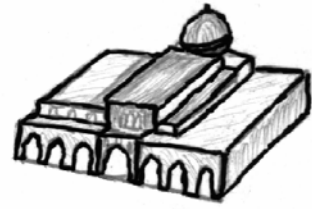


Dome of the Rock

# Al Aqsa



Al-Aqsa Mosque

Quarterly

Newsletter 1

August 1999

## To Begin...

*“Glorified is He Who took his servant by night journey from the Masjid al Haram (in Makkah) to the Masjid al Aqsa (in Jerusalem), the precincts of which we have Blessed...”*

Holy Qur’an Al Isra 17: 1

We have been commanded by Allah ﷻ to honour and dignify the *sha’air* (symbols and distinguishing, salient features) of Islam. To strive towards safeguarding the symbols of Islam is described in the Holy Qur’an as “*piety of the heart*” (32:22).

The Masaajid of Allah ﷻ are indeed from among the distinguishing features and great ‘symbols’ of Allah ﷻ. Moreover, since Masjid al Aqsa has been bestowed with special status and significance in Islam, our duty to honour and show reverence towards it increases manifold. Further, to work towards its safety is an incumbent duty upon all Muslims

It is a fact that the honour and status of Masjidul Haram and Nabawee are rightly embeded in our hearts. Yet, sadly the love for the third Haram, Masjid al Aqsa is lacking, either through lack of historical and religious knowledge or for want of ease.

With the present threats to Masjid al Aqsa it is of paramount importance for Muslims to be abreast of ‘facts on the ground.’

...to continue

## Spiritual Strangulation of Masjid al Aqsa

Since the establishment of an exclusive Jewish State in Palestine Masjid al Aqsa has been in danger.

However recently the physical destructive threats to Masjid al Aqsa have been topped up with spiritual strangulation.

Over the past few years the Palestinian Muslims have been issued with identity cards thereby controlling their every move and denied all but those few resident in East Jerusalem entry to Masjid al Aqsa.

This apartheid law has lead to reduced number of people being able to perform prayers in Masjid al Aqsa.

Besides the restriction of entry through identity cards the Israeli police routinely harass and temporarily detain those young Muslims proceeding to Masjid al Aqsa for Salaah.

As Abu Ahmed, a young 25 year old told me, “It is routine for the

Israeli police to question me for 15 to 20 minutes on my way to Masjid al Aqsa. They know the Salaah will have completed and than they let me go.”

The planned spiritual death of Masjid al Aqsa is one of many concerted effort of the Zionist towards ethnically cleansing Muslims out of Jerusalem and even more sinister is their goal to spiritually detach Massaged al Aqsa from the hearts of the Muslims. Thereby making it easy to build a Jewish Temple on the site of Masjid al Aqsa.

It is upto the Muslims of the International Community to make representation to the appropriate bodies and become pro-active in defending the human rights of the oppressed Palestinians and ensuring that the Zionist do not succeed in destroying one the holiest Mosques of Islam.

## Arab Countries Diplomats Fail to Meet Mufti

A meeting arranged for dipomats from six Arab Countries with offices in Gaza failed to attend a meeting with Mufti Sheikh Ekreme Sabri in Masjidul al Aqsa on June 15<sup>th</sup> .

The Mufti arranged to discuss the Israeli measures and in particular the high court’s decision to allow extremist settlers to perform Jewish prayers in the precincts of Masjid al Aqsa.

Sources believe that Israel pressured the Arab diplomats away from the meeting. Since such a meeting of Arabs in Masjid al Aqsa would be interpreted as Muslims’ authority in Jerusalem.

So far the diplomats have not been forthcoming with their reasons for failure to attend.

## Arafat Losing Grass Root Support

Arafat unable to call on Barak for negotiations and scared of unilaterally declaring a state, in case he offends the other side rallied to the Palestinian people and called for a 'day of rage' on 3<sup>rd</sup> of June against Israel's settlement policies. It was stated by Tayyib Abd al Rahim, PA General Secretary, the demonstration is to "strengthen popular opposition to the settlement offensive and translate our anger into confrontations that can put an end to the settlements that threaten to erase our existence."

However, Arafat failed to arouse substantial interest amongst the Palestinians who voted with their feet and stayed at home. Unfortunately of those few that did venture out, for a peaceful protest, were met by hostile Israeli forces. One Palestinian was shot dead and many injured.

### *In This Month...*

**12 August 636:** The Romans were defeated by the Muslims in Al Yarmouk Battle, so Palestine has been a part of the Islamic State since then.

**29 August 1897:** The first Zionist conference was held in Basl, Switzerland, presided by Haim Hertzl, who had chosen Palestine as a homeland for the Jews.

**10 August 1922:** The British government issued the Palestinian constitution preceded by a statement of the Balfour Promise.

**14 August 1922:** Herbert Samuel became the first British Supreme Deputy in Palestine.

**02 August 1926:** The British Minister of Settlements issued new Palestinian currency, and created a currency committee.

**16 August 1929:** The rebellion of Al Buraq broke out.

**30 August 1945:** The American president Harry Truman asked for permission to allow hundreds of thousands of Jews to enter Palestine.

**14 August 1947:** The American president Harry Truman put forward his proposal to the British. The proposal was approved at the Zionist conference in Paris, and it granted the Jews the International Zone according to Bill Proposal, in addition to Al Naqab.

**31 August 1947:** The UN special committee completed its report about Palestine and presented it to the General Assembly of the UN.

**21 August 1969:** Al Aqsa Mosque was set on fire by the Australian tourist Michael Rohan, urged by the Israelis.

**08 August 1970:** The attrition war between Egypt and Israel was stopped.

**12-13 August 1976:** The massacre of Tel Al Za'ater was committed by the Christian Militia in collaboration with the Israeli forces.

**06 August 1982:** The Israeli forces entered west Beirut.

**02 August 1985:** The Israeli forces adopted the steel-fist policy against the Palestinian protests.

**18 August 1988:** The Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) was declared.

**14 August 1994:** The Palestinian Authority forces arrested several Palestinians who opposed the peace process along with members of HAMAS.

### History of Masjid al Aqsa

Al Quds (Jerusalem) has been the land of the Prophets. Rich in history, heritage and emotions. Masjid al Aqsa is one of the oldest houses of Allah on earth and goes back, right up to the time of Prophet Adam ﷺ. It is only second to the Ka'ba in Makkah. It is reported by Imam Muslim [ra] in his Sahi on the authority of Abu Dharr ؓ who states, "I asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ about the first mosque on Earth?" "The sacred Mosque (in Makkah), he answered. "And then which?" I asked. "Masjid al Aqsa, he said."

I further asked, "and how long was it between them?" The Prophet ﷺ of Allah replied. "Forty years."

Nearly 4,000 years ago Prophet Ibrahim ؑ stopped in the land of Canaan (Palestine) and he is believed to have re-established the Masjid al Aqsa.

## Remembering Jerusalem Neighbourhood - Al Joura

Muhammad Yusuf Udeh, 66 says, "Al Joura was a small village of about 450 people. There were five people in my family in addition to my grandmother and uncle. When I was 16, I worked as a shepherd. The 1948 war erupted during Ramadhan. The Zionist began to attack us and villages like Deir Yassin and al Qastal were captured. Our neighbouring village of Ein Kerim was attacked, the situation worsened, so some people began to leave their houses while others were killed. My family was displaced and we didn't know what had happened to my uncles. When the villages of Beit Safafa, al Malha, Ein Kerim, Staf, Khirbit al Louz, al Joura, al Walaja and al Qabou were captured, the Zionist began destroying the houses to ensure that people would not try and return. It was midnight when we left our houses. We left everything behind except the livestock. We stayed in Beit Jalla for 11 miserable months. It took me several years to improve my condition, but still I don't feel stable and secure because I am not in my village. We have suffered so much since being forced to leave our land. These days the Zionists can still arrest my sons and our lives are always under threat.

We left 50 dunams (1Dunam=0.25 Acre) of land. There was a Diwan called al Sahah in the middle of the village. Agriculture was the main source of income."

Al Joura is located to the west of Jerusalem. In total it covered 4,158 dunams. In 1945 it had 420 inhabitants. A spring to the west of the village supplied the people with water. It was devastated during the Dani operation (an Israeli plan, aimed at widening the road leading to the coast). In 1950 a Jewish settlement of Aoura was established on the village lands.

## Barak's Victory Dampens Hopes For Peace

Barak, the new Prime Minister of Israel's victory speech caused concern to Palestinians hoping for peace. In his first speech after victory he stated:

1. There would no concessions on the West Bank i.e. Pre 1967 borders.
2. Jerusalem will remain the undivided capital of Israel under Israeli rule
3. No dismantling of Jewish settlements in Gaza and West Bank, which will remain under Israeli rule.
4. Palestinian army severely restricted and no "foreign armies" allowed west of River Jordan.

### Israel Key Says Hague

In an exclusive interview to the Jewish News (12<sup>th</sup> March 1999) William Hague the leader of Conservative Party is reported to have said, "I am a friend and supporter of Israel and believe Israel has a vital role to play in the region." He further added, "Israel may sometimes do things that we don't approve of in the West, but the whole point of having the State of Israel is that the Jewish people can have self-determination." His unequivocal support for Israel was further emphasised with the comments, "Other countries cannot dictate the terms of the Peace Process."

Friends of Al Aqsa queried the report with Mr Hague, but he failed to deny the report and further added, "Of course, the outcome of the peace process must be one which safeguards the security of Israel and achieves self-determination (*not rule-italics editors*) for the people of the occupied territories."

## HEADLINERS

**Israelis demolish Palestinians' homes:** The bulldozers just took a few minutes to turn the houses of Maher Izzat Hassan and Abdul Razaq as Sheikh into heap of concrete in the outskirts of Jerusalem. THE INDEPENDENT 20<sup>th</sup> April 99.

**Settlers race for land:** Ehud Barak's victory in the Israeli elections has only increased the pace at which ultra-orthodox groups are seizing Palestinian territory. Guardian 25<sup>th</sup> May 99.

**Jews Stake Claim Where Palestinians Hope to Rule:** The settlers, who regard peace as chimerical and compromises on territory as a calamitous sellout of the Jews biblical homeland, are busy establishing new homes on the very same land where Palestinians hope to establish an independent state. Herald and Tribune 3<sup>rd</sup> May 99.

**Israeli gets 20 years for killing Britons:** A former Israeli paratrooper who killed a British tourist and wounded his girlfriend was given a reduced sentence of 20 years on a plea of diminished responsibility because he was a member of an army death squad that killed Palestinians in Gaza in the 1970's. THE INDEPENDENT 4<sup>th</sup> May 99.

**Peace postponed:** Professor Shlomo Ben-Ami said, "You cannot be a liberal democracy, when 20 per cent of the population, the Arabs of Israel, are discriminated against in every sphere of life. Or when military values are so central to our lives. Or when mobilising a nation is so heavily dependent on patriotic gimmicks directed at one part of it. Or when people must pray every day for Jerusalem as the eternal capital. Guardian 1<sup>st</sup> May 99.

## Ethnic Cleansing Through Bulldozers

On 17 June, the Israeli army demolished two houses and a surrounding wall in the village of Beit Liqya in the Ramallah district, north of Jerusalem. The reason given by the authorities for the demolitions was that the houses had been built without a permit, though the land itself is owned by the families. In the process of the demolition, two adjacent houses built with permits, were damaged. Throughout the demolition, a curfew was imposed on the area.

It was reported that, at 8:30 in the morning, a bulldozer accompanied by about 15 military jeeps and 100 soldiers approached the house of Mahmoud Muhammad Abdel Rahim Ghayan(40), which was under construction.

On 4 March of this year Mr. Ghayan had received a 'stop working' order from the Military Court. His case was still pending at the time of the demolition. When the bulldozer reached the house, the family asked for the demolition to be delayed for the court proceedings to be continued. The soldiers refused and the demolition was carried out, even though the family had not been given any warning.

In order to make way for the bulldozer, Ethiopian workers removed a number of chickens from a shed. Moreover, a water pipe, the stairs, balcony and kitchen of the adjacent two storey building, which housed 5 families, were damaged. The total loss of the house and additional damages is said to be approximately US\$ 37,500.

It had been expected that, twenty out of thirty members of Mr. Ghayan's family and the four families of the adjacent house were to move into the new house that covered a area of 160 square meters.

During the demolition Mr. Ghayan's wife was hit by a soldier and his son was shackled and beaten for no apparent reason.

Later in the morning, the bulldozer and the army proceeded to demolish a second house in the village. The house was owned by Sharif Muhammad Al-Qadi (20) and Ashraf Muhammad Al-Qadi (25) and was supposed to shelter 5 members of two families. The house cost \$15,000 and covered an area of 130 square meters.

Since the beginning of 1999, 33 houses have been demolished in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Palestinians have to apply to Israel for permission to

build. Because Israel maintains discriminatory planning regulations, Palestinians are frequently refused permits. Consequently, to meet their housing needs, many families build without a permit and are then threatened with demolition.

Israel's policies are aimed at the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories to free up land for Israeli settlement. Israel's policies involve planning regulations – prohibiting Palestinian building on 40% of Gaza, 70% of the West Bank and 80% of Jerusalem. In accordance with Israel's land confiscation policies an estimated 75% of Palestinian land in the Occupied Territories has been taken. While restricting Palestinian development, Israel builds on the same land in the Occupied Territories to house Israelis alone. This is illegal under international law.

Israel's policies have been severely condemned by the international community, including the General Assembly and the UN treaty-monitoring bodies. Join us in ending these violations. Please write to Ehud Barak at: [feedback@www.knesset.gov.il](mailto:feedback@www.knesset.gov.il) and President Clinton at [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov) and to Tony Blair, Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London SW1 1AA. Please send a copy of your letter to us.

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