

INSIGHTS ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

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Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

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Insights on the Road to Jerusalem

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Introduction

Praise be to *Allah*, Lord of the Worlds, and prayer and peace upon the messenger of *Allah* and upon his family and companions.

The booklet seeks to display the prominent features and determinants of the Islamic vision of the Palestine issue, which capitalizes on *Shari'ah* concepts, the Divine universal laws, the accumulated history, realities and future foresight.

Originally this booklet is the Insights chapter of the revised and updated version of the book, *The Road to Jerusalem: A Historical Study of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine From the Time of the Prophets to the 21st Century*, published in 2023. Being preoccupied for decades to introduce Palestine, its issue and the pathways to its liberation means that there are reiterations of and overlaps with studies and articles we published previously. We have benefited from these that are in line with the insights of this book, including the booklet *Basic Facts on the Palestine Issue*.

However, due to its importance and based on suggestions of a number of specialists and experts, this chapter has been published separately in a booklet, where its condensed size could be distributed easily and reach every Palestinian, Arab and Muslim, and also everyone seeking the truth and aspires to liberate all of Palestine, from its river to its sea.

Some modifications and improvements have been made to the "Insights" chapter published at the end of the Arabic version of the book *The Road to Jerusalem*, based on the kind comments and suggestions from a number of specialized scholars and experts. We also welcome all constructive criticism, advice and suggestions.

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammed Saleh



Insights on the Road to Jerusalem

1. Islam is a way of life and a founder of civilization: Islam is a comprehensive religion, an integrated system for life. It is the source of the *Ummah*'s glory, dignity and progress. It is the way to prosperity and success for humanity in this world and the hereafter. It is distinguished by "realistic idealism," that is, it is the best blueprint for humans, and is suitable for every time and place. It is following Islam's foundations and rules that the best nation that was brought for mankind had risen: the *Ummah* of *al-Tawhid* "monotheism," the *Ummah* of the final divine message, the *Ummah* of moderation and centrism, and the *Ummah* that would be a witness over the people (*Al-Ummah al-Shahidah*).

The Islamic civilization arose and spread throughout the Earth, absorbing people of all nationalities, races, colors, classes and sects, forming an incubator for coexistence, tolerance and human ingenuity. And it will be upon its foundations that the *Ummah* will rise from its weakness, backwardness and fragmentation, restore its glory and defeat its enemies.

2. The legitimacy of the legacy of the prophets: This great religion is the religion of monotheism that the prophets and messengers advocated for. Muslims thus believe that they are the true heirs worthy of the legacy of David and Solomon and the prophets of the Children of Israel and their righteous ones, who ruled Palestine for a period of time under the banner of monotheism (Islam). Therefore, the legitimacy of governing Palestine was transferred to Muslims because they raised the banner of monotheism after these messengers, and are the ones following the path of the prophets, and also because the Israelites strayed from the path of truth, hence the holy land is no longer theirs.



3. Location, status, and empowerment (*Al-Makan, al-Makanah and al-Tamkin*): This trinity characterizes Palestine, its civilized mission, and its role throughout history. The location, with its attractiveness for living and strategic importance, is at the dividing point between Asia and Africa, in the heart of the Arab world and in the heart of the Muslim world. Its status is great as a blessed holy land, and for being the land of prophets, *al-Isra'* (night journey) and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. And its role throughout history has been associated with the empowerment of *Allah's* religion, as it is a center for the struggle between right and wrong, where *Allah* Almighty made it (and the rest of *Bilad-al-Sham*) the land of *ribat* and the home of the victorious faithful who uphold righteousness (*Al-Ta'ifah al-Mansurah*). All of this made it the focus of the world's attention, and a graveyard for unjust invaders throughout history... Palestine will be the place where the corruption and transgressions of the Israelites (as in the openings of *Surat al-Isra'*) will come to an end, the Dajjal will be slain, and Gog and Magog will meet their end.

4. The decline of the *Ummah*: The Muslim *Ummah* and its political systems have suffered from backwardness and civilizational decline, manifestations of weakness and division, political despotism, intellectual and jurisprudential stagnation, a decline in the ability to innovate and renew, internal conflict, and a misguided focus on worldly affairs. They have failed to develop policies capable of keeping pace with progress and building effective systems (derived from our religion and Islamic heritage) capable of facing contemporary challenges and competing with emerging global powers. As a result, our Muslim world, including Palestine, became easy to invade by colonial powers and the enemies of the *Ummah*, easy to desecrate, occupy, tear it apart, and spread Western ideologies in its midst.

5. The nature of the Zionist project: The Zionist project is an aggressive, expansionist, settler-colonial project of population replacement. It is not only hostile to the Palestinian people but also to humanity and its values and to the *Ummah*, especially the Arab-Muslim environment surrounding it. The Zionist project was implanted in the heart of the region. It is allied with the Western colonial powers having mutual objectives. The establishment of Israel to fulfill the role of being a “buffer state” and a colonial stronghold, supported by western colonialism, especially the British, represents the pinnacle of the western-Zionist threat. By establishing it in the heart of the Muslim and Arab lands, it would split the two wings of the Muslim world in Asia and Africa into two separate parts. It would obstruct Muslim unity and thereby weaken it. Hence, this would ensure that the Arab and Muslim world remains divided and incapable of any revival, rotating instead in the orbit of subservience, producing raw materials and consuming western commodities. It also aims to prevent the emergence of a major Muslim power, to replace the Ottoman State, which was in the process of collapse. The chances of Israel continuing to enjoy stability and growth in a hostile environment rest upon an assurance that the Muslim states around it remain weak, fragmented and underdeveloped. Likewise, the likelihood of the revival of the Muslim *Ummah*, its unity, and its strength is dependent upon its ability to end the Zionist occupation of Palestine.

6. Dividing the region and isolating Palestine: Colonial domination, which benefited from the state of underdevelopment and division, and the aspiration of its local forces to power, led to the spread of the idea of the narrow nation-state. It facilitated the division of the region into states and mini-states. One of the most dangerous divisions was what was known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the subsequent arrangements that divided *Bilad al-Sham* and Iraq. It created a more appropriate environment for the establishment of the Zionist Jewish entity in Palestine, by singling-out Palestine and trying to isolate it from its Arab and Muslim surroundings.



7. Jerusalem (Al-Quds) is an indicator of the *Ummah*'s strength and weakness: Throughout history, Jerusalem (and *al-Aqsa* mosque) have been an indicator of the *Ummah*'s strength or weakness. When the *Ummah* is strong, Jerusalem is free and dignified, and when the *Ummah* is weak, backward and torn, Jerusalem is exposed to aggression and occupation by enemies. This is because Jerusalem and Palestine are the focus of the world's religious and strategic attention. The liberation of Jerusalem is an indication of the *Ummah*'s recovery and strength.

8. The central issue of the *Ummah*: When it comes to matters of liberation and conflict with the *Ummah*'s enemies and colonialism, Palestine appears to be the central issue of the *Ummah*. This is so not only because of its religious and strategic position, but also because the Zionist project is an aggressive global project that aims to weaken and tear the *Ummah* apart prevent its revival, and poses a real danger to it. This means that when Muslims defend Palestine, they are also defending themselves, their land, identity, religion, history and heritage. Consequently, Palestine, Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* will unite the *Ummah* against its common central enemy, and act as leverage for the *Ummah*'s revival and strength, because the liberation of Palestine cannot be accomplished without that. In contrast, Palestine exposes and shames those who let it down and abandon it. Therefore, the *Ummah* must move from the state of support to a true partnership (Especially in the strategic environment surrounding Palestine), where Muslims would contribute according to their abilities, capabilities and circumstances.

The centrality of this issue does not diminish the value of other major issues of the *Ummah*, such as the establishment of *Allah*'s law on earth; achieving civilizational advancement and Islamic unity; fighting injustice, corruption and tyranny; and liberating the rest of Muslim lands... .

9. The Islamicity of the liberation project: If the land of Palestine is an Islamic one, its people are Muslim, its civilizational and cultural affiliation is Islamic, its popular incubator is Muslim and its strategic

environment is Muslim, then it is natural that the identity of the liberation project should be Islamic. Those who want to distance Islam from the liberation project fall into a great delusion because they are like those who seek to separate the soul from the body or strip energy and engines from active forces.

The “Arab” aspect also applies to all of the above without contradiction. It goes along with our statement, as this aspect is associated with Islam in terms of “conquest” (*Futuh*), propagation, language, Arabization and civilization. The “Arab” conquistadors (*al-Fatihun*) were Muslim and carried the message of Islam, and other peoples and nationalities remained under its umbrella, while living in openness and civilizational interaction, accommodating all in one *Ummah* under the banner of Islam. Palestine’s Arab identity was and is still a natural part, in harmony with its broader Muslim identity.

10. Islam is the best mobilizer of the masses: Islam is the most capable of mobilizing the masses, orienting and urging them to sacrifice. The harmony of the Palestinians (as well as the Arabs and Muslims) with themselves, their creed, culture and heritage, is essential for instigating their enthusiasm and making them ready to sacrifice life and money. For when Muslims believe that victory is from *Allah*, Who has guaranteed victory for His true servants; when they deem Palestine, with its sanctity, blessing and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, as part of their religious beliefs, considering them endowments for the *Ummah* and the Muslim generations that they are entrusted with; when they believe that their steadfastness and suffering would be rewarded and considered good deeds; when they consider their victory a glory for the *Ummah* and part of its dignity; and when they believe that martyrdom would make them attain the highest level of Paradise... Then, it will be realized that no ideology has the energy, vitality, power and influence that Islam has.

11. Setting the fundamentals and paths: Palestine is an Islamic land and belongs to Muslims and their generations throughout the ages



until the Day of Resurrection; it is not permissible for anyone, whether Palestinian, Arab or Muslim, to give up any part of it, no matter how small it is. Therefore, Palestine is not the property of Palestinians or Arabs only, but it is the property of all Muslims... and Muslims everywhere should practically contribute to defend it, by providing money and making other sacrifices, as a mandatory religious obligation on all (*Fardh 'Ayn*).

The Muslim identity of Palestine defines the fundamentals, as well as the tracks. It determines the extent and areas of national action as well as the margins of maneuvering and interim programs. There is no room for tampering with the full right to Palestine and the sovereignty over it, from its river to its sea; no room to recognize any legitimacy or right for the occupation over any part of it; and no room to waive the right of return of refugees to their homes from which they were expelled, just as there is no room to waive the right of resistance and *Jihad*, until victory is achieved and liberation is completed.

12. The lessons of historical experience: Historical experience has proved that the liberation of Palestine is linked to Islam, from the age of *Futuh* to the Crusades and the confrontation of the Tatars and until our contemporary times. The various ideologies that have dominated the Arab and Palestinian public discourse and politics in our modern history, whether leftist, nationalist or region-oriented, have failed to lead a real liberation project. We are still paying a bitter price for the official dominance of these ideologies.

Although the Islamic trend was fiercely fought in the region and deprived of the means of revival and empowerment, especially in the strategic surrounding area of Palestine, Islam remained the main motivator (or at least a major one) of revolutions, resistance action and the uprisings of the Palestinian people over the past hundred years. For more than two decades, the Palestinian Islamic resistance has represented the backbone of the armed resistance forces in Palestine.

13. The upcoming persistence and revival, preceded by weakness and defeat: The projects of unity, liberation, and revival were preceded throughout our history by cases of rupture, fragmentation, weakness, and the domination of enemies. These conditions were an essential motivation for thinkers, scholars, and activist forces of the *Ummah* to launch these projects and push the wheel of change and creativity. The miserable situation that the *Ummah* has been through, led to the emergence of many revival projects over the past two centuries. Mobilization will continue until the elements of success, empowerment and advancement of an Islam-based project shall unleash the *Ummah*'s energies, unite them and defeat their enemies.

14. Towards a comprehensive reform: Throughout its modern and contemporary history, the *Ummah* has been subjected to many blows and calamities. Its energies and human and material resources have been depleted, its competencies have been displaced, and its countries have been led by corrupt, tyrannical regimes subservient to major powers hostile to the *Ummah* and its collective will. One of the most recent manifestations of its suffering was the setback of what is known as the “Arab Spring” and the unrest, tragedies and disasters of the peoples of the region.

However, these setbacks have strengthened the movements that seek comprehensive change, and not just reform under the umbrella of the regimes. They revealed the faults of the Arab and regional regimes and exposed the hypocrisy of the calls for democracy and freedom made by the international powers, and their willingness to ally with the corrupt regimes to prevent an Islamic revival. They also revealed the failure of the regime's political, economic, social and revival programs. The tragic situation of the *Ummah* was accompanied by mass resilience, with the emergence of hundreds of thousands or millions who confronted the oppressors and tyrants by both soft and hard means. This constitutes a strategic asset in the projects of mobilization, resistance and liberation.



15. Towards an independent, civilized Islamic alternative:

The system on which the revival project is based, must constitute an independent civilized Islamic alternative, based on Islamic belief, behavior, values and way of life. It offers comprehensive visions and solutions, not just partial ones or just adaptations of other civilized environments, or programs governed by the conditions, tools and powers of others, specifically Western civilization.

The Muslim *Ummah* is capable (as long as it adheres to its holy book and the Sunnah of its Prophet) to become the “civilizational witness” leading humanity. It is the most capable of offering humanity an environment that provides justice, truth, freedom, and harmony between man, the Creator (*Allah* Almighty) and the universe. Therefore, the restoration of the *Ummah*’s status is possible, obligatory and necessary. The active forces of the *Ummah* have a great task ahead, which is to build the desired civilized model that goes beyond addressing some of the consequences of secularism here or there, presenting solutions and alternatives to have a civilized advancement and lead humanity, taking advantage of the best accomplishments that civilizations have reached.

16. Basic conditions for the success of the revival and liberation project: The clarity of vision and message; faithful and competent leadership; a solid core of activists and competent leaders, capable of activating the masses and then leading the state and the revival project; an effective consultative institutional system; a comprehensive, realistic and ambitious practical program; and a strong will ready to pay the prices and make sacrifices. These are six basic conditions that must be built into any revival and liberation project.

17. The essential relationship between revival and liberation:

There will be no change in our backward and weak situation except through an Islamic revival project.

There would be no revival project unless it is independent, comprehensive, and satisfies the subjective and objective conditions of success.

There would be no revival project without being “empowered” in an independent state.

There would be no revival project without a unitary project.

There would be no room for empowerment and unity without confronting external influence and interference.

Nor is there room for empowerment and unity without confronting the Zionist project.

The revival project would not be completed unless the liberation of Land and Man is one of its pillars.

Thus, the project of advancement, unity and empowerment is intrinsically linked to the project of liberation.

18. The Islamic perspective of liberating Palestine: The most prominent features of the Islamic vision for the liberation of Palestine are:

- a. Adopting Islam comprehensively: its principles, as a code of conduct, as a way of life, and governance according to what Almighty *Allah* has revealed.
- b. There must be qualified sincere leadership capable of facing the Zionist plan and defeating it.
- c. Broadening the circle of struggle against the Zionist occupation (in addition to being the responsibility of every Palestinian and Arab) to become the responsibility of every Muslim, and every human being who is a defender of right, justice and freedom.
- d. Supporting the Palestinian people and preparing them with various means, in their capacity as the people on the front lines of the defense of the Islamic Ummah, to remain firm in their land and be able to continue their struggle and resistance.
- e. Striving to achieve a civilized revival that can pave the way to achieve change, positive political, economic, scientific and military progress,



and unity, especially in the strategic environment of Palestine. Thus, the Muslims will be able to shoulder the burdens of battle and liberation and secure the necessary conditions for being strong and fit to pioneering humanity and world civilization.

19. A battle of generations: The battle for the liberation of Palestine is a continuous battle that does not stop until its complete liberation and the defeat of the Zionist project. It is a battle of generations, one after another until *Allah* permits victory and liberation.

Defeats, setbacks, frustrations, betrayals from near and far, and corruption of regimes and their rulers should not be reasons for giving up any part of the blessed land. Rather, it should constitute a motive for the faithful to conduct revisions, draw lessons, redouble efforts and creativity, and complete the conditions for success.

20. Parallel lines of action: The *Jihad* for the liberation of Palestine, on one hand, and working for the civilized advancement of the *Ummah* and the establishment of the Islamic state, on the other hand, are two parallel and complementary actions. One may leverage the other, without one waiting for the other or holding it back. Just as revival and unity are the path to liberation, so too is *Jihad*, confronting the Zionist enemy, weakening it, preoccupying it, and defeating it are the path to revival and unity.

21. Achieving strategic superiority: The role of the people of Palestine is vital, and they bear a great responsibility. They are the vanguard guardians of the *Ummah's* frontiers (*Ashab al-Thughur*), and by their steadfastness, they prove the land's Islamic identity, and by their resistance, they weaken the enemy, make it lose its security and stability, and hinder its expansion. However, Palestine cannot be liberated from within, and the Palestinian people alone cannot liberate all of Palestine. Achieving the complete liberation project and confronting a global Zionist project sponsored by superpowers can only be achieved through an Islamic revival project, especially in the strategic environment

surrounding Palestine, that achieves a strategic superiority, enabling it to drive out the Zionist project.

22. No contradiction with the national and Arab dimensions: The Islamic vision of liberation does not contradict the Arab nationalist dimensions. Muslims are quite loyal to their homeland, and they support objective patriotism which means love, longing and nostalgia for the land; dignity and liberation; and cooperation, solidarity, and compassion of the society. Moreover, preserving the land and sacrificing life and money to liberate it from enemies is part of the Muslims' faith and religion.

There is no conflict between the Arab and the Islamic aspects, as Arabs now are overwhelmingly Muslims (about 95%). What mostly unites Arabs is their religion and their language preserved in the *Qur'an* and the Islamic heritage. Arab unity projects can be viewed positively as a step towards Islamic unity, if they express the will of the people, are open, and are not based on exclusionary fanaticism and mentalities, nor the dictatorship of minorities or military coups. Therefore, the circles of action for Palestine, whether they are national, Arab, Islamic or humanitarian, are integrated ones, and their positive elements should be activated in the revival and liberation projects.

23. The revival liberation project accommodates non-Muslim religious sects: The Islamic project is not sectarian, racist or isolationist. It does not mean injustice or marginalization of non-Muslim religious sects, nor does it mean coercion in religion; rather, it is a civilized revival project that is open and flexible, and accommodates all segments and forces seeking to contribute to the liberation project, which will take their positions according to their sincerity and competence.

If Islam is the main uniter of the Palestinian people, Arabs and the peoples of the *Ummah*, and it is the greatest common denominator among all, it is not permissible to exclude it in favor of ideologies that do not bring together even halves, quarters or tenths of what Islam brings together.



Using the same analogy, why, according to the pan-Arabist perspective, should peoples of other nationalities in the Arab region such as the Kurds, Amazighs, Africans and Turkmen, all of whom are Muslims (and speak Arabic) be overlooked, when their percentage of the population is higher than the percentage of people of other religious sects?

The greatest driving force, instigator and unifier of liberation should not be dispensed with; in favor of ideologies that have failed, over many years, to mobilize this huge reservoir of energy and vitality in the *Ummah* to confront the Zionist project.

Moreover, the Christians of Palestine (since the time of ‘Umar (RA)) and the Christians of the East, have been integrated into Islamic civilization and participated in its construction. They have lived in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance throughout Islamic history. The Christians of Palestine contributed strongly to confronting the Zionist movement with words, pens and guns. They worked without any sensitivity under the leadership of the Mufti of Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husaini, and fought within the formations of the Holy Jihad Organization. They were and still are an essential part of the Palestinian national movement.

24. Fighting the usurpers and aggressors: Muslims do not fight the Jews because they are Jews. Muslim relationship with the Peoples of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) is based on justice and benevolence, while enjoying freedom, as well as religious and citizenship rights under Muslim rule. Muslims fight the Zionist aggressors, who usurped the land of Palestine, expelled its people and violated its holy sites, and they will fight any faction or group that tries to occupy their land, irrespective of religion or nationality.

25. The nature of *Jihad* movements: Swimming against the tide, not in line with the prevailing paradigm, and not maneuvering and adapting to the current “rigid regimes,” or under the ceilings and calculations of the regimes: All these are usually the characteristics of

Jihadi, revolutionary and transformative movements. Such movements should not be discouraged by any lack of adherents or the abundance of complacent people. What is important is a good relationship with *Allah*, the validity of the approach, and the reliance on *Allah* after doing everything possible to satisfy material conditions.

On the way to the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine, and after the clarification of the vision, path and approach, credibility and seriousness should be proven on the ground, through patience, steadfastness, perseverance, sacrifice, defending the frontiers, supporting the resistance fighters, and competing only in defeating the enemy, while respecting the reasoning of the honest men fighting on the ground and guarding the frontiers (*Ashab al-Thughur*).

26. Transnational safety nets: To confront the Zionist project and liberate Palestine, the sincere and active forces of the region must form safety nets (popular and official where possible):

- a. A national, Arab and Islamic safety net that supports development and advancement.
- b. A safety net against sectarian and ethnic conflicts, and everything that prevents the unity of the *Ummah* or diverts it from the struggle with its real enemies.
- c. A safety net against external interference and the forces seeking to weaken and fragment the *Ummah*.

Consequently, the *Ummah* would save its energy and potential for acivilized advancement and the liberation of its lands and holy sites.

27. The Humanitarian Dimension of the Palestine Issue: The Palestine Question has profound and far-reaching humanitarian dimensions. The Zionist project is based primarily on the usurpation of rights and injustice. It is hostile to human values that adhere to the principles of right, justice and freedom. The Zionist movement and its occupation of Palestine is one of the last remaining outposts of traditional



western European colonialism that was obliterated from all parts of the world, and must, sooner rather than later, be expunged from Palestine.

The presence of Israel in the heart of the Muslim world, its mobilization of weapons of mass destruction, and the unlimited US and Western support of it, will always be the burning fuse threatening world peace to explode; as long as it insists on the occupation of Palestine, the Judaization of the land, people and holy sites; and the suppression of the Palestinian people and the will of the *Ummah*. Therefore, the mission of liberating occupied Palestine is essentially a humane and civilized mission in which all nations and countries should contribute.

28. The Defeat of the Jewish Zionist Project: The defeat of the Jewish Zionist project in Palestine is not only possible, it is an affirmed truth, because Almighty *Allah* (SWT) has given us glad tidings of this in the Holy Qur'an, and so did Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). Moreover, *Allah's* Laws in this universe and history tell us that injustice doesn't continue forever, that the tyrant will inevitably be defeated, that no right is lost if there is someone behind it and that when the *Ummah* obeys *Allah* (SWT), gets unified, reclaims the reasons of strength and honour, then and only then, it will be able, *Allah* willing, to achieve victory and liberation. The *Ummah* and its fighting forces must educate the generations to trust in *Allah's* promise, and on the fact that the Zionist project is one of the episodes of struggle over the Holy Land, and it will be defeated and vanish, just as many previous invasions and occupations were defeated.

INSIGHTS ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

This Booklet

The booklet seeks to display the prominent features and determinants of the Islamic vision of the Palestine issue, which capitalizes on *Shari'ah* concepts, the Divine universal laws, the accumulated history, realities and future foresight.

The booklet considers Islam is a way of life and a founder of civilization, and that Palestine has an important status and a role that has been associated with the empowerment of *Allah's* religion. It warns that in our modern and contemporary world, the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) has been suffering from backwardness, and needs to resume its civilizational role and revival project. However, it believes that Palestine is the central issue of this *Ummah*, whose liberation is an Islamic project. The booklet further explains that this liberation and working for the civilized advancement of the *Ummah* are two parallel and complementary actions, and that its Islamic aspect does not contradict the Arab nationalist dimensions and the humanitarian dimensions, too.

The booklet discusses the factors of achieving strategic superiority and the basic conditions for the success of the revival and liberation project. At the end, the booklet emphasizes the trust in *Allah's* promise of victory and liberation, after doing everything possible to secure the subjective and objective conditions of success.



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