

# Baysan Cemetery



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Like many Palestinian Islamic and Christian sanctities, Baysan cemetery has been subjected to the most severe violations since Israeli authorities declared a devastating war on them to deliberately uproot and erase the Palestinian history and presence from the face of historic Palestine.



Islamic Cemetery of Baysan

Following the Nakba events of 1948, the residents of the city of Baysan became refugees in the diaspora and some were scattered across historic Palestine. Even the dead did not rest in peace; the Palestinian Islamic cemetery of Baysan was vandalised and desecrated. Hundreds of graves were smashed and scattered. The surviving tombstones stand, in their own way, to document some of the features of the city that mediates Tiberias and Jericho.



Smashed Tombstones at the Islamic Cemetery of Baysan

Like other Palestinian towns, the historic and even ancient tombstones at the Islamic Cemetery of Baysan stone antiques that reflect the features of the social, economic and cultural life of the past eras; eras that have not been fully documented.



A Grave The Tombstones of Which Has Been Smashed

Baysan used to be known before 1948 as the bride of the valleys, however, as a result of the violations and vandalism, the Islamic Cemetery of the town looks like a warzone and does not reflect that history of prosperity and beauty.

For example, the very few graves that have survived the vandalism show that some of the tombstones were designed and decorated according to the status of certain people, like leaders and Imams and so forth. One also notices that most of the graves have writings with ancient Arabic calligraphy and some have Persian calligraphy, while others have the pointing engravings and inscriptions.



Meezaan defends and renovates the Islamic Cemetery of Baysan

## **Unprecedented Achievement**

The Palestinian human rights organisation, Meezaan, reached out to the Bait Shan municipality, an Israeli settlement build on top of the Palestinian town, Baysan, in order to allow families that were displaced and kicked out of Baysan to go back to burying their deceased at the town's cemetery.

Previously it was illegal to visit the cemetery, however, Meezaan facilitated fencing the cemetery to protect it from future vandalism, in addition to extracting a court decision that allows us to renovate the graves at the cemetery. It is worth mentioning that after the Nakba of 1948, a few families managed to go back to Baysan, however they count to only 50 families. These families were not allowed to use the cemetery and had to bury their deceased in neighboring towns and villages like Al Naura and Tayba Zubiya.

### **Images of Islamic Cemetery of Baysan after Renovation**







The fence and gate which were facilitated by Meezaan to be installed in 2020