

WHAT'S IN A NAME? - ALLENBY OR "AL NEBI"

Australian Curriculum, Year 9 – ACDSEH095, ACHHS172

How an Old Arab Prophecy Helped Save Jerusalem from Destruction – Jill Curry



Sir Edmund Allenby was the General in charge of the entire Allied Forces in the Middle East from late June 1917 to the end of this campaign in 1918. He was known to the Turks and the local Arabs as "Al Nebi". In Arabic this happens to mean 'prophet of god'.

Major Vivian Gilbert commanded the 180th Brigade (Machine Gun Company) of the 60th division of the British army through the Sinai, Palestine and Syria. He wrote a book about his adventures in which he records hearing an Arab expression which had been around for over 200 years at the time of World War 1.

"When the Nile flows into Palestine, then shall the prophet from the west drive the Turk from Jerusalem."

Since the River Nile is over 300 kilometres away from Palestine with the forbidding Sinai desert in between, this must have appeared ridiculous to the Arabs and meant that it could never happen.

However, as the Allied troops progressed through the Sinai, they had built a pipe from the Nile at Kantara to provide water for the troops and the horses.

After the breakthrough Light Horse charge at Beersheba on October 31, 1917, the British and Allied troops continued to pursue the Turkish armies through the Judean hills towards Hebron, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The British troops first travelled westwards and took Gaza by November 7, on the third attempt, and then moved north along the Mediterranean coast. From there, they battled their way up the foothills along the notoriously vulnerable Jaffa-Jerusalem road, which holds easy hideouts for snipers. They took the high point of Samuel's tomb which had evaded Richard the Lionheart, but each attack brought a counter attack and a stalemate occurred. Meanwhile the Australians were closing in from the south and south west of Jerusalem. Allenby decided to surround Jerusalem and force a surrender. This succeeded – partly because of the Arab prophecy and what the Turkish soldiers saw happening before their eyes.



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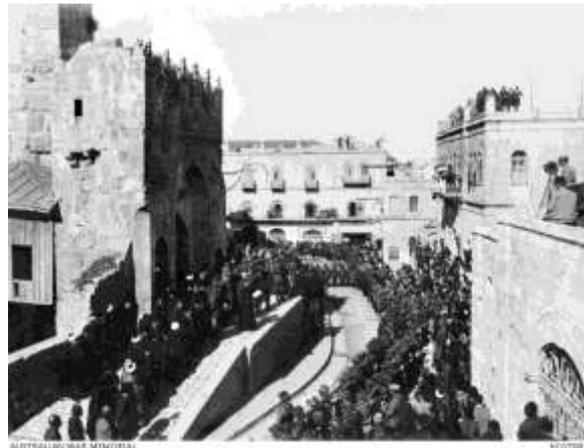
Just before the capture of Jerusalem, the pipeline had crossed the border into Palestine and was pumping 4,500 litres of water a day to north of Gaza.

So Allenby (Al Nebi – the prophet of god) from the west had come and driven the Turks

from Jerusalem just as the waters of the Nile had begun to flow into Palestine!

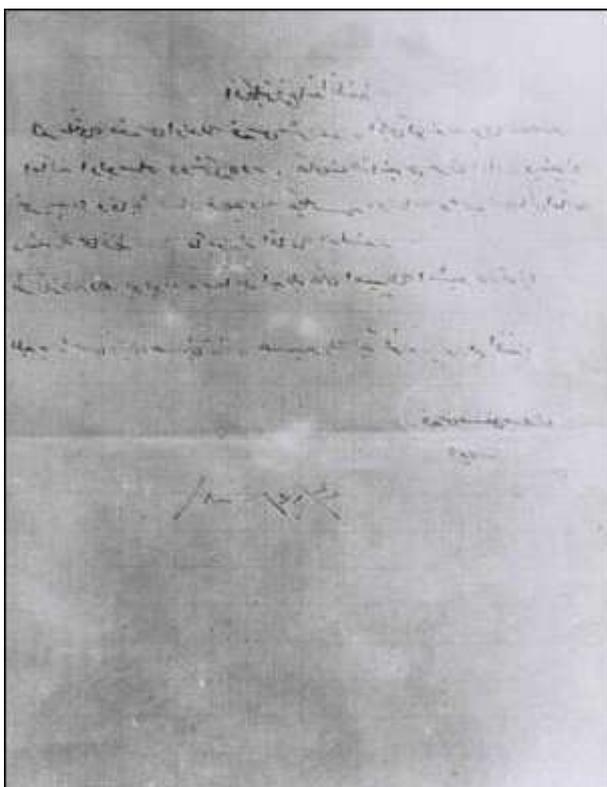
Could anyone but the Almighty God arrange a ‘co-incidence’ like this?

On the evening of December 9th, the 10th Light Horse regiment was the first representative of the Desert Mounted Corp to enter Jerusalem. They were greeted with jubilation. The local Jews were celebrating the Feast of Dedication (Hanukka), which remembers the overthrow of their Greek rulers. Now another liberation was unfolding – this time from 400 years under the Muslim Ottoman regime.



On December 11, 1917, the soldiers, including 65 ANZACs, formed the guard of honour for the official handover of the city on the balcony of the Citadel of David. This fortress dates back to the Romans who drove the Jews from Jerusalem in 70 CE. Now the Jewish people hoped for a new day when perhaps their exiled relatives could return to their ancient homeland and live in peace.

Text of the Decree of the Surrender of Jerusalem into British Control



Due to the severity of the siege of the city and the suffering that this peaceful country has endured from your heavy guns; and for fear that these deadly bombs will hit the holy places, we are forced to hand over to you the city through Hussein Bey al-Husseini, the mayor of Jerusalem, hoping that you will protect Jerusalem the way we have protected it for more than five hundred years.

Signed Izzat the Mutasarrif of Jerusalem

Source:

Gilbert, Major Vivian., *The Romance of the Last Crusade with Allenby to Jerusalem*, Appleton and Company. Pages 177-178

<http://www.beersheba100.com.au/>

Pictures:

1. Sir Edmund Allenby - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Allenby
2. Building the pipeline through the Sinai desert. Australian War Memorial - <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/B02905A/>
3. Allenby entering Jerusalem 1917 – British Official Photograph Q12617, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jerusalem
4. The official surrender of Jerusalem December 11, 1917 – Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/H10708/>
5. <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/jerusalemdecree.htm>

Powerpoint:

1. Sir Edmund Allenby - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Allenby
2. Gilbert, Major Vivian., *The Romance of the Last Crusade with Allenby to Jerusalem*, Appleton and Company, Page 177
3. Tomb of the Prophet Samuel - <http://www.israeldailypicture.com/2011/08/what-you-probably-didnt-know-about-nebi.html>
4. Building the pipeline through the Sinai desert. Australian War Memorial - <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/B02905A/>
5. Writing only
6. Chanuka lights - <http://imgarcade.com/1/chanukah-menorah-in-window/>
7. Allenby entering Jerusalem 1917 – British Official Photograph Q12617, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jerusalem
8. The official surrender of Jerusalem December 11, 1917 – Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/H10708/>
9. <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/jerusalemdecree.htm>