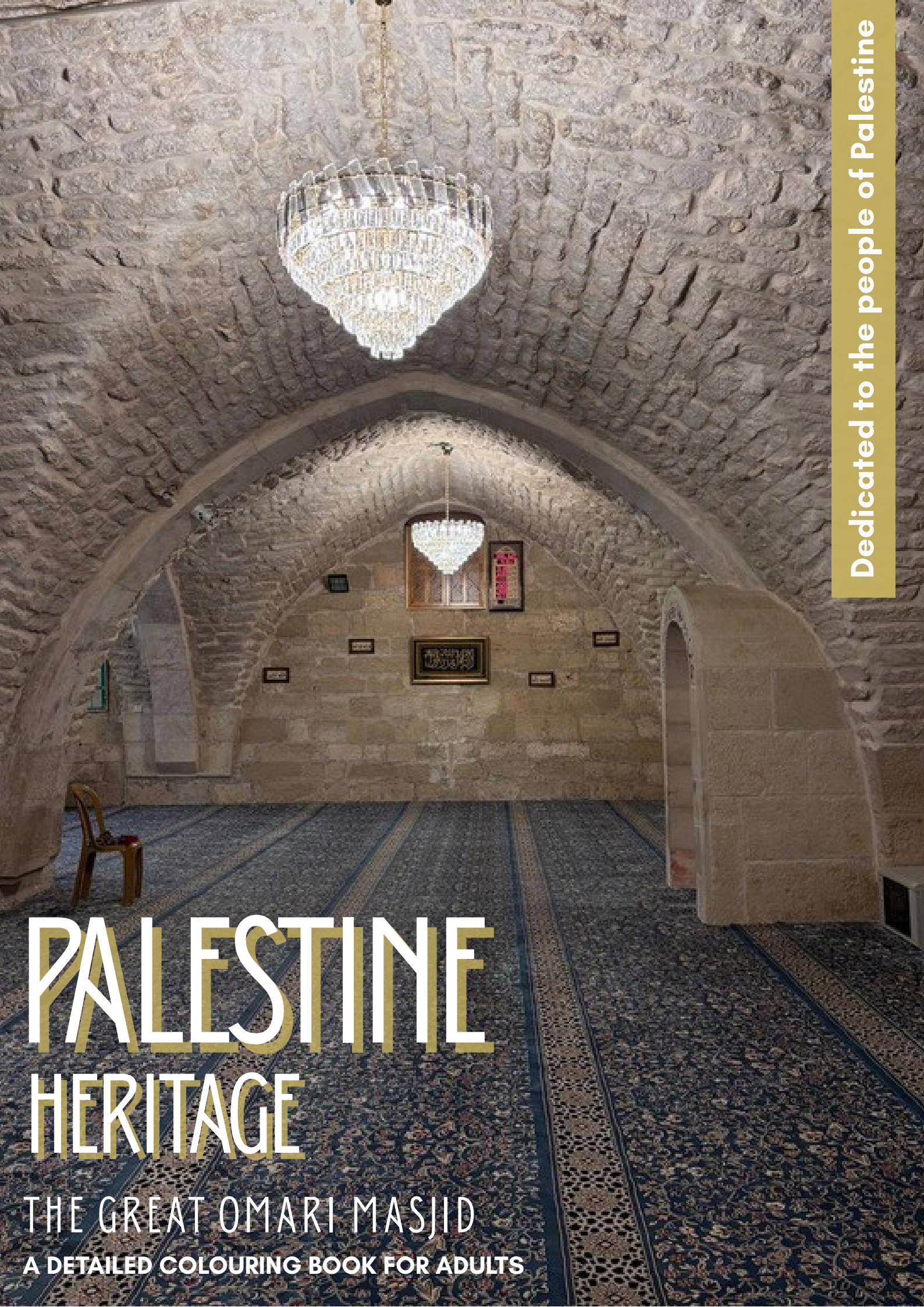


Dedicated to the people of Palestine

PALESTINE HERITAGE

THE GREAT OMARI MASJID

A DETAILED COLOURING BOOK FOR ADULTS

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Dedicated
to the servants of Allah
in the Mubarak lands
of *Palestine*

Foreword

What if saving a building can save an entire heritage?
What if learning about one building can save its memory for generations.
This is what our project is based on. Learning about one building at a time in order to preserve its importance for the next generation of Muslims.

Can the stroke of a crayon or the trace of a pencil hold the weight of a nation's history? In Palestine, where ancient stones face the constant threat of erasure, heritage is not a static relic of the past; it is a dynamic act of resistance. When we learn about a single building—like the Great Omari Masjid—we are doing more than memorising dates and dynasties. We are ensuring that its architectural "DNA" survives in the collective memory of the next generation.

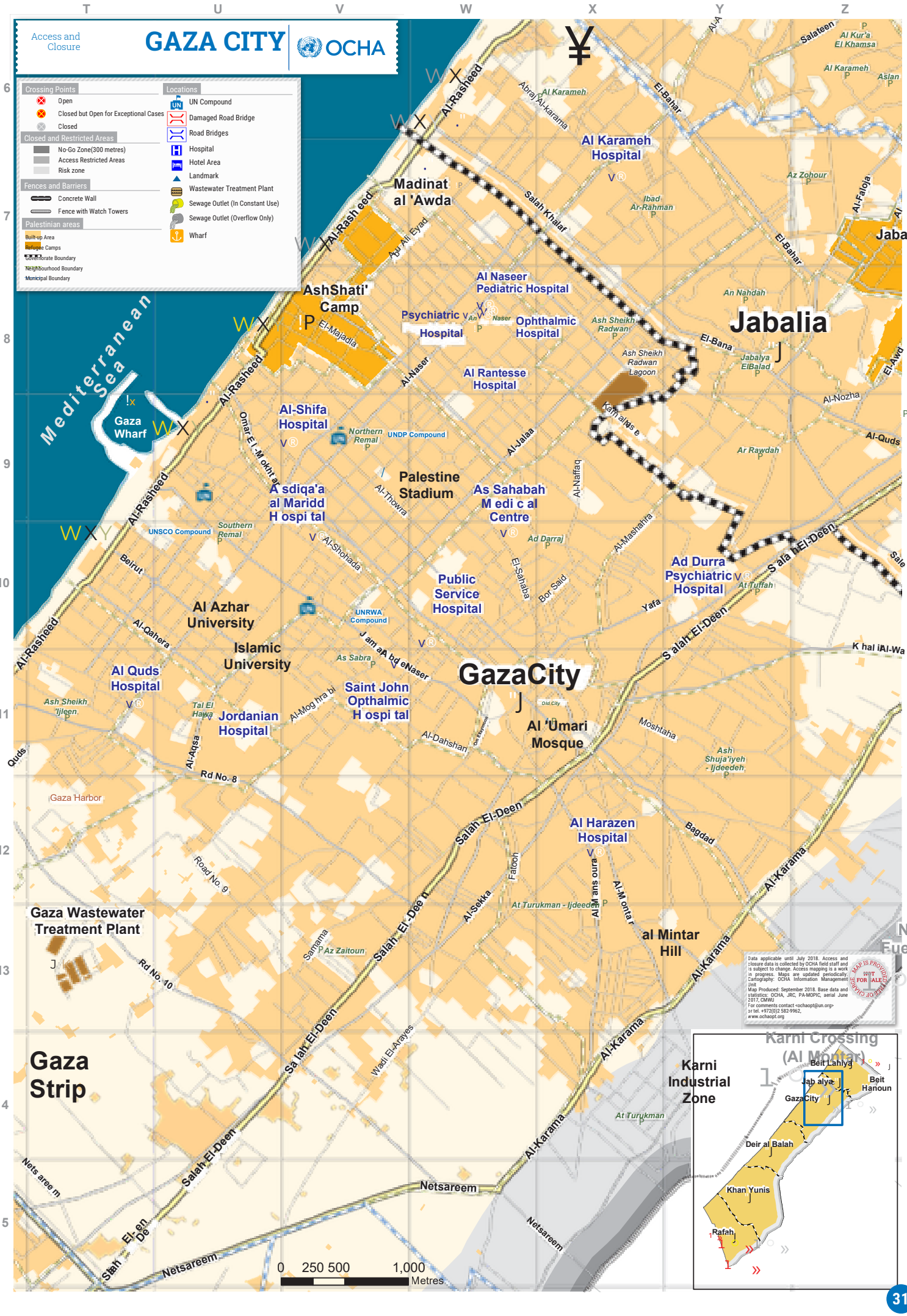
This colouring book is designed to turn passive observation into active preservation. By blending historical research with the tactile, creative process of a colouring book, we invite readers to rebuild Palestine's landmarks line by line. As you shade the geometry of a Mamluk minaret, those patterns become etched into your mind. You are not just filling in shapes; you are documenting a living chronicle that refuses to be forgotten.

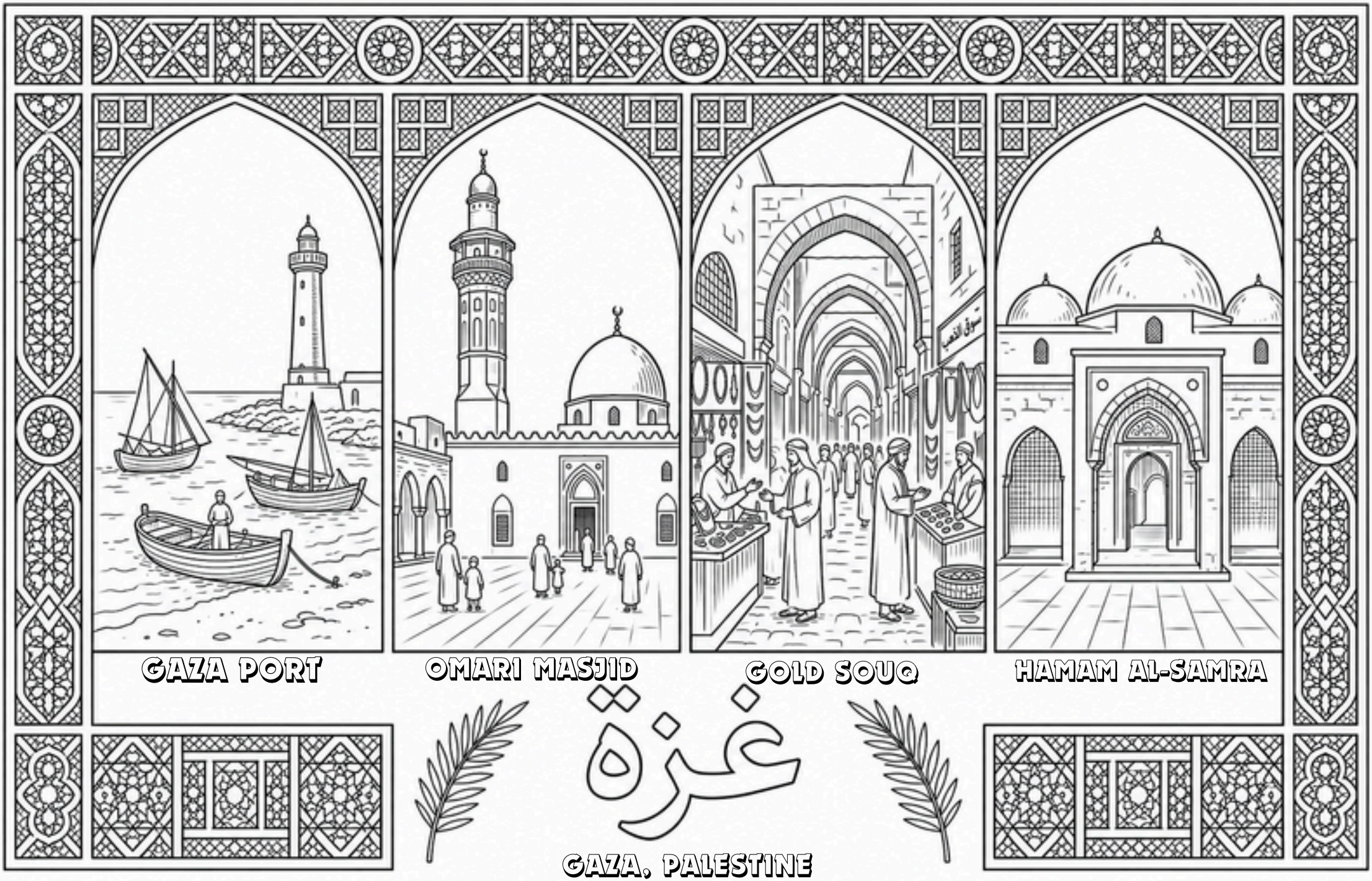
In a landscape where physical structures may fall, the intellectual and visual blueprint must remain indestructible. Teaching a person the curve of an arch or the story behind a 500-year-old manuscript transforms them from a spectator into a guardian of heritage.

This "learning through doing" ensures that even if a stone is moved, its story remains held in the hands of the Ummah. Through these pages, we weave the past into the present, proving that knowledge is the most enduring form of restoration. And All Praise is due to Allah.

MAKTAB AL KAWTHAR

South Africa


Access and Closure
GAZA CITY
OCHA
Crossing Points
Open
Closed but Open for Exceptional Cases
Closed
Closed and Restricted Areas
No-Go Zone(300 metres)
Access Restricted Areas
Risk zone
Fences and Barriers
Concrete Wall
Fence with Watch Towers
Palestinian areas
Built-up Area
Refugee Camps
Governorate Boundary
Neighbourhood Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Locations
UN Compound
Damaged Road Bridge
Road Bridges
Hospital
Hotel Area
Landmark
Wastewater Treatment Plant
Sewage Outlet (In Constant Use)
Sewage Outlet (Overflow Only)
Wharf
Mediterranean Sea
Gaza Wharf
Al-Rasheed
Madinat al 'Awda
Al Karameh Hospital
Al Karameh
Abraj Al-Karama
Salateen
Al Kur'a El Khamsa
Aslan
Az Zohour
Ibad Ar-Rahman
Salah Khalaf
El-Bahar
Al-Faloja
Jaba
AshShati' Camp
El-Majadla
Abu Ali Eyad
Al Naseer Pediatric Hospital
Psychiatric Hospital
Ophthalmic Hospital
Ash Sheikh Radwan
Jabalia
An Nahdah
El-Bana
Jabalya ElBalad
Ash Sheikh Radwan Lagoon
El-Awda
Al-Naser
Al Rantesse Hospital
Al-Nozha
Al-Quds
Ar Rawdah
Al-Shifa Hospital
Northern Remal
UNDP Compound
Omar El-Mokhtar
Al-Jalaa
Al-Naffaq
Palestine Stadium
Al-Thowra
As Sahabah Medical Centre
Ad Darraj
Al-Mashahra
Salah El-Deen
Ad Durra Psychiatric Hospital
At Tuffah
Sale
Southern Remal
UNSCO Compound
Al-Shohada
Beirut
Public Service Hospital
Bor Said
Yafa
Al Azhar University
UNRWA Compound
Al-Qahera
Islamic University
As Sabra
Khal il Al-Wa
Al Quds Hospital
Saint John Opthalmic Hospital
GazaCity
Old City
Ash Sheikh 'Ijleen
Tal El Hawa
Jordanian Hospital
Al-Mog hra bi
Al 'Umari Mosque
Moshtaha
Al-Dahshan
Ash Shuja'iyeh - Ijdeedeh
Quds
Al-Aqsa
Rd No. 8
Gaza Harbor
Al Harazen Hospital
Bagdad
Al-Karama
Road No. 9
Fatooh
Al-Sekka
At Turukman - Ijdeedeh
Al-Montar
Gaza Wastewater Treatment Plant
Rd No. 10
Samama
Az Zaitoun
al Mintar Hill
Gaza Strip
Wadi El-Arayes
At Turukman
Netsareem
Netsareem
Karni Crossing (Al Montar)
Karni Industrial Zone
Beit Lahiya
Beit Hanoun
GazaCity
Deir al Balah
Khan Yunis
Rafah
0 250 500 1,000
Metres
31


GAZA PORT
OMARI MASJID
GOLD SOUQ
HAMAM AL-SAMRA
غزة
GAZA, PALESTINE

Ahlan Wa Sahlan
to the Great Omari Masjid,
a magnificent treasure located in the
very heart of Old Gaza City!

This ancient masjid is like a beautiful storybook made of stone. For hundreds of years, it has stood proudly next to the bustling, colourful lanes of the Zawiya Market and the Qaysariyya Gold Market.

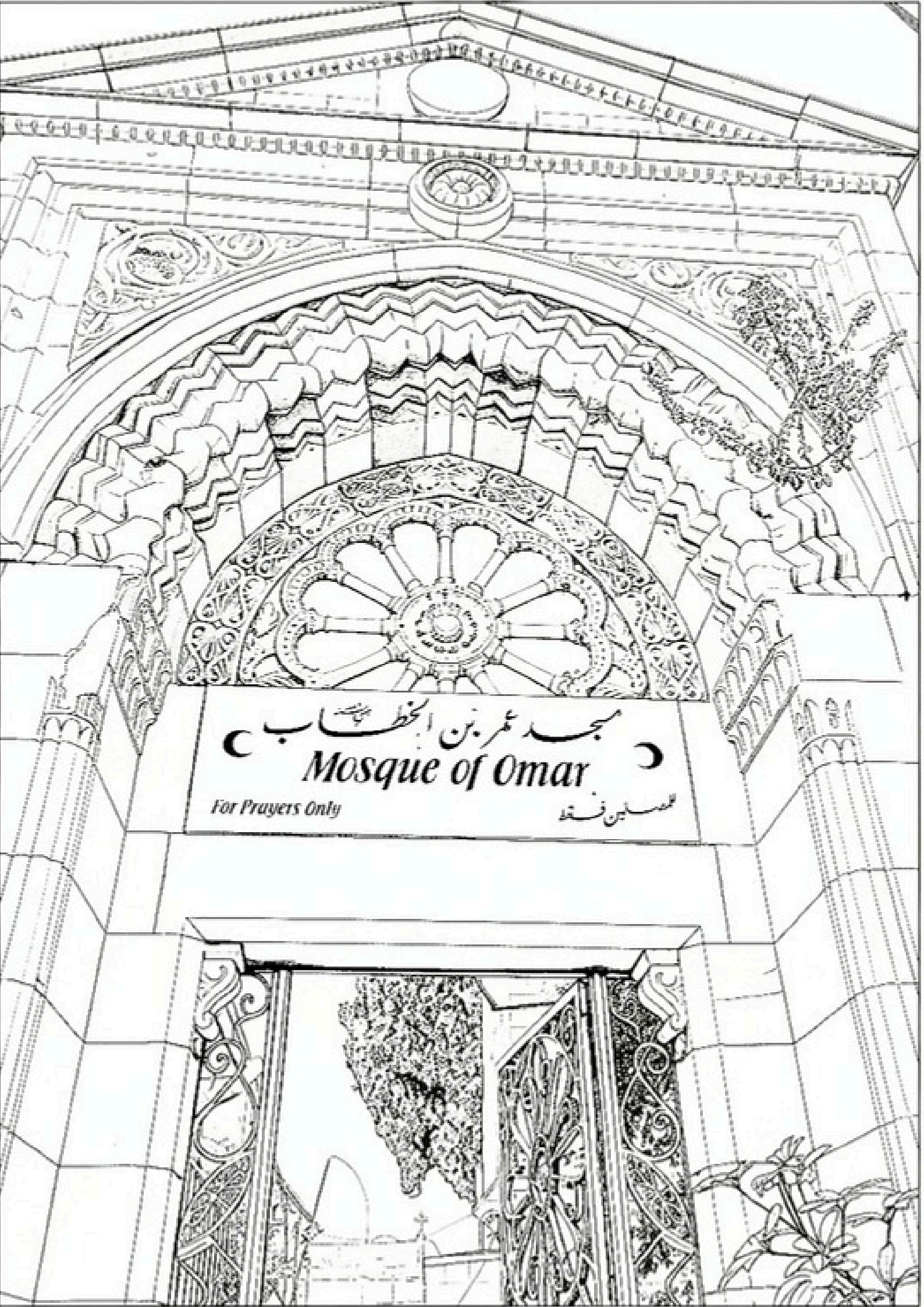
The Omari Masjid has a wonderful history of changing and growing. Long ago, this special place was an ancient temple, then a Byzantine church, and later a masjid named after Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). When different rulers arrived over the centuries including the famous leader Salahuddin al Ayyubi—the building changed shape and purpose.

Instead of tearing down the old walls, each group added their own beautiful styles, creating a unique puzzle of history. As you colour these pages, look closely at the marvelous shapes that make up the masjid.

The masjid was also famous for its huge library, which held thousands of precious, hand-written books, making it one of the richest treasure houses of knowledge in all of Palestine! Even when the Masjid was badly damaged during World War I, the community lovingly gathered up the fallen stones and rebuilt it, piece by piece.

You can enter this historical place through many secret paths. The Western Gate has descending steps that lead past the library and into a room with beautiful pointed arches. The Southern Gate opens right up to the glittering Gold Market, and the Northern Gate guides you up a staircase into the open courtyard.

Grab your favorite colours, crayons, or pencils! As you bring these historic walls, arches, and gates to life, you are celebrating the incredible strength, art, and spirit of Gaza.


مسجد عمر بن الخطاب
Mosque of Omar
For Prayers Only
للمصلين فقط

The Secret Stories in the Prayer Rugs

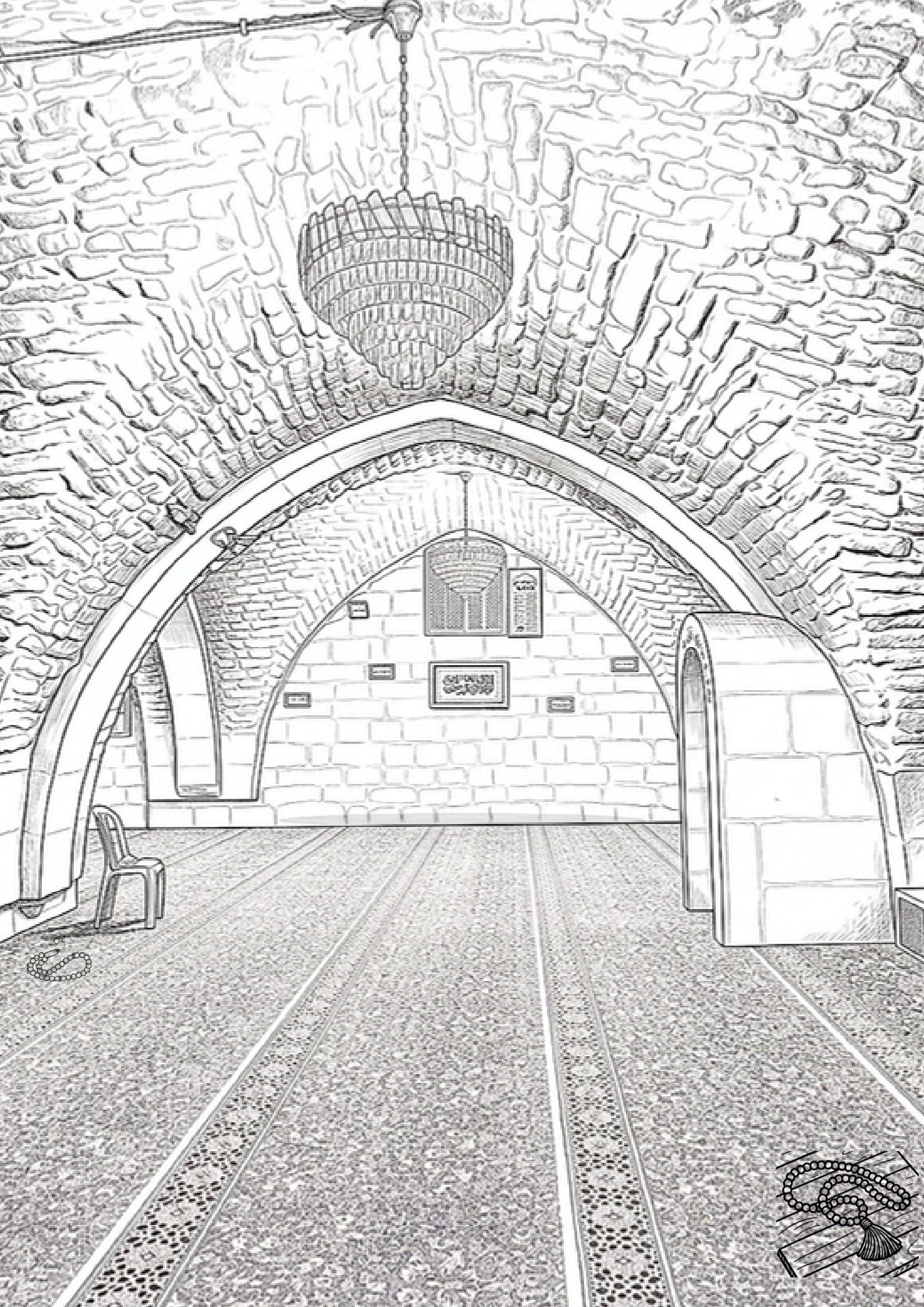
Look down at the floor!
The soft carpets you are about to colour are more than just rugs–
they are like a map for the worshippers.

Flowers and Shapes:
As you pick your reds, blues, and golds, look for the geometric stars and floral vines hidden in the borders.

Lattice Work:
The windows are often covered with beautiful stone or wooden screens called Mashrabiya. These act like a filter, turning the bright sun into soft, glowing patterns on the floor. You can leave the spaces between the lines white to show where the light is strongest.

Sunbeams:
These beams of light were designed by ancient architects to make the room feel quiet, cool, and full of peace.

Colour while repeating dhikr
What is your favourite dhikr?



The Covenant of Umar (al-ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya)
is displayed at the Masjid of Omar (Masjid Umar)
in the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City

For the Masjid, the Covenant is not just an old scroll; it is the very reason the building exists where it does.

Tracing the fluid, rhythmic curves of the Arabic script by hand;
the way a scribe would have centuries ago connects you directly to this legacy.

As your pen follows the sweeping alifs and rounded noons, you aren't just practicing calligraphy; you are retracing a promise of safety and respect that has defined Jerusalem's shared history for over 1,400 years.

Rewrite the Arabic text of Umar (RA)'s covenant to the people of Palestine
Uhdd al- Omari

سم الله الرحمن الرحيم،
هذا ما أعطى عبد الله، عمر، أمير المؤمنين، أهل إيلياء من الأمان، أعطاهم أماناً لأنفسهم وأموالهم ولكنائسهم وصلبانهم وسقمها وبريئها وسائر ملتها.
أنه لا تسكن كنائسهم ولا تهدم، ولا ينقص منها ولا من حيزها ولا من صليبهم ولا من شيء من أموالهم، ولا يكرهون على دينهم، ولا يضار أحد منهم، ولا يسكن بإيلياء معهم أحد من اليهود.
وعلى أهل إيلياء أن يعطوا الجزية كما يعطي أهل المدائن، وعليهم أن يخرجوا منها الروم واللصوص.
فمن خرج منهم فإنه آمن على نفسه وماله حتى يبلغوا مأمنهم، ومن أقام منهم فهو آمن، وعليه مثل ما على أهل إيلياء من الجزية.
ومن أحب من أهل إيلياء أن يسير بنفسه وماله مع الروم ويخلي بيعهم وصلبهم فإنهم آمنون على أنفسهم وعلى بيعهم وصلبهم حتى يبلغوا مأمنهم.
ومن كان فيها من أهل الأرض فمن شاء منهم أقام وعليه مثل ما على أهل إيلياء من الجزية، ومن شاء سار مع الروم، ومن شاء رجع إلى أهله، فإنه لا يؤخذ منهم شيء حتى يحصد حصادهم.
وعلى ما في هذا الكتاب عهد الله وذمة رسوله وذمة الخلفاء وذمة المؤمنين، إذا أعطوا الذي عليهم من الجزية."
شهد على ذلك خالد بن الوليد، وعمرو بن العاص، وعبد الرحمن بن عوف، ومعاوية بن أبي سفيان. وكتب وحضر سنة 15 ه

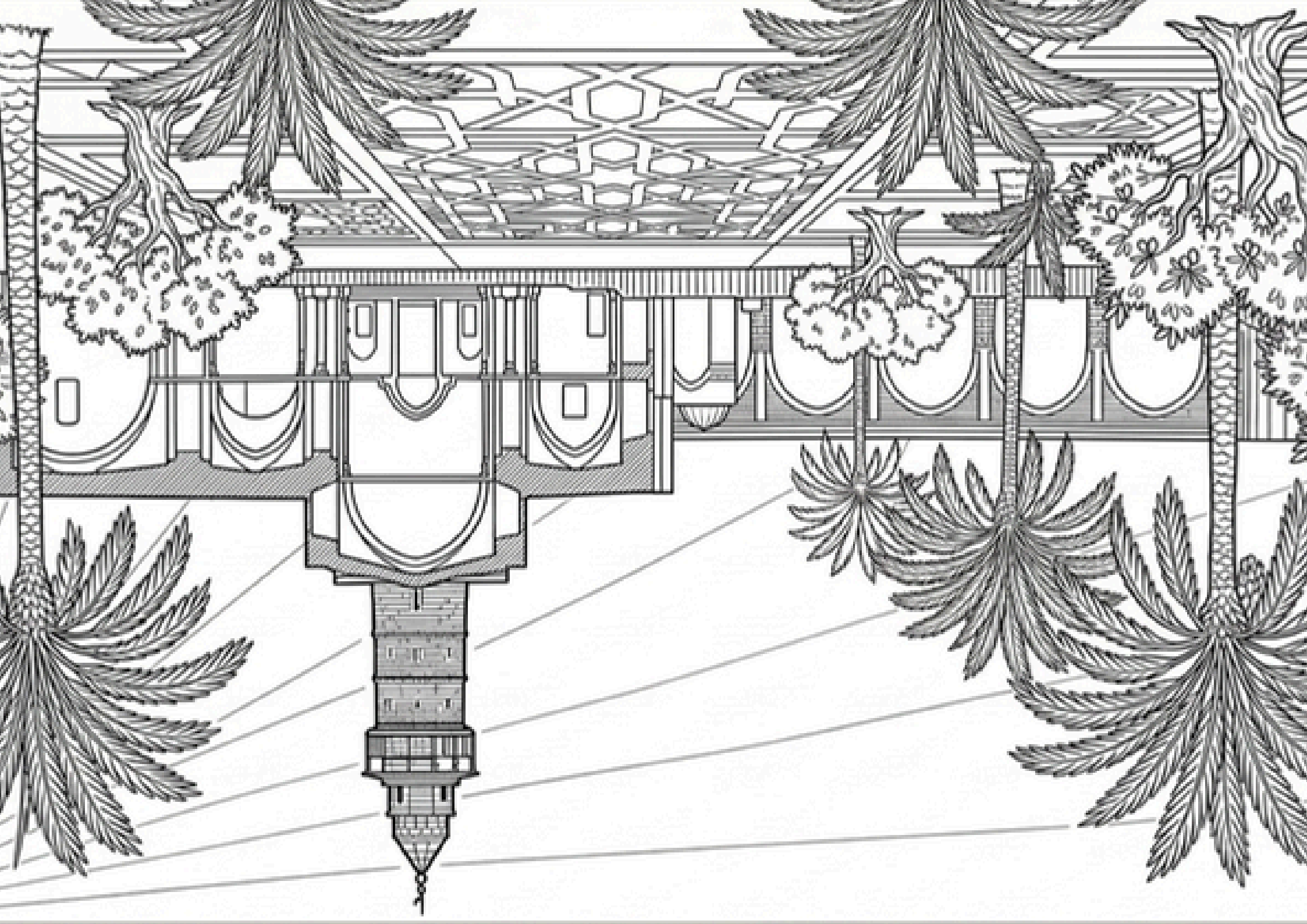
Story of Umar (RA) journey to Palestine

Welcome to a very special corner of history!
As you reach for your pens and pencils, imagine you are stepping back over a thousand years.

The courtyard you see here is a place of kindness and respect.
In the year 638 CE, Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) stood in this very spot in Jerusalem. When he was invited to pray inside the famous church nearby, he chose to pray outside instead, making sure the church would always remain a safe place for other faiths.

To enter this peaceful sahn (courtyard), you have to walk down a short flight of stone steps, as the ground here sits tucked away below the busy city streets. As you colour the ancient stones and the tall minaret reaching for the sky, think of the many people who have come to this quiet garden to pray and reflect since the days of Salahuddin's family nearly 800 years ago.

Reflection
If your heart sat here in silence, what would your heart say?



Step inside and watch
as the sunlight shines across the prayer hall.
As you bring this page to life, notice the grand stone
arches that curve gracefully above you,
holding up the weight of history
with elegance and strength.

These arches are more than just part of the building; they create a rhythmic pattern that leads your eyes toward the heavens. Beams of light stream down from the high windows—they cut through the quiet air like golden ribbons, landing softly on the floors below.

This play of light and shadow highlights the intricate textures of the ancient walls, which were built during the time of the Ayyubid dynasty.

As you colour, use your brightest yellows for the sunbeams and deep, earthy tones for the stones to capture the peaceful, glowing atmosphere of this sacred space.

Reflection

When have you experienced Nur (light) during dark times in your life?

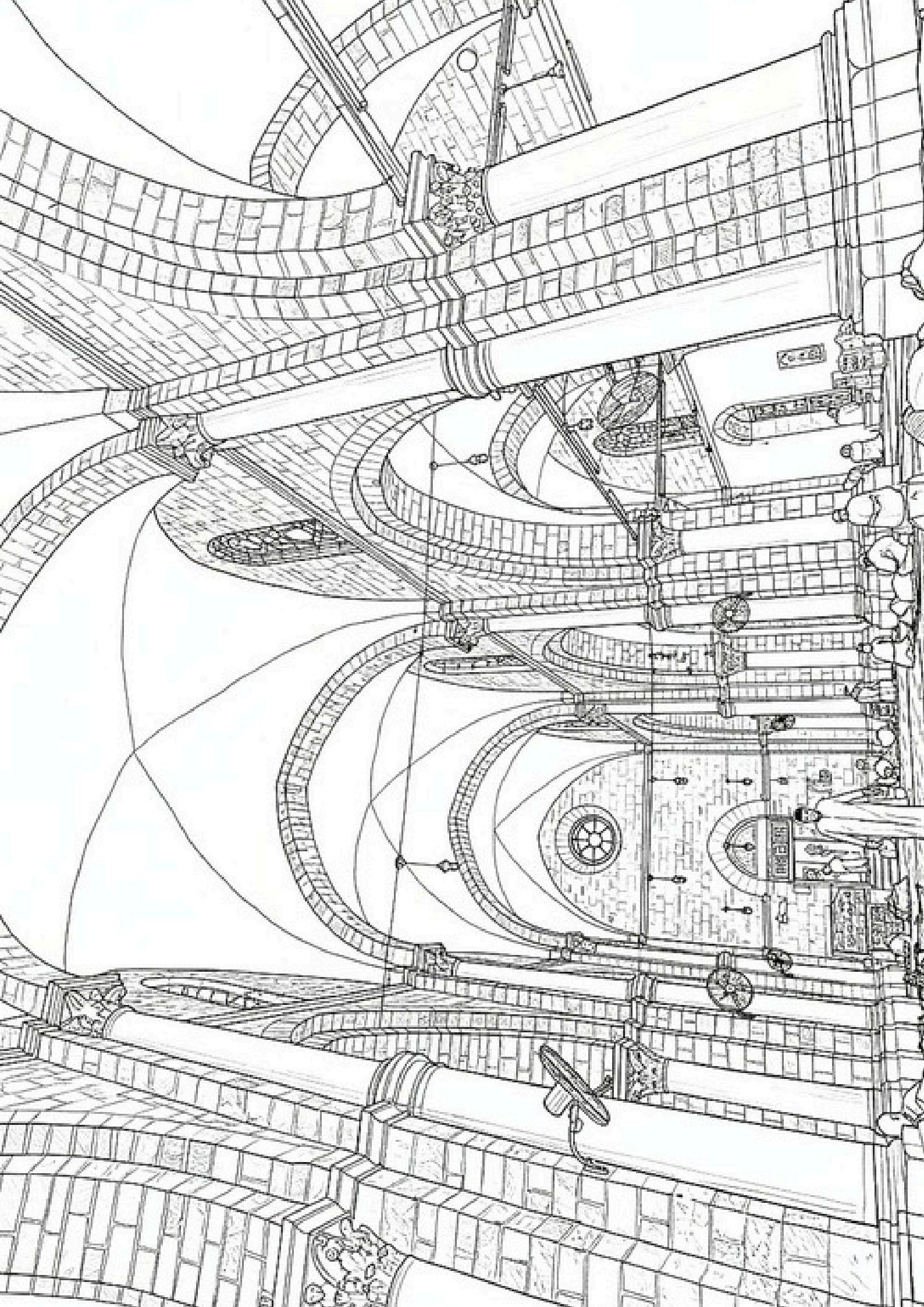


Before you use your pencil colours,
let your eyes wander across the lines of this page. You are looking at a living map of history, drawn from the very heart of Gaza.

Imagine standing right in the center of the image as a heritage explorer, watching how centuries of faith and art blend together.

Look to the Center:
The Grand Prayer Hall: Your eyes are immediately drawn to the soaring lines in the middle of the page. Notice how the arches climb extra-tall toward the sky.

See those high windows tucked near the roofline? That is where the bright morning sunshine streams inside, casting long, soft shadows across the stone floor you are about to colour.



The Great Omari Masjid was famous for its minaret (tower). The bottom half was square, and the top half was eight-sided. This was a common style for Mamluk buildings.

The minaret was built from stone from its base up to the hanging balcony. The very top part was mostly made of wood and tiles and was often repaired. A simple dome sat on top of the eight-sided stone part.

Colour from base to top using gradient tones

Reflection

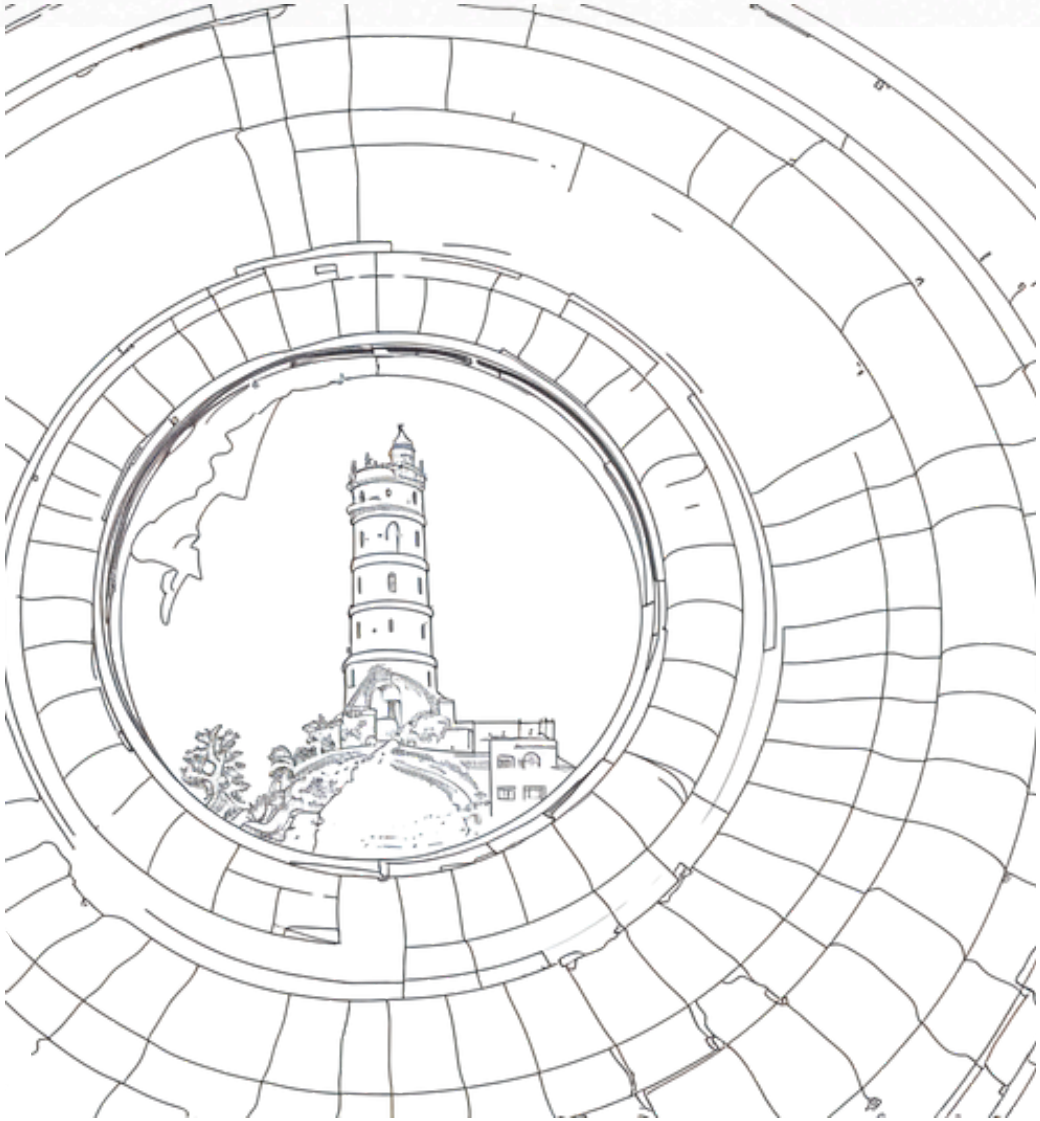
What does rising again mean for you?



“The crime of targeting and destroying archaeological sites
should spur the world and UNESCO into action to preserve
this great civilisational and cultural heritage,”

Gaza’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said after
Gaza’s Great Omari Masjid
was destroyed in an Israeli air strike
on December 8, 2023.

POST CARD





UNESCO World Heritage Centre

7 place de Fontenoy | |

75352 Paris 07 SP | | | France

Descend three meters beneath Omar Mukhtar Street to discover Hammam al-Samara, a centuries-old bathhouse and one of Gaza's most treasured historic landmarks. Admire its Mamluk-era architecture, with vaulted stone ceilings, intricate marble floors, and a sunlit dome adorned with colored glass. Heated by traditional wood-fired ovens, this remarkable sanctuary remains a powerful symbol of Palestinian heritage, resilience, and community tradition.

Hammam al-Samara: Guided Coloring Key

This master key connects specific areas of the historic bathhouse to traditional colors, helping you recreate the true architectural essence of the Mamluk era.

1. *The Soaring Vaulted Arches and Masonry*

Color Palette: Sandstone Beige, Warm Taupe, Soft Grey.

Description: The structural arches are built from ancient kurkar stone. Use alternating light beige and warm gray on individual stone blocks to mimic the historic ablaq masonry style common in Mamluk architecture.

2. *The Central Octagonal Fountain and Basin*

Color Palette: Charcoal Black, Terracotta Red, Creamy White.

Description: The intricate, interlocking geometric patterns inlaid around the fountain water basin look best when sharply contrasted. Alternate deep earthy red with pristine white and dark gray tiles to make the floor layout pop.

3. *The Pierced Skylight Dome (Qamariyyat)*

Color Palette: Amber Orange, Sapphire Blue, Emerald Green.

Description: The small circular openings embedded in the dome are made of colored glass. Color these windows vividly, then use light strokes of Pale Yellow extending downward to represent beams of sunlight cutting through the steam.

4. *The Wall Tiling and Arabesque Borders*

Color Palette: Turquoise Blue, Cobalt, Olive Green.

Description: The mosaic tiles lining the lower halves of the walls feature delicate floral and star shapes. Use rich blues and greens to capture the classic Mediterranean and Islamic ceramic heritage.

5. *The Brass Jug and Basin (Aftaba)*

Color Palette: Antique Gold, Burnished Bronze, Metallic Copper.

Description: The traditional washing vessels resting in the foreground should look heavy and metallic. Leave small white gaps along the edges to suggest a polished reflection on the engraved metalwork.

6. *The Text Banner and Framing Border*

Color Palette: Burnt Sepia, Deep Walnut, Roasted Coffee.

Description: Frame the entire composition like an ancient parchment page. Use dark, rich browns for the outer ornamental scrollwork and the Arabic calligraphy to anchor the page like a historical document.



HAMAAM
SAMARA

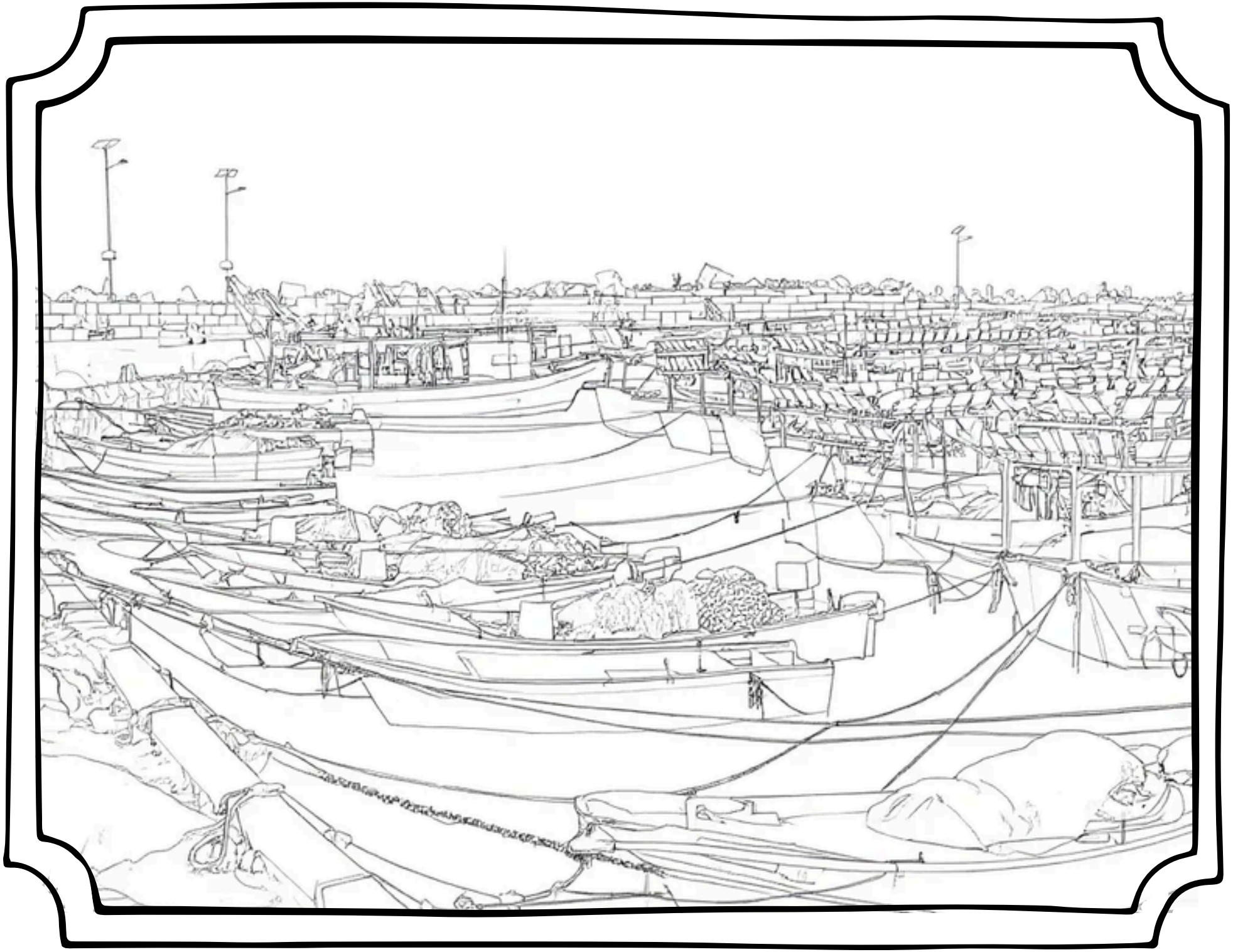
Gaza as a Port

In the Hellenistic period, between 250 BC and 70 AD, the port city was called Anthedon. Later, the name Anthedon became Tida or Theda. When the Byzantines conquered Gaza, they also used the port. As Arabic became standardized in the medieval period, it became known as El-Blakiyeh.

Throughout history, Gaza's position next to the Mediterranean Sea has shaped its culture. Gaza's location is strategic, built at the confluence of Asia and Africa. It's on winter and summer transport routes. Gaza has consistently functioned as a port city. Thus, its prominent marketplace, Souk al-Qissariya, has consistently served as a fluid hub of traded goods between West and East.

These ports traded goods like frankincense, myrrh, Indian spices, precious stones, pearls, ebony, silk, fine textiles, rare woods, feathers, and animal skins. As Yousef Aljamal describes, Gaza's most popular exports included clay and gold.

Looking out at the sea evokes the memory of what Gaza once represented: a cultural epicenter deeply connected to the rest of the world.



Masjid Abd Manaf

Gaza and its people hold a unique place in our hearts, honoring our Prophet's ﷺ lineage and serving as a strategic stronghold for the defense of Muslim lands. Gaza has a history steeped in nobility, virtue, and honor.

Honoring a noble lineage

Gaza has been the resting place for many noble figures. In a challenging year during 5th-century Arabia, Makkah faced severe food shortages. In response to this crisis, ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Manāf, a respected Quraysh leader responsible for providing food and water to pilgrims and the great grandfather of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, undertook a remarkable initiative. He traveled to the Levant (al-Shām- Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon), spending all his wealth to purchase baked cakes, which he then crumbled (hashama) to make a nourishing broth (tharīd) for the pilgrims. Being the first to feed Makkans tharīd, this selfless act earned him the title 'Hāshim,' the one who crumbles or breaks. In addition to addressing the food shortage, Hāshim enhanced the water supply by digging multiple wells, implemented a foster-care system in which wealthy families fostered the less fortunate, and introduced a system of two annual trade journeys to al-Shāam in the summer and Yemen in the winter—the Qur'an (106:1-5) documents these trade journeys, showing their role in providing provision and security to Makkan society.

Predating the advent of Islam, Hāshim's dedication to preserving human life and fostering social solidarity left a lasting legacy. Whilst returning from a journey to al-Shām, Hāshim passed away in Gaza and was buried there. This marked the inception of the region's esteemed status, with Gaza playing a pivotal role as a hub for Arab trade expeditions. Residents of the Arabian peninsula, including some of Hāshim's relatives from the Banū ʿAmr ibn Kināna tribe, were drawn to settle in Gaza, given its strategic location within that trade hub.

During the 8th century, in the Zeitoun district of Gaza, a noble descendant of Ḥāshim was born: the esteemed scholar and founder of the Shāfiʿī school of thought, Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820). The place of al-Shāfiʿī's birth later transformed into an interdisciplinary school that, despite enduring challenges, today persists as a Qur'anic institution, intellectual hub, and library.

In this vein, Gaza has continued to honor the Prophet's ﷺ lineage, becoming known among Muslims as Gaza-Hāshim.



The Great Omari Masjid Library

The Great Omari Masjid Library dates back roughly seven centuries. In 676 AH (1277 AD), the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari ordered its establishment as a center for knowledge and learning in Gaza. He initially endowed the library with around 20,000 books and manuscripts, making it a prominent intellectual hub.

Today, the library consists of two modest rooms, each spanning over 50 square meters. Despite their size, they symbolize a long-standing tradition of scholarship and cultural preservation within the masjid complex.

The mosque housed a historic library on its western side, established more than 700 years ago.
Before its destruction, it held approximately 20,000 books and was the third-largest library in Palestine, covering 4,100 square meters.

The library's collection included a vast array of manuscripts, from comprehensive works to smaller scholarly treatises, with the oldest dating back to 920 AH (1514).

Among its most notable manuscripts was "Sharh al-Ghawamid fi 'Ilm al-Fara'id" by Badr al-Din al-Mardini, a text on Islamic inheritance law that is approximately 500 years old, according to the Palestinian Studies Institute.



Before Israel's war, the Omari Masjid library was a quiet refuge for students, historians, and religious scholars. Its shelves held thousands of works spanning literature, Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic language, medicine, and law.

Researchers from across Gaza once came here to study rare manuscripts and historic texts.

For generations, its library served as a vital centre of learning. The mosque itself was severely damaged when it was bombed on 8 December 2023 during Israel's genocide in Gaza.

For Gaza's heritage activists, the loss is immeasurable. "Libraries are not just buildings filled with books," Haneen al-Amsi, director of Eyes on Heritage and the coordinator of the volunteer effort said. "They hold the intellectual history of a society. When they are destroyed, part of that memory disappears." Operating under the Gaza-based non-profit group Eyes on Heritage, they spent hours sifting through rubble, cataloguing damaged texts and preparing them for possible restoration.



The Library of the Great Omari Masjid

Nestled within the historic Great Omari Masjid, this treasured library has safeguarded knowledge for centuries. Its shelves have held ancient manuscripts, religious texts, and works of science, history, and literature, preserving the wisdom of generations. Scholars, students, and visitors have long gathered here in search of learning and inspiration.

As you colour these books, imagine the stories, ideas, and discoveries contained within their pages. Reflect on the countless hands that carefully copied, studied, and protected these works through the ages. The library stands as a symbol of Palestinian heritage, learning, and resilience– *a reminder that knowledge can endure across centuries, connecting the past with the future.*


فلسطين
من النهر إلى البحر
القدس
الأرض إلى النجم
غزة
أرض الزيتون
فلسطين
في القلب
الأرض لنا
الفلسطينيون
النكبة
من النهر فيسبفلون

Zawiya Souq I

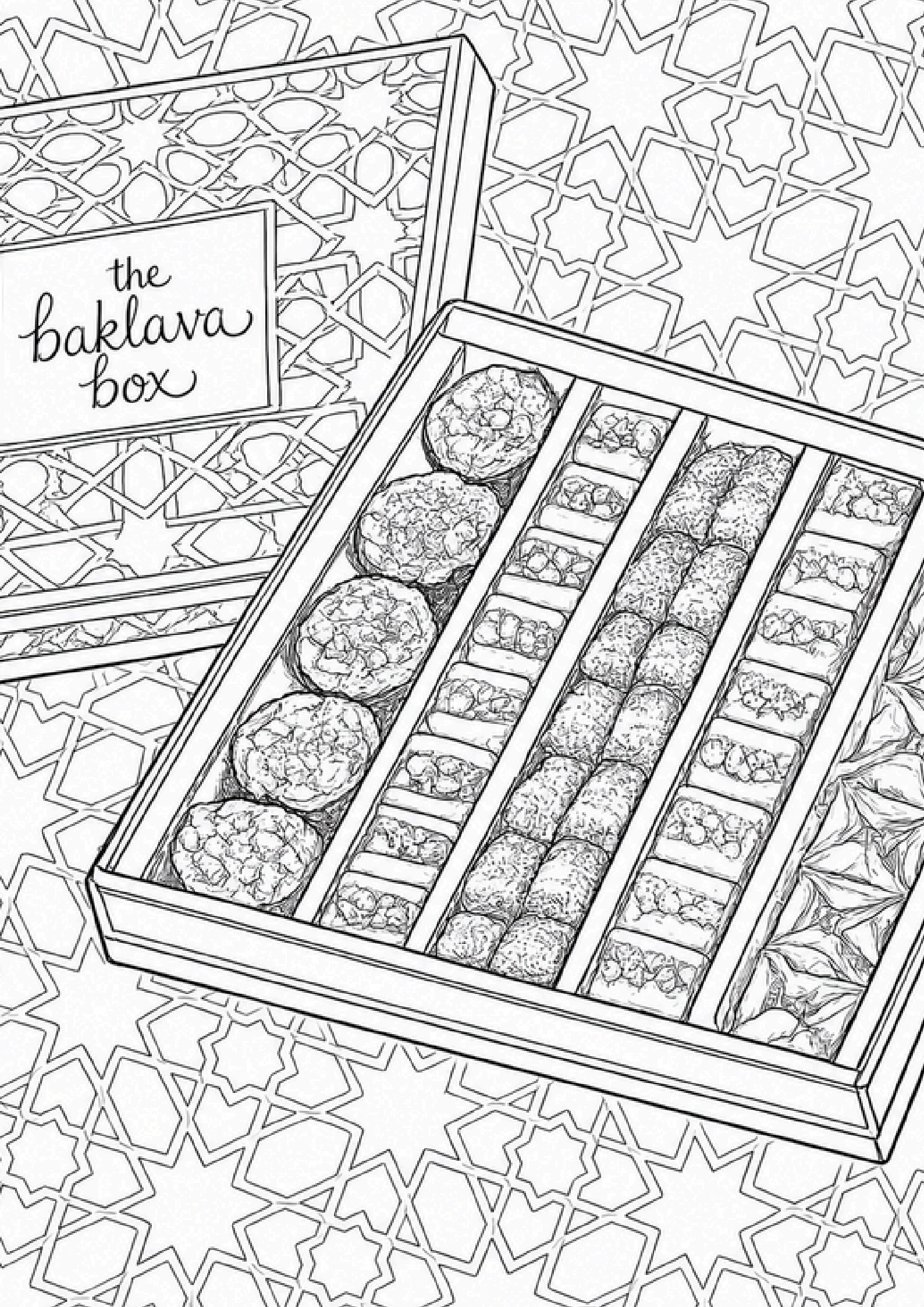
Stepping into the Zawiya Souq,
you are instantly wrapped in a dense
blanket of sound, colour, and aroma. The narrow alleyways press close, humming with the vibrant energy of vendors and shoppers.

As you approach the sweet shop, the aroma shifts dramatically to melted ghee, toasted nuts, and boiling sugar syrup.

Giant circular shining metal trays sit on the counter, displaying hundreds of perfectly cut diamond-shaped pastries.
You watch the baker pour glistening, warm orange-blossom syrup over a freshly baked batch, making the flaky layers hiss and crackle.

A heavy dusting of bright green, crushed pistachios coats the center of each piece, contrasting beautifully against the deep, golden-brown crust of the crisp, paper-thin phyllo dough.

To walk through this souq is to witness the unbreakable spirit of a people who find joy in the details, warmth in community, and hope in the preservation of their heritage.


the
baklava
box

Zawiya Souq II

Zawiya Souq is one of the oldest and most historically significant markets in Gaza City's Old City.
For centuries, the souq has served as a vibrant commercial center where merchants sold spices, textiles, fresh produce, household goods, and traditional crafts, making it an essential part of daily life for generations of Gazans.

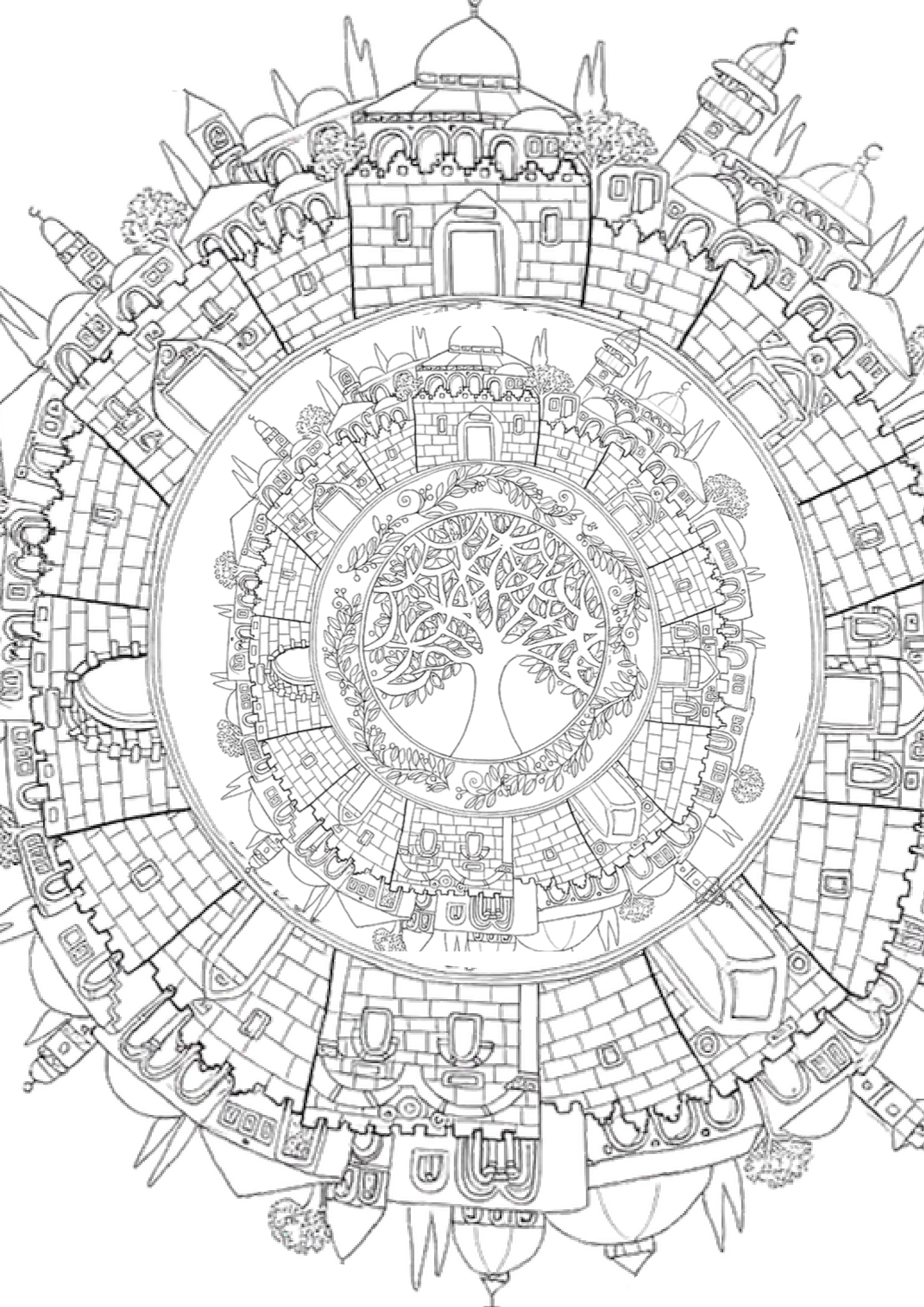
Beyond its role as a marketplace, Zawiya Souq represents the living heritage of Gaza. Its narrow alleys, stone buildings, and traditional shopfronts preserve the character of the city's historic urban fabric, offering a glimpse into centuries of commerce and community life.
As you colour in the bustling alleyways of the souq, remember Al Zawiya as one of the oldest continuously used markets in Palestine. It stands as a symbol of Gaza's resilience, and cultural identity.

Did you know there's a tree in Gaza that refuses to be uprooted?

In the heart of the Al-Daraj neighbourhood in Gaza stands the Sidra tree, believed to be over 1,400 years old. Legend has it that when attempts were made to uproot it, the bulldozer broke down—leaving the tree untouched, a living testament to the idea that roots cannot be torn out and resilience cannot be defeated.

Locals also use parts of the Sidra tree for natural remedies, making it not only a symbol of history, but also of healing and life.

The Sidra tree is more than just wood and leaves—it is memory, medicine, and a reminder that even in the harshest storms, life clings on. Its roots, like the people of Gaza, run too deep to be erased.



Souk al-Qissariya

Directly adjacent to the Omari Mosque, the Souk al-Qissariya was historically visited most often on religious holidays. Many families come to al-Qissariya to buy gold for a newly-wed bride. One can access the Omari Mosque through a small door tucked between the shops.

"Al-Qissariya" is an Arabic transliteration of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus. "Caesar" turned into qasr, which came to mean castle or fort in Arabic. Qissariya means "many castles," referring to its long, arcaded structure containing a row of tiny shops in parallel walls.

Souk al-Qissariya used to sell goods from all over the Eastern hemisphere during the medieval period, when the Silk Road trade peaked. Gaza was the last stop in the ancient incense trade route, which connected ports in the Mediterranean to as far as east China.

SOUQAL-DHAHAB
GOLD MARKET

600 Year-Old Marketplace

Located in the Muslim Quarter of Old Gaza City, Souk al-Qissariya was built in the 14th century during the Mamluk Empire. It has 44 shops: 21 on the north side and 23 on the south side.

Mamluk Inscription
On the walls of the Bazaar, one can see inlaid stone text. These inscriptions were carved in the Bahri Mamluk period (1250-1382) when Souk al-Qissariya was built.

Part of the inscription says:
"In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. One who believes in God and the Last Day and performs prayer and zakat (alms/charity) does not fear anything but God."

The inscription honors the patron – the person who commissioned the building: "The victorious sultan of the world and religion, Muhammad, son of the martyr sultan Al-Mansur Qalawun." Ibn Qalawun ruled Egypt intermittently between 1294 - 1341. Al-Qissariya was built in the 1300s.

مجوهرات
Jewellery
جوال
Jawal
البلدة القديمة
The Old City
الجوهرجي

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