

Jerusalem

The Concern of Every Muslim

Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

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Publisher's Note

Praise is due to Allah Alone; peace and blessings be upon the last Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

We have sought to publish this book for the sake of enlightening, directing the attention of, and mobilizing Muslims to this cause. It is intended to remind Arabs and Muslims of their role in and duty towards the cause, each from their own position and place.

The importance of translating published material concerning the status quo in Jerusalem cannot be stressed enough, particularly with regard to the reshaping occurring to the city at the hands of the Zionist criminals while the international community remains silent and the Arab community disappointingly fails to fulfill their duty toward their sacred mosque.

New Vision would like to express deep thanks to *Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradany* for giving us the chance to translate such a precious work, supplicating Almighty Allah to make it profitable to Islam and Muslims. We would also like to thank our team, especially *Asma Muhammad Yusuf, Muhammad Sha`ban, Muhammad S. Abd Al-Zaher,* and *Omar Shihab Al Deen* for their efforts in translating and revising the major part of this book. Great appreciation is due to *Mahmud Kastawi* and *Emily Richardson*, our editors, under whose guidance and supervision the subject matter took form.

Finally, all praise is due to Allah; through His Blessings all good deeds are completed.

General Director

Sheikfi Muhammad `Abdu

Introduction

Praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon His Messengers and the chosen seal Messenger, Prophet Muhammad, and upon his Companions, the sources of right guidance; whoever follows their example is truly guided.

This is the tenth message of Rasa`il Tarsheed As-Sahwah (Message of awakening guidance), which deals with one of the most important issues before us as both Muslims and Arabs: Al-Quds Ash-Sharif (the Noble Jerusalem).

Jerusalem is facing the direction of the wind, contending with an imminent danger that has set its goal and schemed to swallow Jerusalem, Judaize it, and uproot it from its Arab and Muslim origins. This enemy has declared its decision, challenged, confronted, and aggressed and has not found anyone from among the entire nation of Islam who can stand against it. There is an Arab proverb that says, "O Pharaoh, what has made you be such a tyrant? He said, 'I did not find anyone to stand against me.'"

Through these pages, we are trying to warn the unaware, awaken the sleeping, remind the forgetful, encourage the scared, sustain the hesitant, reveal the traitors, and strengthen the Mujahids (fighters in Allah's Cause) who have refused to give up, freed themselves from weakness, and been determined to live with dignity and die as martyrs.

Jerusalem is not for Palestinians alone, even though they are most worthy of it, and it is not for Arabs alone, even though they are the most appropriate ones to defend it. It is for every Muslim wherever they may be, in the eastern, western, northern, or southern parts of the land and whether they are a ruler or ruled, literate or illiterate, rich or poor, man or woman, each according to his or her ability.

O nation of Islam, rise; it is time for persistence and the alarm has sounded: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa, Al-Aqsa.

Jerusalem: The Concern of Every Muslim

[And say (O Muhammad) 'Do deeds! Allah will see your deeds, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be brought back to the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.']

(At-Tawbah: 105)

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

Jerusalem in the Creed of Muslims

Muslims all over the world, regardless of their different sects, parties, and ideologies, firmly believe that Jerusalem enjoys a prominent religious status in the heart of Islamic creed. No wonder then that all Muslims fervently stand together to defend this sacred city, protect its sanctity and sacred places, sacrifice their souls, and painstakingly spare no effort for the sake of its safety and driving the aggressors away from it.

However, Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians have adopted different views with regard to the issue of making peace with Israel: Is it permissible or not? And if permissible, would it be feasible or not? Yet, they all have a profound belief in the eternal nature of Jerusalem as an Islamic and Arab city and the obligation of resisting all the desperate Israeli attempts to Judaize it, alter its features, distort its history, and obliterate its Arab, Islamic, and Christian historicity. Indeed, Jerusalem has a predestined Islamic sanctity. It embodies in the Muslim conscience and sentiment the first Qiblah (direction towards which Muslims turn their faces in prayer), the land of *Isra'* (the Night Journey of the Prophet - peace be upon him - from Makkah to Jerusalem) and *Mi`raj* (the Prophet's Ascension to Heaven), the third sacred city in Islam, the land of prophecies and blessings, and the land of Jihad, as will be explained in the following pages.

Jerusalem: The first Qiblah

The first image that is conjured up in the mind, conscience, and religious thought of Muslims regarding the status of Jerusalem is that it is the "First Qiblah" towards which the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions turned their faces in Prayer since Prayer was ordained on the Night of *Isra'* and *Mi`raj*, in the 10th year of the inception of the Islamic Message – i.e. three years before the *Hijrah*. From the early days of Muslims in Makkah until sixteen months after their Hijrah to Madinah, Muslims prayed towards Jerusalem. Then, the Divine Command came to them in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an ordering them to turn their faces in Prayer towards the Ka`bah, the Sacred Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Haram). Allah (Exalted be He) says,

[And from wheresoever you start forth (for Prayer), turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah), and wheresoever you are, turn your faces toward it (when you pray).]

(Al-Baqarah: 150)

There is still a monument of the place in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah where the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions performed one prayer time, part of which was with their faces in the direction of Jerusalem while the other part was performed with their faces in the direction of Makkah. It has recently been renovated and been taken great care of. Today, Muslims still flock to visit it and perform Prayer therein.

Upon such conversion in the direction of the Qiblah, the Jews in Al-Madinah stirred up considerable suspicion about it, and the Ever-Glorious Qur'an refuted their pretensions by accentuating that all directions belong to Almighty Allah and that He (Exalted be He) alone decrees which of them should be the Qiblah of the one who performs Prayer:

[The fools (pagans, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say, 'What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah [Prayer direction (towards Jerusalem)] to which they used to face in Prayer.' Say, (O Muhammad) 'To Allah belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a Straight Way.'" The verses then go on declaring, "And We made the Qiblah (Prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger).]

(Al-Baqarah: 142 - 3)

Among their claims was that "The prayer of the Muslims during all the years preceding (the change of the Qiblah) were nullified and wasted because it was not performed towards the right Qiblah". Therefore, Allah (Exalted be He) replies, *[And Allah would never make your faith (Prayers) to be lost (i.e. your Prayers offered towards Jerusalem)]*, as the Prayers were performed towards a valid Qiblah that had been decreed by Allah (Exalted be He).

Jerusalem: The land of the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj*

The second symbol of significance that Jerusalem represents for the Islamic conscience is that Almighty Allah made it the destination of the earthly Night Journey (*Isra'*) and the point of departure for the heavenly ascension to Heaven

(*Mi`raj*). Almighty Allah ordained that the blessed Night Journey of the Prophet Muhammad commence from Makkah, specifically from Al-Masjid Al-Haram, where the Prophet (peace be upon him) then lived, and end at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. Such a course of action was neither arbitrary nor haphazard, but was, rather, assigned according to a divine plan and for a divine purpose, namely that the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers (Muhammad) should meet the Messengers and Prophets there and lead them in Prayer. This situation implies a declaration of the passage of religious leadership of the world from the children of Israel to a new universal nation (*Ummah*), a new universal Messenger and a new universal scripture. Almighty Allah says,

[*And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the Worlds.*]

(Al-Anbiya': 107)

And,

[*Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the Worlds.*]

(Al-Furqan: 1)

The Glorious Qur'an clearly identified the point of departure and the destination of this *Isra'* and *Mi`raj* journey in the verses of the eponymous sura (Al-Isra'). Allah (Exalted be He) says,

[*Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allah) Who took His servant (Muhammad) for a journey by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem), the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him (Muhammad) of Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc.)*]

(Al-Isra': 1)

Despite the reverent position and glory of the Sacred Mosque Al-Masjid Al-Haram, the verses overstepped it and here underlined the following qualifications and characteristics of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, saying "*the neighborhood whereof We have blessed*". Therefore, if the neighborhood of the Mosque is blessed, then it follows that the mosque itself is more worthy to be blessed.

The story of the *Isra'* and *Mi`raj* is invested with symbols and denotations that reveal the significance of such a blessed spot, where Jibril tied the Buraq (the

miraculous mount that transported the Prophet from Makkah to Jerusalem) to the Sacred Rock waiting for the return of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from his *Mi`raj* – the journey that commenced from Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa through the high heavens to *Sidrat Al-Muntaba* [lote-tree of the utmost boundary beyond which none can pass]. Such a journey endowed the Muslims with blissful memories of *Al-Buraq* Wall and the Sacred Rock.

Indeed, if Jerusalem were not a focal point in the journey, then the *Mi`raj* could have taken place directly from Makkah to Heaven. However, passing by the consecrated station of Jerusalem is purposeful, as is indicated by the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and the noble *Hadiths*.

Among the fruits of the *Isra'* journey is establishing a connection between the journey's point of departure and its destination, i.e. between Al-Masjid Al-Haram and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. This connection has a great impact and connotation on the perception, conscience, and sentiment of Muslims that the sanctity of each of the two Mosques becomes inseparable from that of the other. Consequently, one who renounces either of them is almost abandoning the other.

Jerusalem: The third sacred city

With the revered city of Makkah being the most sacred city in Islam due to the honor of housing Al-Masjid Al-Haram, and "Teebah" or Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah coming second in ranking with the honor of housing the Mosque of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and being the place of his grave, Jerusalem or "Bayt Al-Maqdis" comes third in Islam. Jerusalem enjoys the honor of holding within its boundaries Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, the neighborhood of which Almighty Allah has blessed. In this context, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in the authentic hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, "*Do not set out on a journey except for three Mosques i.e. Al-Masjid Al-Haram, Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, (in Jerusalem), and this mosque of mine (Al-masjid An-Nabawi).*" (Agreed upon)

Hence, all the mosques are equal in honor with regard to the reward of praying in them, and a Muslim is not allowed to set out on a journey – with the purpose of praying or religious devotion - for any mosque other than the three distinguished

mosques stated in the hadith. Therefore, the hadith came in the restrictive mode implying that such honorable exception does not apply in analogy to other mosques.

In fact, the Ever-Glorious Qur'an underscored the significance and sanctity of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa even before the building of the Mosque of the Prophet (Al-Masjid An-Nabawi) six years before the *Hijrah*. Besides, the Prophetic traditions came to reiterate what the Glorious Qur'an stated, such as the above quoted hadith and the hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*The reward of) A prayer in Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa equals (that of) five hundred prayers in any other mosque, except for Al-Masjid Al-Haram and Al-Masjid An-Nabawi*". (Agreed upon). Moreover, Abu Dharr reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, "Which mosque was first built on earth?" He (peace be upon him) replied, "*Al-Masjid Al-Haram*." Then he was asked, "Which was next?" He said, "*Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa*" (Agreed upon).

When Islam declared Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa the third of the two great mosques (Al-Haram and An-Nabawi), it consequently annexed Jerusalem as a third to the two sacred cities (Makkah and Madinah). In this way, it intended to establish one of the basic principles, namely that it (Islam) has come not to destroy but to construct, to fulfill, and not to demolish. For Jerusalem has been the land of prophethood, and the Muslims with greater reason are the most entitled among people to acknowledge Allah's Prophets and Messengers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) once said to the Jews of Madinah, "*We have a closer connection with Moses than you do*".

Jerusalem: The land of Prophethood and blessings

Jerusalem is part of the land of Palestine. Rather, it is the gem and seed pearl and the kernel of it. Besides, Almighty Allah has attributed benediction to it in five verses of the Glorious Qur'an:

First: In the sura of Al-Isra', Almighty Allah described Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa as follows: [*...the neighborhood whereof We have blessed*].

Second: Upon mentioning the story of Friend of Allah, Prophet Ibrahim, Almighty Allah says,

[*And We rescued him (Ibrahim) and Lot to the land which We have blessed for the Worlds.*]

(Al-Anbiya': 71).

Third: Upon mentioning the story of Musa, Allah says about the Children of Israel, after drowning Pharaoh and his troops,

[And We made the people who were considered weak inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which We have blessed.]

(Al-A`raf: 137)

Fourth: Reporting the story of Sulayman (Solomon) and the blessings Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed upon him, a sovereignty the likeness of which none after him will ever possess, including subjecting the wind to blow by his command, Almighty Allah says,

[And to Sulayman (We subjected) the wind strongly raging, running by his command towards the land which We had blessed.]

(Al-Anbiya': 81)

Fifth: Upon mentioning the story of *Saba'* (Sheba) and how Almighty Allah endowed them with safety and prosperity, He (Exalted be He) says,

[And We placed between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen, and We made the stages (of journey) between them easy (saying), "Travel in them safely both by night and day."]

(Saba': 18)

Such towns that Almighty Allah had blessed are the land of Palestine and the Levant.

The reputable exegete of the Glorious Qur'an, Al-Alusi, said, "The towns referred to – in the verses – as being blessed are the villages of the Levant, due to the opulent trees and fruits and the abundant life with which its people are endowed. Ibn `Abbas asserted, "They are the villages of Bayt Al-Maqdis", and Ibn `Atiyah said, "The exegetes unanimously agree on this opinion".¹

Commenting on Almighty Allah's Saying, "*By the fig, and the olive. By Mount Sinai. And by this city of security (Makkah)*" (At-Tin: 1 – 3), a number of exegetes of the Glorious Qur'an – from among the early and late scholars – viewed that the "fig" and the "olive" is an implicit reference to the land or the city where they grow, namely *Bayt Al-Maqdis*. Moreover, Ibn Kathir added, "Some *Imams* said, 'the verse refers to three places, to each of which Almighty Allah sent one of the resolute Prophets (*Ulu Al-*

ʿAzīm). The first of these places is *Bayt Al-Maqdis*, where Almighty Allah sent *ʿIsa ibn Maryam* – Jesus – (peace be upon them); the second is Sinai, where Almighty Allah addressed Musa ibn ʿImran; the third is Makkah, the city of security whosoever enters it is granted peace". According to this exegesis or interpretation, the three places go together in harmony and congruence. For, if the city of security refers to the cradle of Islam where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) preached his message, and Mount Sinai implies the birthplace of Judaism and the Message of Musa, then the "fig and the olive" refer to the Message of ʿIsa, who grew near *Bayt Al-Maqdis* and delivered his famous sermon on the Mount of Olive.²

Jerusalem: The land of garrisoning and Jihad

For Muslims, Jerusalem is the land of garrisoning and Jihad, since the Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths on the virtue of Prayer therein included good tidings that Jerusalem will be opened by Islam, and that Muslims would gain sovereignty over it, and that they shall flock to visit its mosque to pray and worship the Almighty there. Sure enough, Jerusalem – previously known as *Ihya'* – was opened during the reign of the second Caliph in Islam, ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab. The then-patriarch of the city, Sophronios, stipulated that he would hand in the keys of Jerusalem only to the Caliph himself, and not to any of his army generals. Hence, ʿUmar set out from Madinah to Jerusalem in an extraordinary historic journey to receive the keys of the city, and concluded a momentous peace treaty, known as "*Al-ʿUhdab Al-ʿUmarīyyab*", with the Christian citizens of the town. According to this treaty, the Caliph guaranteed safety for their souls and properties, their places of worship, freedom of belief, and practice of their rituals. A number of the prominent Muslim figures, such as Khalid ibn Al-Walid, ʿAbdurrahman ibn ʿAwf, ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿAas, and Muʿawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, then witnessed and testified to the treaty.³

It is worth noting that Almighty Allah had informed His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that this sacred land will be under threat of occupation by the enemies. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged his Ummah to garrison there and undertake the activities of Jihad to defend it from falling into the hands of its enemies, or to liberate it in case it was destined to fall in their hands. He (peace be upon him) foresaw the prospective decisive battle between the Muslims and the

Jews, ensuring that victory will eventually be on the side of the Muslims and that everything – including stones and trees – will assist the Muslims in their battle. He (peace be upon him) added that the stones and the trees in the battlefield will inform the Muslims of the hideouts of their enemies, and the means of communication could be real or figurative.⁴

Moreover, Abu Umamah Al-Bahili narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "A group of my Ummah will remain constant to hold to the truth, conquering their enemies and unharmed by those who challenge them – except for what befalls them of distress – until the Command of Allah comes while they are still in that condition." They (the Companions) asked, "Where will they be (then), O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "In Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) and the vicinities of Bayt Al-Maqdis".⁵

Jerusalem Is Being Publicly Judaized

On the 2nd of December 1997, I was invited by the Islamic Research Council in London to participate in the activities of its first scientific conference on "Jerusalem" and to deliver a speech on the occasion. Thus, I attended the conference and said, at the beginning of my speech:

This year (1997), weighty and significant memories of our primary issue, the issue of Jerusalem and Palestine, are swarming. This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the first Zionist conference in Basel, Switzerland, that was held in 1897 A.C. under the presidency of Herzl, and the consequent emergence of the global Zionist Organization. It also marks the passing of eighty years since the sinister Balfour Declaration in 1917, promising the Jews a homeland in Palestine. Another memory that crosses the mind is the passing of half a century since the issuance of the international division resolution of Palestine, which paved the way for the rise of the state of Israel. It also coincides with the memory of the passing of thirty years since the occupation of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza in 1967, following the Six-Day War which broke out on June 5, 1967. Finally, there is the memory of the passing of twenty years since the visit of President Sadat to Israel in 1977, which represented the first flaw in the united block of the Arab stance towards Israel.

We now reap the colocyth of all these bitter events, the bitterest of which is the Israeli attempt to "Judaize" the Arab Islamic Jerusalem according to a contrived conspiracy and a premeditated scheme, and before the very eyes of more than two hundred and fifty million Arabs and more than a billion Muslims. This is also taking place despite the resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council, and with the benediction and support of the United States of America, the unique superpower that currently dominates the whole world.

Israel still pursues acts of "excavation" under Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa with the pretext of - as they allege - establishing a tourist city. Worth noting is that during the above mentioned conference, I heard the dear fellow Sheikh Ra'id Salah - head of Umm Al-Fahm Municipality and chief of its Islamic Movement - saying that he got the chance to see such excavation works and he warned that Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is threatened with the impending possibility of collapse. These words confirm what I always warn of: that Israel knows exactly when the mosque will collapse. The Israelis pre-planned and chose a certain time in the future in which they will trigger and announce such a collapse; a time when the Arabs would be preoccupied with other concerns that will distract them from such a disastrous misfortune, or at the worst they would reduce the expected protests of the Arabs against the collapse of the mosque to no more than meaningless noise that neither retrieves a pillaged right nor resists falsehood. Then, the world would also be busy with other striking events, which will almost certainly be brewed and perpetrated by Israel or Zionist powers themselves.

In such a way, Arab and Islamic Jerusalem - the land of sanctities, prophethood, and *Isra'* and *Mi`raj*, and the dominion of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, the jewel in the crown for Muslims and the neighborhood which Almighty Allah has blessed - is suffering premeditated Judaizing, schemed plundering, and deliberate usurpation. In like manner, the sacred Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is suffering a sure threat due to the continuous excavation works under and around it with the aim of its eventual demolition and the re-establishment of the alleged temple of the Jews on the site of the mosque.

Hence, the aim is clear-cut, the plan is evident, and the work is obvious and unanimously contrived by all Jews regardless of their inclinations or allegiances, be they religious or secular, of the unreserved and supercilious Likud Party or of the slippery and evasive Labor Party. Despite this, we still race with the wind in search of a miserable peace that does not help in establishing a state for the Palestinians, returning the displaced people, or regaining its capital Jerusalem for them. Despite all this excessive wrongness and flagrant injustice, Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-1999) trample upon the alleged peace, a stance that intensifies the irony of the situation.

Thus, each time we cede a proven right, Israel in turn claims a falsely alleged right. Each day it usurps what its likes from us, while we take nothing in return save hollow words and promises that remind us of the following lines from Ka`b ibn Zuhair:

She gives promises unfulfilled anyway,

Like fluffy things that fade away.

In fact, Israel under the Likud Party even concedes vain promises to us reluctantly. It fearlessly and unabashedly brags about its absolute rejection, while the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*One of the sayings of early prophethood which the people have got is, 'If you do not feel ashamed, then do whatever you like'*" (Agreed upon).

Indeed, Israel unrightfully practices tyranny and oppression because it has no fear of anyone deterring it. It wants a form of peace that corresponds to its own perspective, that serves its interests and its expansionist strategies, and that supports its regional covetousness as embodied in the dream of Great Israel from the River Nile to the Euphrates, from the land of cedar trees (Lebanon) to the land of palm trees (Iraq). However, Israel might conceal this dream at certain times according to the strategy of "phases" which they have long mastered.

Moreover, the current local, regional and international circumstances have facilitated Israel's ability to ride roughshod and practice tyranny in the way we witness today. Such circumstances are reflected in the Palestinian submissiveness, the weakness of the Arabs, the present Islamic powerlessness, the absence of international justice, and the prejudice of the United States.

Yet can Israel be sure that these circumstances that contribute to its strategies will remain unchanged forever? Or can it be certain that Supreme Destiny will keep them sailing in the same direction forever? Considering Almighty Allah's enactments in the universe, reflecting upon the history of past nations, and exploring the reality of our world, we come to the conclusion that the dynamics of life always fluctuate and that the world around us changes. The pace of change can be swift and unexpected, such as the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the emergence of the European Union, and the rise of some new economic giants in the world. As the proverb goes, "The

longest day must have an end.' This cosmic enactment of ceaseless change is better expressed in the Qur'anic verse that reads, "*And so are the days (good and not so good), We give to men by turns*" (Al `Imran: 140). This verse was revealed in the aftermath of the Battle of *Uhud* in which the Muslims were (almost) routed, and seventy of the prominent companions were martyred. The Battle of *Uhud* came after the Muslims' sweeping victory in the Battle of Badr; the day called in the Glorious Qur'an as:

[The Day of Furquan ([criterion] between right and wrong), the Day when the two forces met.]

(Al-Anfal: 41)

Palestinian submissiveness

Undoubtedly, the Palestinian submissiveness is nourished by the languor seeping into the souls of some people and the despair infiltrating into their hearts, the rancor intensified by the impuissance of many Arabs and the blind inclination of others towards the Americans, the fall of the former Soviet Union, the consternation and fear of the American monster and its constant partiality in favor of Israel, and the far extremity of Jihad and its heavy costs and casualties. All these factors have driven some Palestinian leaders to submit to the "deficient peace" offered by Israel under the slogan "Land in return for peace", meaning that Israel cedes the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese lands it occupied in 1967 in return for peace with the Arabs, i.e. no Arab country should fight or attack it. In a word, this equation means that the land of the Arabs is abandoned in return for an alleged peace with Israel. Hence, they would return our occupied land in order to enjoy peace. In other words, the land they usurped through armed conflict and bloodshed has become the property of Israel, and thus it - being entitled to the land - has the right to cede it in order to win peace.

The Arabs, however, accepted negotiations on this distorted ground and consented to Israel's vision of peace, while the latter effectively gave them nothing in return. Plainly speaking, Israel managed to sell the Arabs a bill of goods. For what is the feasibility of a peace that leaves the major issues unsettled: The issue of Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, and the borders? These serious issues are still unresolved, and often postponed to be discussed only at the end of negotiations! No one considers what the situation will be if the two parties are not able to reach an agreement on these issues at the end of negotiations.

The fact is that these major issues shall always remain suspended and deferred for the Arabs, but not for Israel. On the eve of signing the Oslo Peace Treaty, Yitzhak Rabin clearly stated, "We have come from Jerusalem, the ancient and eternal capital of the Jewish people". However, the issue of settlements has not been deferred, as the Israelis continued to build new settlements in several places in Palestine, such as *Har Homa* in *Abu Ghneim* Mount and in Ra's Al-`Amud in East Jerusalem. Settlement building is still on the rise, while the Palestinians - the owners of the land - are denied any kind of growth or expansion. In addition, their houses are razed to the ground before the eyes of the world, as Israel does not and will not allow the building of new Palestinian houses.

The Palestinians today have realized that Israel is deceiving and fooling them, and that its very limited and partial withdrawal was nothing but a big trick, knowing that, in a few hours, it can reoccupy those temporarily relinquished sites. Actually, the Palestinians can now clearly see that Israel holds the reigns of all matters, while they have no strength or authority there. They have also comprehended that the authority granted to them by Israel is illusory, and that Israel's hidden aim behind it was only to incite feudality among Palestinian factions and intensify enmity among them. Then, Israel will only be a bystander of the struggle between fellow Palestinian brothers, with the Palestinian gun being pointed at a Palestinian fellow, and not at the usurper of his land. Such is the objective of Israel.

When Israel was unable to achieve all its goals, it overtly asked the Palestinian Authority to eliminate Hamas, sap any power it has, and support Israel in its fight against it. Israel made this a prerequisite for the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table to achieve alleged peace. In fact, Israel is resolutely going ahead with its premeditated plan to judaize Jerusalem, a plan for which it has determined its target, drawn its strategies, and begun to implement. It has imposed a tight siege on Jerusalem by building settlements and undertaking an ongoing demographical change by emptying the town of its Arab, Muslim, and Christian inhabitants. It also puts various obstacles and hindrances in the way of their population growth and expansion; a fact that is proven through conclusive realities. The Arabs, on the other hand, have nothing in their favor other than words of protestation, denouncement,

and condemnation, which are all worthless in the face of the Israeli crimes of killing, wounding, and usurpation. The Arabs protested against the establishment of the Abu Ghneim settlement and against the occupation of Bayt Ra's Al-`Amud, but their protests went up in smoke.

Nothing remains that stirs fear in Israel except the Palestinian youth who, selling their souls to the Almighty, risk their necks and stare death in the face. They upset Israel through their martyrdom operations, cast terror in the hearts of the Israelis, and leave them sleepless. Surely, diamond alone can cut diamond.

Therefore, Israel - at its highest levels - rose up in retaliation for the actions of those heroes, killing Dr. Fathi Ash-Shiquaqui and Engineer Yahya `Ayyash. More recently, it attempted to murder Khalid Mish`al with a highly developed chemical weapon in Jordan, a country with whom it has a peace treaty. Such would be evidence that the Jews respect no pledge or covenant, as Almighty Allah (Exalted be He) says about their ancestors,

[They are those with whom you made a covenant, but they break their covenant every time and they do not fear Allah.]

(Al-Anfal: 56)

From times of old, Israel has not hesitated to murder whoever stands in its way, criticizes its policies, or reveals its tricks, be they civilians, politicians, or intellectuals. They assassinated Lord Moyne and Count Bernadotte, cruelly assassinated the notable Islamic intellectual, Dr. Isma`il Al-Farouqi and his wife, and continues to threaten and menace whoever opposes them. Even the academic research that reassesses the Nazi massacres against the Jews in an attempt to reveal its real size are not allowed to see the light, and the researchers are subjected to trial, not to mention intimidation, harassment, and persecution. The last of those academics was the famous French intellectual, Roger Garaudy.

Those who have embodied the spirit of the Palestinian struggle, shouldering its resistance and its readiness to sacrifice, are the group that has sacrificed their lives and possessions in order to liberate the sacred land and its Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. They are the members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and their fellow brothers and supporters in the way of sacred Jihad, along with those who encourage

them from among the Palestinian people. They are the people who have sold their souls to the Almighty for the price of Paradise. They have suffered afflictions, persecution, and imprisonment on the Way to Allah. However, they endured more patiently than their enemy, and guarded their territories from the places where the enemy can attack:

[But they never lost heart for that which did befall them in Allah's Way, nor did they weaken nor degrade themselves. And Allah loves as-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.). And they said nothing but, 'Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions (in keeping our duties to You), establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving folk']

(Al `Imran: 146 – 147)

I deem that the state of submissiveness into which the Palestinians have been dragged will not last for long, since things have reached a climax and the situation has become unendurable, and people have come to the end of their tether. Therefore, the only resort to which people will have recourse is a sweeping Intifada (uprising), which will be stronger and fiercer than before. Then, a new situation will dominate the scene, the Palestinian people will gain authority, and they all will stand together in one camp in the face of the enemy.

Arab failure

As for the state of failure of the Arabs we are now witnessing, it is not an inescapable fate, but rather an incidental situation that will inevitably come to an end. The most manifest reason for that failure is the state of disunion that has disbanded the Arab countries since the Camp David Peace Accord that drew the major elder sister, Egypt, from the fateful battle of the Ummah. This disunion has been worsened by the Arabs' abandonment of and withdrawal of support for Egypt, despite the fact that it fought four fierce wars for the sake of liberating Palestine, at a cost of many lives and fortunes.

This disunion was further intensified after the second Gulf War that badly sundered the Arabs, disintegrated their consolidation, and spoiled the unity of their position. Moreover, they lost so much of their wealth that the rich countries had to incur debts, and many of them lost their free will and fell prey to occupation. All these disasters came with one deadly blow, and the only winners were Israel,

America, and their allies. They disposed of their old-fashioned weapons in our lands, tested their new weaponry against our people, and - with our money and at our request - ruined our homelands. Yet, with our money and upon our request, they would also rebuild them for us.

The Arab world has thus been divided in an unprecedented way regarding this issue, dissimilar to any other in its complexity and difficulty. Thus, anyone who denounces foreign intervention is seen to be approving the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, while anyone who accepts the American and Western military intervention for the liberation of Kuwait is considered to be approving the destruction of Iraq and supporting the foreign occupation of the region. Between these two extremes, the moderate view that denounces occupation, calls for withdrawal, and condemns massive and domineering foreign intervention was ignored. Such views were adopted by groups of Egyptian scholars and intellectuals who published their statements in *Al-Abram* (through the weekly article of the notable writer, Fahmi Huweidi) and other newspapers.

Of more importance is the fact that since that sinister day, the edifice of the Arab world has been fractured, with no one to restore it, despite the calls of many wise men of the necessity of overcoming such a crisis that should not dispirit us with its complexity. This restoration process is a prerequisite necessitated by religion, nationalism, morals, and common interest. It is necessitated by our very existence and destiny if we wish to have a definite position in the current world that no longer has a space for small or dispersed entities. That is why we find that historically scattered enemies are forgetting about the past along with all its disputes, wars, and reprisals, and are uniting in response to the demand of mutual interest, as is the case with the European Union.

Today, we are witnessing propitious signs that cannot be overlooked, embodied in the whole Arab world's stand in the face of the United States that attacked Iraq. This Arab stance against the American caprices (on top of world powers) is clear proof that the Ummah will never succumb.

Powerlessness of Muslims

If the Arabs' failure is adventitious, then the present state of weakness on the part of Muslims is likewise transitory. It is a transient state that temporarily strikes nations in the same way that an illness may come upon a sound body, of which it can soon be cured. The Ummah has often been struck with afflictions and illnesses throughout the stages of its history. Despite the fact that the enemies expected such afflictions would be fatally permanent, the Ummah has recovered from these afflictions in the same way that gold is refined in fire, merely becoming purer and more lustrous.

It seems enough as an example of such afflictions to refer to the Western Crusades and the attacks of the Tartars from the East at a time when the Ummah underwent a period of weakness and disunity and its rulers were undutiful. The enemies managed to tie the Ummah to the yoke of occupation, subdue the people, and establish their kingdoms and emirates on its land. At that time, Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa fell into the hands of the Crusaders and remained in captivity for ninety years. Then, Almighty Allah selected and prepared sincere men of non-Arab origin, yet they were Arabized by Islam, such as the Turkish `Imad Ad-Din Zangi and his son Nur Ad-Din Mahmud; the Kurdish Saladin Al-Ayyubi; and those of other ethnicities, such as the Mameluke leaders Sayf Ad-Din Qutuz and Azh-Zhahir Baybars, to take on the responsibility of restoring the land and dignity of Islam. They compelled the Crusaders to return home with a crushing defeat, while hordes of Tartars converted to the religion of Allah.

In modern times, however, the Western imperial powers marched towards the abode of Islam and occupied the lands, from Indonesia to Morocco. Their military generals and political leaders - backed by the Orientalists and missionaries - then assumed that the Muslim land would succumb to them all along the line, so much so that some of them were convinced that some of its territories became inseparable parts of their homelands, as was the case with Algeria. However, Islam - being the religion of the subdued inhabitants of the occupied lands - soon breathed fire in their ashes, stirred their dull roots, and infused life into their souls. Therefore, the "liberation battles" were kindled in every country, with the religion having the biggest hand in triggering the fire of awakening, mobilization, recruitment, and gathering of

the forces. The last epical battle against colonization was the Algerian National Liberation in 1954, which continued until Algeria obtained full independence in 1961.

Our Prophet-teacher (peace be upon him) informed us that the cause of feebleness afflicting the Ummah is moral and psychological in essence. Thawban narrated the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying, "*Soon all nations will convene against you in the way gormandizes convene around their dishes.*" They (Companions) asked, "Will it be because we are then few in number, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet replied, "*No, you will rather be then huge in number, but you will be scum like foam of a torrent, and Allah will withdraw veneration of you from the hearts of your enemy and will instill Waban in your hearts.*" Then they asked, "What is *Waban*, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet replied, "*It is the love of Life and the hate of Death.*"⁶

The idea of love of life and hate of death is the source and cause of *Waban* (debility or weakness). Thus, if the Ummah works to improve its conditions, relegates the love of life from the foreground of its focus, and fearlessly determines to achieve its aim, only then will Almighty Allah change its condition from weakness to strength, from servility to dignity, and from defeat to triumph and consolidation in the land.

Actually, the propitious signs of this change are budding in the garb of the contemporary Islamic awakening, which revived the minds of Muslims through knowledge, and the hearts through faith. They have influenced the youth of the Ummah - men and women alike - in a way similar to that of rain stirring the dull roots in a barren land and breathing life into it. Then, it swells and puts forth lovely growth.

The present author has indicated in a preceding study that,

The Muslim Ummah possesses the basic potentials of power, elevation, and predominance, including human resources (1.3 billion), material resources of mountains, plains, minerals, seas, rivers, etc., and civilizational heritage through its distinct geographical position at the meeting point of the continents, the seedbed of civilizations, and the