


***Destroyed Palestinian Villages:
A Reign of Terror & Systematic Expulsion***

Dayr Yasin

[Before 1948](#) [Occupation & Depopulation](#) [Israeli Settlement](#) [The Village Today](#)

Dayr Yasin Before 1948

The village was built on the eastern slopes of a hill, the peak of which was some 800 meters in height and commanded a wide view all around. It faced the western suburbs of Jerusalem (approx. location at  on map)--about 1 km away--from which it was divided by a terraced valley planted with fig, almond, and olive trees. Along the northern rim of the valley ran a secondary road that linked Dayr Yasin to these suburbs and to the main Jerusalem-Jaffa road 2 km to the north. *Dayr* means "monastery" in Arabic. This was not an uncommon component of Palestinian village names and is hardly surprising in a village so close to Jerusalem. There was in fact a large ruin at the southwestern edge of the village which was known simply as the "Dayr."



It appears that the nucleus of the settlement in early Ottoman times was at *Khirbat Ayn al-Tut*--"The Mulberry Spring Khirba"--some 500 meters to the west of the village site. In 1596 the village of Khirbat Ayn al-Tut was in the *nahiya* and *liwa'* of Jerusalem with a population thirty-nine. It paid taxes on wheat, barley, and olive trees.

The approximate date when settlement shifted to Dayr Yasin is not known, but it is obvious that the name is partly derived from a Shaykh Yasin whose tomb stood close to the ruins of the Dayr. Little is known about Shaykh Yasin or about when the mosque bearing his name and tomb was built.

In the late nineteenth century, most of Dayr Yasin's sturdily constructed stone houses were crowded together in a small area known as the *Hara* ("Quarter"). Two springs, one to the north and the other to the south, provided the village with water. All the inhabitants of Dayr Yasin were Muslim. In 1906 the westernmost Jewish suburb of Jerusalem, Giv'at Sha'ul, was built across the valley from Dayr Yasin, followed respectively by Montefiore, Beit Hakerem and Yefenof. The secondary road linking Dayr Yasin to Jerusalem and the road to Jaffa ran through Givat Sha'ul.

During World War I the Ottomans fortified the hilltop near Dayr Yasin as part of the defense system of Jerusalem. On December 1917, these fortifications were stormed by troops under the command of General Allenby in the final offensive that led, on the following day, to the fall of Jerusalem into Allied hands.

Until the 1920s, Dayr Yasin's livelihood largely depended on agriculture, supplemented by livestock, but the building boom in Jerusalem under the Mandate changed the basis of its economy. The area around Yasin was rich in limestone--the favored building material in Jerusalem. Early in the Mandate, the