



Dome of the Rock

Al Aqsa



Al-Aqsa Mosque

Quarterly

Newsletter 3

February 2000

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

...The second privilege the verse informs us of is:

2. *'the surrounding area have been blessed'* – The fact that Allah [swt] in His Great Wisdom Chose al Masjidul Aqsa as the desired spot on earth from where he raised the Beloved Prophet Muhammad [saas] to the heavens and having mentioned al Masjidul Aqsa by name in the Qur'an holds great virtue and significance for the Muslim Ummah.

The area of al Sham [which includes present day Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon] has been referred to as the *Blessed Land* several times in the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an reports Prophet Musa [as] telling his people: *"O My People! Enter the holy land..."* Al Maida 5:21.

In Sura Al Anbiya 21: 69-71, with references to Prophet Ibrahim [as] who migrated from Ur, present day Iraq, to the land of Canaan, present day Palestine, around 1805 BC, the Qur'an states, *"We Said, O Fire! Be thou cool and safety for Ibrahim. Then they planned against him, but We made them the greater losers. But We delivered him and [his nephew] Lot [and directed them] to the land which We have blessed for the nations"*.

Further, the Qur'an proclaims, *"[It was Our power that made] the violent [unruly] Wind flow [tamely] for Sulaman. To his order, to the land Which We had Blessed..."* Al Anbiya 21:81"

The numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an exalting the blessedness of al Sham and in particular Jerusalem has motivated Muslims from throughout the world and Islamic history to venerate it

.....to continue

British Muslims Rally To Support Palestinian Right of Return

An Early Day Motion [EDM] called by Ernie Ross and several other MPs on November 24th 1999 in the Houses of Parliament stated, the Palestinian refugees have a right of return to their homeland and further "the British government should pursue and take up the legitimate claims of British citizens who are Palestinian refugees."

Friends of Al Aqsa in conjunction with Palestinian Return Centre and other groups organised a nationwide campaign to lobby Members of Parliament to sign the EDM and attend the House of Commons on Nov 24th.

It is with Allah's [swt] great favour upon Friends of Al Aqsa that they managed to take the largest number of individuals on the day. As the plight of the Palestinian refugees and those under Israeli occupation touches most Muslims. The show of solidarity by Muslims from different cities was impressive.

Mr Hashim, Director of Bahadur Garments stated, 'I am pleased to see such a large gathering and from such a varied background and beliefs, all wanting and wishing to see justice is done to the Palestinian refugees'. Between 1400 Hrs and 2000 Hrs of Nov 24th 99, there were more than four hundred people who visited the Commons to lobby the MP's and hear the lectures on the Palestinian refugees issue. Another businessman from Leicester, Mr Sabat was impressed with the forthright statements by George Gallagher MP on the West's vested interest in maintaining the present status quo and denying the Palestinians their basic human rights.

One MP on seeing the Friend of Al Aqsa group remarked, 'He had not seen anything like it in his life.' Friends of Al Aqsa and its supporters, where according to our knowledge, the first group of Muslims to call the Adhan in the House of Commons and perform their Maghrib Salah.

Alhumdollilah, we can claim to have managed to secure an Early Day Motion (No.78), which to date has won the support of just over 100 MPs. This represents just under 20 per cents of MPs.

Although the EDM tabled by Ernie Ross and others was a sincere attempt to make the Government notice the concerns of British citizens it was aired by many that more pressure needs to be applied on MP's from far greater constituencies before the government makes a marked difference in policy regarding the Palestinian issue.

It is up to concerned brothers and sisters up and down Britain to lobby their MP and request them to sign this EDM. Further to point out Israel's refusal to respect international law, in particular:

UN Resolution 194 which has been reaffirmed 110 times by the United Nations, which calls for the right of return and compensation for the Palestinian refugees.

The 1949 *Fourth Geneva Convention [Article 49]* which 'prohibits individual or mass forcible transfers'.

Mossad Opens Office in Amman

The London based magazine 'Foreign Report' reported that the Israeli External Intelligence Organisation (Mossad) has reopened its office in Amman, the capital of Jordan.

Foreign Report said, 'the reopening of the Mossad office in Amman was indicative of the "great improvement in the intelligence cooperation between Jordan and Israel.'

In This Month...

07 February 1799: The French expedition led by Napoleon was initiated in order to invade and occupy Palestine.

21 February 1927: The British Minister of Settlements announced that the Palestinian currency would replace the Egyptian.

07 February 1939: The Round Table Conference was held in London between some Arab delegations and a Jewish delegation.

14 February 1947: The British government announced that the Palestinian question "cause" would be referred to the United Nations.

28 February 1955: The Israeli forces attacked the Gaza Strip and shot down 38 martyrs and injured countless others.

08 February 1976: An Israeli court allowed the Jews to pray on the mountain of Al Haykal in the Holy Shrine of Jerusalem.

07 February 1983: Kahan committee submitted a report on the massacre that took place at Sabra and Shatilla indicating that Sharon was responsible for it, so he resigned from the ministry of defence but he remained in the cabinet.

02 February 1988: The Israeli forces closed the Palestinian schools and university.

15 February 1989: Min. Sharon calls for the arrest of East Jerusalem Arabs who are politically affiliated to the PLO.

09 February 1992: Israeli settlers move into a Palestinian house in the Old City's Via Dolorosa.

24 February 1994: Israeli terrorist Goldstein massacred worshippers performing Friday dawn prayers at the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron with the help of Israeli police forces.

07 February 1995: The first State security court was established by Yasser Arafat, the chief of the Palestinian Authority.

28 February 1995: UN discusses Israeli settlement expansion but refuses to table a resolution condemning Israel as US threatens to veto.

February 1996: A census of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics says by the end of 1995 Gaza's population reached 934, 000 and the West Bank 1,333,000 [Total 2,267,000 Palestinians]. 46 per cent are under the age of 15.

12 February 1996: Israel imposes a total closure across Palestinian territory until the end of Eid al Fitr [22 Feb].

01 February 1997: Yousef Ismail dies in Rafidiya Hospital, Nablus, after being tortured during interrogation by PNA security forces, marking the 11th to die in PNA detention.

07 February 1997: On the last Friday of Ramadhan, some 300, 000 Muslims fill the al Aqsa Haram Sharif, closely observed by 2,500 Israeli police forces.

12 February 1997: 120 dunnums of village land in the Tulkarem district are declared closed military zone in order to facilitate construction of a new bypass road to the settlement of Burka.

History of Masjid Al Aqsa [3]

In 536 BC, the Persians overthrew the Babylonians and the Jews were once more allowed to reside within Jerusalem. The Jews began to reconstruct their Temple, which took twenty years to complete.

After 200 years of relative peace under the Persian rule the Greeks captured Jerusalem. The Temple was confiscated and dedicated to the Greek God Zeus, where the sacrifice of pigs and general obscenity sparked a revolt.

In 164 BC Hasmonean Jews captured the Temple. After only 100 years in 63 BC Jerusalem was overrun by Rome. Herod was appointed King of Judea. He slaughtered the last of the Hasmoneans and ordered a lavish restoration and extension of the second Temple.

A period of great civil disorder followed with strife between Pacifists and Zealots and riots against the Roman authorities. In the midst of this chaos 'Isa [as] began his mission. His attempts to call back to the pure teachings of Ibrahim [as] and Musa [as] were unfortunately judged subversive by the authorities and Jews. He was tried and sentenced to death: "*Yet they did not slay him but only a likeness that was shown to them.*"

Years later Jewish Zealots captured the Temple and massacred Roman Troops. Rome dispatched the great General, Titus who in 70 AD captured Jerusalem and banished all the Jews out of Jerusalem and worst still destroyed the Temple.

HEADLINERS

Weizman considers standing down to escape prosecution over 'gift': EZER WEIZMAN, the Israeli President, could soon resign in return for immunity from prosecution over allegations that he accepted \$450,000 in gifts from a French businessman, the Voice of Israel claimed yesterday. The Times 13 Jan 2000

Cook's security guards arrested in Jerusalem: Robin Cook's trip to the Middle East suddenly turned sour yesterday when two security men provided by his Palestinian hosts were arrested by Israeli police in Jerusalem.

The incident occurred as the Foreign Secretary was about to fly home, after a delicate three-day peace-making trip in which he painstakingly sought to avoid the acrimony that plagued his last trip 18 months ago.

He had pronounced his trip a "success" before two guards from the Palestinian Liberation Organisation were detained and accused of attacking an Israeli guard. Independent 27 Oct 99

Talks snag as Barak challenges UN ruling: The handshakes were barely over yesterday when the two sides in the Middle East peace talks found themselves at loggerheads again. Just a day after the final-status talks began, Israel threw them into turmoil by challenging the UN resolution that underpins the 1993 Oslo accord.

UN Resolution 242 has been a bone of contention since it was signed. But the conflict flared anew after a top adviser to Ehud Barak said publicly that Israel's Prime Minister had told his cabinet on Sunday that he believed 242 – and the supporting UN Resolution 338 – has no standing in the West Bank.

Mr Barak added fuel to the fire during a trip to Paris by repeatedly saying that the resolutions mean different things when applied to Palestinians than when referring to Arab nations with recognised borders. They have "a different context," he said. 10 Nov 99.

Arafat steals show as Israel misses out on Millennium: The Holy Land begins its millennium celebrations today when the Christmas tree in Bethlehem's Manger Square is illuminated. But the hand on the switch for one of the greatest Christian festivals will be that of a Muslim, Yassar Arafat, the Palestinian leader. FT 4 Dec 1999.

Irving Ready For Court Battle Over Holocaust: The British Historian, David Irving, who has been widely vilified for questioning whether 6M Jews were killed by the Nazis and who believes that Hitler knew nothing of the Final Solution until late in the war – is suing Deborah Lipstadt, a professor of modern Jewish Holocaust studies at Emory university, Atlanta for accusing him of being one of the most prominent and dangerous 'Holocaust deniers' in the world. Guardian 8 Jan 2000.

More Oppose Golan Deal: Ehud Barak, the Israeli Prime Minister returned home from the United States yesterday after eight days of talks which achieved nothing more than a commitment to meet Syria again while domestic opposition to exchanging the Golan Heights for peace hardened. Times 12 Jan 2000.

Passage only for selected few

The bridge or elevated highway connecting West Bank to Gaza [as reported in Al Aqsa Newsletter 2] is only accessible to a selected few.

Israel who has the final say on who uses the bridge and has already rejected 40 per cent of Palestinian applications to use the highway.

As always Israel sought to hide behind the screen of security for its decision to deny access to the Palestinians.

Jerusalemite ID card confiscation on the increase

Through September 1999, 150 Palestinian Jerusalemites had their identity cards confiscated by Israel.

The loss of an ID card means the Palestinian cannot travel out of Jerusalem and if he does go out then he is not allowed entry back into Jerusalem. Further, all insurance benefits and medical aid is denied to this individuals.

The ID card confiscation is one of the tools used by Israel to ethnically cleans Jerusalem of Palestinians.

Guns placed overlooking al Masjidul Aqsa

On one of the highest point of East Jerusalem Palestinian neighbourhood of Jabel Mukkaber, bulldozers have been working round the clock for six months.

At the beginning, according to the AIC, the nature of the project was not clear, but slowly it appeared to be a huge military position, dominating not only the neighbourhood but the whole of East Jerusalem from the top of the hill.

The minister of police, Avigdor Kahalani, formally opened the new site: a border police military position, aimed at "controlling the Arab neighbourhoods of the city, in order to avoid it to become a source of troubles."

The Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the guardians, on the ground, of al Masjidul Aqsa are under further threats from these guns, not only the bullets, which could pin point anyone the Israeli's wish to kill but also pick up regular worshippers to al Masjidul al Aqsa for future harassment.

While passing by, notes the AIC report, it was hard not to remember the Israeli Army position on the top of the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut, September 1992, controlling the camp while they allowed the right-wing Lebanese militias to massacre its Palestinian population.

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