

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Introducing Islamicjerusalem

By Professor Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi

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## Review I

This is a study that breaks new ground in our understanding of Islamicjerusalem, and is as ambitious as the title suggests. The author ambitiously attempts to introduce an intellectually exciting and stimulating new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies which should interest not only those in the field, but also students, both academic and non-academic, as well as the general reading public. This excellent compilation will complement well the previous four monographs on Islamicjerusalem Studies.

Following a brief preface, which does no more than detail the book's origin and lay the groundwork, the work is divided into seven chapters. The book works systematically and structurally, beginning with the texts and ending with a look at the present and future in relation to these.

The first chapter is entitled 'Islamicjerusalem: a new Concept and Definitions'; this focuses on defining the new concept and its background. Professor Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi argues that Islamicjerusalem is neither the walled city of Islamicjerusalem nor the city of Jerusalem but an extensive region that covers a large number of cities, towns and villages. El-Awaisi stresses that such definitions are a human explanation using interpretation and terminology which are subject to change and development based on the latest scholarly research in the field. In this chapter the author justifies the reason behind adding 'Islamic' to Jerusalem to make one word rather than two separate words. The chapter concludes by highlighting the latest research in the field.

The next six chapters further develop an understanding of the definition. Chapter two presents a new term Barakah and suggest that, in the case of al-Aqsa Mosque, the Barakah is not only manifested in the mosque, as in Makkah, but goes on to cover the surrounding areas of the mosque. In other words, al-Aqsa Mosque is the centre of Barakah. El-Awaisi very interestingly develops a new theory called the 'Barakah Circle

Theory of Islamic Jerusalem' which is inclusive and applies to every human being without exception as has been clearly spelled out in the Qur'an lil' alamin. El-Awaisi has divided the Barakah circle theory of Islamic Jerusalem into three geographical locations.

In chapter three a new term for Islamic Jerusalem is introduced: the land of hope (Amal); it suggests that Islamic Jerusalem is inclusive rather than exclusive and should be open to the followers of all other religions. He supports his claim by quoting the Qur'anic verse lil' alamin. El-Awaisi also discusses the steps taken by Prophet Muhammad and his first successors towards conquering this land. El-Awaisi concludes that this land has been given by Allah and is a land of hope and one of the manifestations of the Barakah.

Chapter four, the largest and most explicit of the chapters, is devoted to the study of an important document, namely the 'Umar Assurance of Safety to the People of Aelia granted to them after the first Muslim conquest of Islamic Jerusalem in Jumada I/II 16 A.H/ March/ April 367 C.E. El-Awaisi focuses on two versions of the document, namely Al-Tabari's version and the Orthodox Patriarchate version of 'Umar's Assurance. He examines the former thoroughly critically analysing every single article appearing in the text of the document; he concludes by stating that this Assurance reshaped a new society and environment in Islamic Jerusalem granting a peaceful life to all of its inhabitants. In addition, this Assurance affirmed the policy of non-interference in the internal religious matters of the people of Aelia. El-Awaisi pays special attention to a condition in the Assurance which states 'No Jews should reside with {the Christians} in Aelia'. He comes to the conclusion that this condition was not a part of the original text of the 'Umar Assurance. Furthermore, El-Awaisi concludes, after criticising the Orthodox Patriarchate version internally and externally, that this version is unauthentic and is either forged or at least concocted during the Ottoman period to serve the political and religious aims of the Greek Orthodox sect in Islamic Jerusalem.

In chapter five, El-Awaisi presents Islamicjerusalem as a model of conflict resolution by focussing on four main key elements: the methodological approach of Tadafu' (counterbalance), the concept of 'Adl (Justice), the principle of non-exclusion, and the constructive argumentation methodology which leads to peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. He then implements these elements on the first Muslim conquest of Islamicjerusalem, more specifically, on the 'Umar Assurance of safety to the people of Aelia and the negotiations between Salah al-Din and King Richard I King of England during the third Crusade (1189-1193). The chapter concludes that the first step in any conflict resolution should be through constructive argumentation based on the power of knowledge and not from an arrogant position.

Chapter six is entitled 'Islamicjerusalem as a Model for Multiculturalism' and recalls the first Muslim conquest of Islamicjerusalem and how it established a multicultural society identifying and recognising diversity and plurality. The chapter examines the Muslim vision for Islamicjerusalem and infers that, in the absence of this vision, there will never be peace and stability.

Finally, in chapter seven, the author succeeds in presenting his methodology in understanding history. El-Awaisi points out that, from a Muslim point of view, history has never been seen as independent knowledge, but as part of the wider Muslim knowledge, linked with Muslim core discipline and science. He examines why the history of Islamicjerusalem has suffered from distortion, fabrication and alteration. In addition, he discusses the very important issue of why Islamicjerusalem has never been made a capital.

In the conclusion, El-Awaisi succeeds in finding a relationship between Barakhah, Amal and Aman and discovering how these are related to his central argument that Islamicjerusalem is not exclusive but inclusive and should be opened up to everyone in the universe.

Professor Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi begins by defining IslamicJerusalem and IslamicJerusalem Studies, and then opens up what he considers to be the six important areas for reflection. These are: the Barakah, hope (Amal), assurance (Aman), conflict resolution, multiculturalism and historical issues. In light of this discussion, El-Awaisi suggests that the unique common space of openness and Barakah has made IslamicJerusalem an ideal Amal region where the one human family can make Li ta'arafu, live together in Aman and enjoy the Barakah. In many cases, the author uses Arabic terminologies rather than English because he finds it very difficult to translate the concept of Barakah, for example, into the English language.

The author emphasises his theories and arguments by presenting them, very interestingly, with maps and diagrams which have definitely greatly enhanced the appeal of the book and enriched the chapters. The monograph is sufficiently rich in detail to provide a starting point for further research. Its main strength lies in its framework and the significant body of information and argument contained therein. Its limitations, in my view, arise from the fact that it does not deal with each concept thoroughly, even though seeking to introduce the topic, as the title suggests. Exploring each concept will need to be the subject of other books. Moreover, it would have been preferable if chapter seven been placed after the introduction, containing as it does important information which needs to be read and understood from the start.

To sum up, 'Introducing IslamicJerusalem' is in itself a highly rewarding study. It is very well researched, clearly written and makes an important contribution to the history of IslamicJerusalem. It is a dense and thorough presentation of IslamicJerusalem based on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches and should be read with care and attention, and will be deeply reward the serious student of IslamicJerusalem Studies. El-Awaisi's study is a serious

contribution to the field of Islamic Jerusalem Studies in particular and to knowledge in general, breaking new ground altogether. The book fills its remit well and, with the reservations listed above, I would recommend university libraries in particular to secure a copy. It marks a major step towards understanding Islamic Jerusalem.

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## Review II

The book is made up of seven main chapters, introduction and a conclusion. The introduction and chapter one both highlight the historical background to the writing of this book - that is Islamicjerusalem as a new concept and terminology. Islamicjerusalem is a new field of academic inquiry that is geared towards studying the various aspects of this vital and dynamic region. Chapter two examines the concept of barakah with regard to Islamicjerusalem in the light of the discussion of some Qur'anic verses. Chapter three outlines the spiritual significance of Islamicjerusalem across nations, religions and prophets, as the land of hope amal. The thrust of the discussion, though, is on chapter four, which looks into 'Umar's Assurance of Safety to the people of Islamicjerusalem. It discusses what changes and transformations 'Umar introduced in Islamicjerusalem, as far as relations among adherents of the different faiths were concerned. Chapter five tests the hypothesis whether or not Islamicjerusalem could be claimed as a model of conflict resolution, while chapter six looks into Islamicjerusalem as a model of multiculturalism on the basis of recognition and preservation of human dignity. Chapter seven draws on understanding and articulating historical methodology with regards to Islamicjerusalem.

The author has made it clear that his intention in the book is to write this book for both academics and non-academics, in order to clarify issues relating to Islamicjerusalem and as an essential contribution to the new academic field of inquiry. He points out that his intention is not to present the history or politics of Islamicjerusalem, but to "set the scene for advanced research". Moreover, El-Awaisi has indicated that in order to explore the concept and definition of Islamicjerusalem, it is important to examine questions with regards to its nature and history.

On the definition, it is understood that it took El-Awaisi a couple of years before he could establish a working definition.

He notes that the annual conference on Islamicjerusalem and the launch of the Journal of Islamicjerusalem Studies as pertinent to arousing more analysis, debate and discussion. He cites the annual academic conference and the Journal as practical steps in order to create a new frame of reference for the development of the new field of inquiry. The author has also demonstrated that the development of such an academic inquiry was possible because of the cooperation between knowledge and power and seemingly that equation is fundamental to politics. Initially, El-Awaisi presented the three main elements of Islamicjerusalem namely, geography, people and vision. Apart from the third element, political scientists, on discussing the arms of a state make reference to, people, land and sovereignty which to my mind may be inclusive of the vision in terms of the administration, the executive, judicial and legislative apparatuses of the state. Sovereignty may not be looked at in terms of control and domination. In fact, sovereignty must entail authority, legitimacy and the kind of political system a certain political entity may or may not adopt. What is perhaps striking in the elaborate and revised definition is the emphasis on the unique nature of Islamicjerusalem as theater of competing interests and diverse claims historical or otherwise. Thus, the author affirms that the uniqueness also lies in what the author refers to as “its unique and creative inclusive vision”. As a matter of fact, the author has attempted also to review his ideas about the nature of the Islamicjerusalem Studies as a branch of human knowledge that is intended to look into different facets of Islamicjerusalem region in an interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches from Theology and Political Science to Sociology and History.

The author has employed the concept of barakah circle to the region. He looks into the understanding of barakah in the light of Qur’ānic verses that are mainly Makkan, which is suggestive of the significance of Islamicjerusalem at that early period of the advent of Islām. El-Awaisi has made a distinction between the barakah in Makkah and that of Islamicjerusalem.

He asserts that while the former is exclusive the latter is inclusive and radiates. He relates this to the first verses in chapter seventeen (17) of the Qur'ān that the Al-Aqṣa Mosque is surrounded by barakah. Furthermore, El-Awaisi makes an interesting inference that Makkah is the reference point for al-Aqṣa and sees the link between the two as one of a "twining relationship". He traces such a linkage and relationship back to Prophets and that the bond was reinforced by the Prophet Muhammad in his extraordinarily supernatural Night Journey Isra' and subsequent ascension Mi 'rāj to the Heavens, as Muslims believe. The author stresses that the Isra' was a manifestation of the centrality of the region and to attach to it an international status, as well as its religious, cultural and political significance.

In outlining IslamicJerusalem as land of hope amal, El-Awaisi dwelt on pointing out the significance of the region across nations and civilizations. He particularly argues that the phenomenon of Isra' occurred at a crucial historical moment during the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad. He notes, as a matter of fact, that it coincided with the passing of the Prophet's dear spouse Khadījah and uncle Abū Ṭālib both were supporters of the Prophet. The event also exhibits the focal nature of IslamicJerusalem in religious and political terms. The author has argued that the Prophet put in place strategy for the conquest of IslamicJerusalem. This began accordingly with the sending of envoys to leaders around Arabia, the battles of Mu'tah in 8AH/629CE and Tabuk in 9AH/630CE respectively, as well as the mission of Usamah that Abubaker the second caliph implemented in 11AH/631CE.

The thrust of the book has been on the analysis of the different versions of the important historic document that 'Umar the second caliph in Muslim political history developed for the people of IslamicJerusalem. The author argues that it is the caliph's Assurance of safety amān for the people of the region irrespective of their diversity and plurality in terms cultural, political and religious persuasions. Although there are several

versions of the document, the author has focused on the al-Tabri's version and the one published by the Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem in 1953. Indeed, the author has employed the historical methodology of analysis, comparison, external and internal examination of the texts. The author has spent some time to rebut claims that 'Umar's Assurance was exclusionary and exclusive. On the contrary, he asserts that the document is one of assurance of safety and the rejection of supremacy. He suggests that the clause in the second paragraph of the document in the Ṭabarī's version that refers to the exclusion of Jews, seems according to the author contradictory to the general spirit throughout the document. This is attributable to the fact that that it contrasts sharply with the emphasis and impetus the document places upon inclusion and assurance of safety for people of Aelia. To substantiate the point of inclusive assurance for the people of Islamic Jerusalem including the Jews, the author alludes to Al-Ya'qubi that 'Umar granted an assurance of safety to the Jews (he quotes from Hani Abū Rab). As for the Orthodox Patriarchate's version at the Greek Orthodox Library in Istanbul, the author has equally deployed methods of internal and external criticism to establish its veracity or otherwise. He has observed that the style of language used in the preface and conclusion is a more recent thing. The "artistic decoration", the vocabulary and structure of language all have made the author believe that the document may have been written during the Ottoman rule. Another suspicion that casts doubts over the version is the inclusion of Christian sects, such as Copts, Maronites, the Armenians and East Syrians in the document. It is argued thus that the known Christian (denomination) was the Greek Orthodox Church. This has led the author to conclude that the version of the document may have been written during the Ottoman rule and not immediately after the 'Umar's conquest.

On the issue of conflict resolution, the author has focused on how to develop ways and means of multiculturalism through education and a common denominator for a shared purpose.

This he argues will create an atmosphere of dialogue as opposed to rigid interpretations of religious texts or secular ideologies. He indicates that Muslim theoretical frame of reference is the Qur'an and Sunnah. He argues that this understanding of conflict resolution and Muslim theoretical framework hinge upon the Qur'anic notions of counterbalance (tadafu'), justice (adl) and inclusion and constructive argumentation. It seems to suggest that the different elements are connected in bringing about peace and security. He relates the above theory to Islamicjerusalem as implemented by 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab and later pursued by Salah al-Din in his negotiations with Richard the then King of England.

The multicultural model of Islamicjerusalem, El-Awaisi demonstrates, is attributable to the inclusive vision of 'Umar by reshaping the relationships amongst diverse peoples, cultures and faiths. The authors asserts that the advent of 'Umar heralds a dawn of a new era amongst the adherents of the three faiths, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islām. The model, it is argued, promotes recognition and the preservation of human dignity. As such the author has made a distinction between sovereignty and vision. Thus, he has reflected upon Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid's vision for multiculturalism that lies in the latter's passion for the development and support for education and scholarship. It is noted that, coupled with the promotion of scholarship, is the establishment of foundations in breaking barriers and building bridges across cultures and civilizations. Arguably, the vision was translated into the establishment of Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies in Dundee, in order to provide a "unique academic" environment for teaching, learning and research in the Study of Islām and Muslims and Islamicjerusalem Studies. This notion is perhaps indicative of the idea of cooperation between knowledge and power - that is scholarship and political will.

The book has touched upon some historical issues with regards to Islamicjerusalem. It has pointed out the religious and spiritual significance of the region to Jews, Christians and

Muslims that it does not exclude biases, prejudices and generalised conclusions and distortion of facts on some occasions. The point that the author wants to make is the need to adopt a methodology that is objective, balanced and detached from a certain political positioning.

The conclusion reiterates the sacred nature and significance of Islamicjerusalem. More important the geopolitical bearing of the region that has far-reaching consequences and uniqueness make it even more pressing the need to revisit the notions of conflict resolution and the Islamicjerusalem model of multiculturalism based on respect, tolerance and dialogue. These principles, it is believed, germinate seeds of hope, progress and prosperity. Needless to say, the legal issues surrounding the Islamicjerusalem are complex, wide-ranging and charged with political and religious factors. This makes it absolutely necessary that approaching Islamicjerusalem, as pointed out by El-Awaisi, needs detachment in order to counterbalance the political polemic and the dogmatic quality of debate. Seemingly, the dynamics of the analysis centers round vision of a leader. I argue that that lies at the heart of the relationship between power and knowledge. Thus, it would be difficult, in my understanding to separate vision from the notion of sovereignty. Sovereignty may not, by necessity, be akin to control and hegemony. In fact, it has to get its legitimacy from the people. As such the holistic picture of sovereignty includes the balance of power, delegation of power, sharing of power, the rule of law and authority and legitimacy a leadership gets from their people. In essence, what has been made abundantly clear by the author is that should be recognised and developed. Thus, the diverse nature of Islamicjerusalem ought to be an asset to enrich it, instead of propagating exclusion. It has been articulated in the book that the arrival of the second Muslim caliph in the region and its subsequent conquest marked a defining moment in the history of the region. The creative vision of 'Umar allowed for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and the protection of rights.

Fundamentally, the book has provoked academics and young scholars to further explore the different areas the author has examined, political, historical, theological, sociological even legal in as an objective manner and academic as possible.

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### Review III

Islamicjerusalem is indeed a very significant region to the three of the world's major monotheistic religion, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is a region full of history from as far back as the prophetic time to the modern days, today.

While the region is as old as a time, the term Islamicjerusalem itself in fact is a new terminology introduced and developed extensively in academia by Professor Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi, the founder of the new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies. It is indeed a remarkable field of inquiry which seeks to understand the terminology of Islamicjerusalem within the unique interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. Taking into consideration that Islamicjerusalem is a new concept and terminology, therefore further explanation and detail discussion on it is crucially needed.

Accordingly, the publication of this book is certainly comes at the right time. Most of the young scholars studying Islamicjerusalem Studies have been waiting patiently for some time for a book that could serve as a core reference of the field. Fortunately, the author realises this as echoed in the first page of this book, in the introduction chapter, where the author emphasis that "there has been an urgent need for a book to introduce an intellectually exciting and stimulating new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies" (p. 1). Before this book was published, there were almost no main references to the field of Islamicjerusalem Studies, which then require additional effort of young scholars to engage in the debate about Islamicjerusalem.

As one of the first batch of students who study and involved in the exciting development of this field, I admit that before this book was published, there were almost no main references to the field of Islamicjerusalem Studies. Furthermore, many of the students during that early time were desperately in need of this kind of comprehensive book on Islamicjerusalem.

Indeed, the need of this key-reference book begins since the first day of this new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies has been introduced in academia.

Having read and analyse this book, I certainly feel that this masterpiece publication is capable to take reader to understand the many issues related to Islamicjerusalem in its new dimension, concept and approach.

This book contains seven innovative indispensable chapters, with an introduction and conclusion. The author has also discussed academically and rationally a lot of points related to Islamicjerusalem from the viewpoint of core Muslim sources in dealing with the subject. A lot of arguments and counter-arguments have been brought forth by the author and I will endeavour to highlight the main point of the discussion.

The author begins the first chapter by discussing the term Islamicjerusalem as a new concept and definition. This chapter could be argued as the heart of the whole book, as it crucially focuses on explaining about the new concept, including the latest definition of Islamicjerusalem terminology. This chapter provides an extensive discussion which could leave the reader with a clear understanding of what Islamicjerusalem is actually means, as well as the historical background on the birth of Islamicjerusalem Studies.

The author then goes on to discuss his established theory called The Barakah Circle Theory of Islamicjerusalem, which is one of the author's outstanding brainchild. The author is the first prominent academic scholar to introduce and elaborate such distinctive theory.

The author has discussed that Barakah has been given to Islamicjerusalem since the early history of humankind with the earliest reference was to the time before those of Prophet Ibrahim (Qur'an, 21: 71). He then argues that, based on the verse in the Qur'an (17: 1), Islamicjerusalem is not only the region full with Barakah, but the region also serves as the centre of the Barakah. This is the basis of the circle theory which has been developed by the author.

within the document. He has employed internal and external criticism over the text, which lead to this significant finding. The author argues that “ ‘Umar’s Assurance of Safety was the jewel of the first Muslim conquest of Aelia, and the beacon for developing Islamicjerusalem unique and creative vision and nature” (p. 72). This document thus shows that “Islamicjerusalem as a model for multiculturalism and also as a model of conflict resolution.”

In developing his idea, the author has demonstrated that Islamicjerusalem is a model for conflict resolution. It becomes a Muslim theoretical frame of reference towards others. This is by examining the Quranic principles which touch upon the methodology of tadāfu’ (counterbalance), the concept of ‘Adl (justice), the principle of non exclusion and constructive argumentation methodology, which all will certainly contribute towards establishing peaceful co-existence and mutual respect. One important example in this regard is shown on how Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī dealt with King Richard 1 ‘the Lionheart,’ with regard to the significance of Islamicjerusalem to Muslim and others. The author states that “in an exclusive agenda, Richard claimed that ‘Jerusalem is the centre of our worship, which shall never renounce, even if there is only one of us left’.”

Interestingly to note that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn did not give a bad reaction upon receiving the letter. Instead, the author argues that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had asserted Muslim rights in Islamicjerusalem without denying the Christian rights in the region. The author mentioned that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn reply to Richard by stating that “Islamicjerusalem is ours as much as it is yours” (p. 85). This clearly shows that, principally, Muslim do not have an exclusion agenda towards others, and always ready at anytime to give others their rights to live in the region, and the rest of the world, in peace and harmony.

Consequently, with plenty of evidences, the author has developed further his arguments, which he argued that Islamicjerusalem is a model for multiculturalism. Significantly, this concept is well-developed in-line with Shaikh Hamdan Bin

Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision for multiculturalism. The author has provided the evidences of multicultural not only from ancient historical aspects, but also with a good number of current evidences, especially those shown by the relationship between Scotland and Dubai, a unique model of the relationship between west and east. This is indeed a remarkable example brought forward by the author, thus shows that Muslim can live with others as evidence from multicultural IslamicJerusalem.

In the last chapter of his book, the author has presented his argument concerning the methodological approach to understand historical issues related to IslamicJerusalem. The author argues that a true understanding of historical issues is crucial because it helps to plan for the future. Examining the arguments of Hassan Uthman and Malik Ibn Nabiy, this chapter shows that historical evidences are essential to determine the future. Thus, Malik Ibn Nabiy has argued that history, "determine our stands towards events and the problems that arise from them" (p. 108). Hence, in dealing with history, one should avoid taking history within only its own context, but one should have a better idea how to deal critically and analytically on the historical sources and texts. The important issue is to avoid any unjustifiable claims of orientalists and Israelis academics and to avoid their as approaches in dealing with Muslim historical sources. Since the author has clearly mentioned, "this applies to the Study of Islam and Muslims in general and to the study of IslamicJerusalem in particular" (p. 114).

In the conclusion of this book, the author has reinstated the important value of IslamicJerusalem which has been shown historically and religiously throughout this outstanding book. I endeavour to highlight such a strong statement which he agrees with the author, who argues that "the status of IslamicJerusalem is link to the status of Arabs and Muslims, and vice versa; and the future of IslamicJerusalem is linked to their future, and vice versa" (p. 118). This is indeed something very crucial to ponder on. One may disagree by saying that the status of

Islamicjerusalem is linked to 'superpower' in these modern days. But, I am disagree thus refute this by emphasising on the internal affairs of Muslims which should be first priority to be corrected towards establishing strong external affairs, which then become able to establish peace in the region.

To sum it up, I argue that the author of this book has succeeded in establishing the theoretical and conceptual framework to approach Islamicjerusalem. This modern approach towards Islamicjerusalem is avoiding any bad immoral reaction and emotional consequence when dealing with the question related to this region. This is well in-line with the essential document of the Dundee Declaration on the Future of the Study of Islam and Muslim which promotes, among others, post-traditional approach particularly in dealing with the subject of Islamicjerusalem.

Finally, I have enjoyed reading this book as the author has well-presented his arguments and counter-arguments in their sequences. Most importantly, while reading this book, I was impressed with the flow of the idea, which is easy to follow and to be understood. Therefore I strongly recommend to anyone who interested to explore further about Islamicjerusalem, to read this masterpiece and key reference book in the field.

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## Review IV

This book is considered to be the first academic written material on “Islamicjerusalem” as a new concept and new terminology, which maybe translated into the Arabic language as Bayt al-Maqdis. This concept can be summarised by considering Islamicjerusalem as a region containing several cities, villages, and towns, and not only a walled city or a mosque.

The author has studied the main characteristics of this region, and attempts to introduce these ideas to both the academic and the non-academic community. Also in this book, the author attempts to introduce and explain the main characteristics, concepts, and ideas of the new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies within academia. This field is considered to be one of the new fields of knowledge within academia, and the first in this context worldwide for postgraduate studies.

The book is divided into seven chapters, each taking into consideration one of the principles of Islamicjerusalem and Islamicjerusalem Studies. These principles can be considered as starting points for those researchers and scholars eager to study this rich region. The author introduces his new definition of lamicjerusalem region on which, as he mentions, he has been working for many years.

The definition, as follows, concentrates on three points. First, it introduces Islamicjerusalem as a region, not only as a city or mosque. Second, it defines the characteristics of the region that make it unique, one different from any other land or region in the world. Third, it introduces the three main elements that must be studied in order to understand the character of this region; the land, the people, and the vision to rule and administrate the region.

In this chapter the author also gives a complete definition of the new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies, and shows the studies the field contains, such as studying the land,

its people and its history. It is worth mentioning that one of the unique characters of this new field of inquiry is that it is not restricted to one discipline or approach, it can also be studied through interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. Therefore this new field of inquiry is not limited to one discipline in particular.

As well, the first chapter contains the history of establishing the new field of inquiry, from 1994. By studying the history of the establishment and development of this field, it can be argued that the new field has witnessed several changes and developments since its establishment. For example, the author writes about the translation of the terminology “Islamicjerusalem” into the Arabic language, mentioned in the definition that it may be translated as Bayt al-Maqdis; before this it was al-Quds al-Islāmiyyah (Islamic al-Quds). The writer then briefly mentions some of the main new research on the subject. A brief look at these topics gives an impression of the rich variety of research fields within the new field of inquiry of Islamicjerusalem Studies.

In the second chapter, the author begins to examine and study some of the main theories and concepts on which the new field of inquiry was established. The first of these concepts is that on which the whole idea of the uniqueness of Islamicjerusalem is based, namely the concept of Barakah. However, the writer was not able to translate this concept into the English language as, according to him, there is no English terminology that equals the Arabic terminology in meaning.

After introducing this concept, the writer talks of a new theory that attempts to explain the concept of Barakah in Islamicjerusalem, namely “the Barakah circle theory of Islamicjerusalem”. This theory is based on the understanding of the (roundness) of the Barakah of Islamicjerusalem, mentioned in the Qur’ān (17:1), as circular radiations of Barakah beginning from al-Aqsa mosque in Islamicjerusalem and possibly reaching the whole world, with a special reference to the fact that the

radiation of the Barakah becomes weaker whenever it goes further than IslamicJerusalem.

One of the most interesting of the author's arguments regarding this theory is in connecting different cities (those that are on the same circle), and understanding historical issues related to the two places in the light of the connection between them. One example is the connection between Makkah and Istanbul; the author argues that the connection of these two cities on the same circle around IslamicJerusalem gives a new understanding of the concept of their relationship, since Makkah was the first city in which Islam was born and Istanbul was the city which witnessed the claps of the Muslim political system in 1924. It can be argued that this new understanding of the historical events in this context is very interesting in that it leads to gates wide open to new approaches and new insights in studying history. Thus, more investigation and studies are needed to discover the possibilities of this theory in order to solve some of the contradictions and problematic issues related to history.

After explaining the Barakah circle theory of IslamicJerusalem according to the verse in the Qur'ān (17:1), which is concerned with the first element in studying IslamicJerusalem, namely the land, the author deals with the second element, namely the people, an element which must be connected with the third one, namely the vision. As an introduction to these two elements, in the third chapter the author focuses on a new concept that he found to be related to the character of IslamicJerusalem, namely (the land of Hope). In this context the author refers to two very important examples in the history of IslamicJerusalem and the relationship between it and the Muslims.

The first example is that of Prophet Muhammad, to whom the concept (the land of Hope) was clear during his life in his Night Journey (Isrā' and Mi'rāj) in light of the hard time that he had during the time before this journey. It can be argued that the author has been successful in his application of this new concept

to this case; this can be clearly seen by looking at the circumstances occurring prior to this incident.

The second example is that of Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham), who God saved from oppression in his land and sent to the land of Barakah; in the Qur'ān it stated that this land had been given Barakah Lil'ālamīn (for everyone in the universe). The author focuses on the terminology Lil'ālamīn and uses it many times after that, since it clearly shows that the Barakah in this region is not restricted to one nation, religion, or race.

However, despite the clear importance of the author's discussion of this concept (the land of Hope) in understanding the role of IslamicJerusalem among different nations, it was noted that the author did not clearly explain the role of this concept in the academic studies of IslamicJerusalem; all that was explained was the right of this region to gain this concept. Neither did he explain the connection between this concept and his theory on the plan of Prophet Muhammad for the conquest of IslamicJerusalem. After explaining the concept of (the land of Hope), he began to discuss his theory of the plan of the Prophet. Although a connection between the concept and the theory of the plan can be understood when reading this chapter in general, it would have been better if the author had clarified this connection in greater detail.

In this context, the author had made a brief study in which he connected a number of incidents that occurred during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad, such as the encounters, battles, the Isarā' and Mī'rāj journey, the endowment made by the Prophet to Tamīm al-Dārī, and other incidents. By studying these incidents in the context drawn up by the author, he comes to the conclusion that the Prophet clearly planned to conquer IslamicJerusalem, and the author is assured yet again of this when he briefly studies the attitude of Abū Bakr after the death of the Prophet, and his declaration of the intention of the Prophet.

With a smooth transaction from speaking about the people to discussing the vision, the author presents in the fourth chapter

of the ‘Umar assurance of safety (Aman) to the people of Aelia (IslamicJerusalem). It is worth mentioning that this chapter was the longest of the book’s seven chapters, which reflects the importance of this historical document in studying the history and the vision of this region.

It is clear from this chapter that the author had altered some of his past arguments related to this document. He himself mentions that some of the arguments he had put forward in research and publications about the Assurance of safety has had later changed in subsequent publications. One argument the writer had changed, for example, was his opinion about the point in the Assurance that speaks about excluding the Jews from living in IslamicJerusalem; in this chapter he argues that this point was most likely not in the original text of the assurance, unlike to his former arguments on the case. However it seems that, due to the nature of this book as an introduction to the principles of IslamicJerusalem Studies, the author could not expand his studies to some problematic issues in the case of the Assurance of safety, particularly the point of excluding the Jews, which still needs more investigation and research.

As mentioned above, the fourth chapter studies the connection between the second and third elements regarding IslamicJerusalem, namely the people and the vision. From the fifth chapter, the writer concentrates on some principles that will help in understanding the third element, namely the vision of ruling and controlling IslamicJerusalem. Here the author studies the role of the inclusive vision of IslamicJerusalem in helping to solve the conflicts and wars in light of a political science theory, namely, the conflict resolution.

The author studies this issue theoretically by connecting the concept of (conflict resolution) with four principles: the Methodology of Tadāfu‘ (counterbalance), the concept of ‘Adl (Justice), inclusion and constructive argumentation methodology. Each of these principles is linked to the others so that together all lead to a new understanding of the inclusive vision of IslamicJerusalem. Then the author briefly studies a

practical example of this issue, the negotiations between Salah al-Din and Richard the Lionheart. Through this chapter, the book opens up new horizons of research and studies on this issue and applies them to IslamicJerusalem.

In the sixth chapter, the author studies the vision of IslamicJerusalem from a different angle, namely the concept of multiculturalism, which is mentioned in the last line of the definition of IslamicJerusalem. In this chapter, the author examines at IslamicJerusalem as a model for multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, according to the author, is based on the Qur'ānic expression *Lita'ārafū* (to get to know each other) which is mentioned in the Qur'ān (49:13). It represents the aim of diversity among humankind in cultures and races; the principle of knowing each other is based on two-way respect and acceptance, and is based on justice, which the author introduces as a solution to the present conflict in this region, introduced by him in a new argument, namely "Justice for Peace". This principle was applied in IslamicJerusalem, according to the author, during the Muslim rule of IslamicJerusalem, and the author links the concept of living with respect for others and the results of this in protection, security and freedom; these are the main elements for stability. The author explains these relations and concepts in diagrams, which can be considered an important addition to the field due to their role in connecting concepts with the mind easily and strongly.

Also in this chapter, the author discuss on the environment in which these concepts are studied and applied, namely Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, and the person who supports this agenda, namely HH Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the Deputy Ruler of Dubai, and UAE Minister of Finance and Industry. The author speaks of Shaikh Hamdan's vision for multiculturalism, and its role in developing the relationship between the west and the Arab world (Dubai and Scotland, for example), and of developing the study of Islam and Muslims (as mentioned in the Dundee Declaration for the development of the study of Islam and Muslims); the author

notes many achievements on this issue, especially in the relationship between Scotland and Dubai.

In the seventh and final chapter, the author studies some points that can be understood as fulfilment points for the principles of IslamicJerusalem Studies. The chapter contains a brief study of historical methodology and its role in understanding the present and the future; here was a very interesting statement made by the writer in this context “the nation that survives is the one with a conscience and a true appreciation of its history”. Such a statement can be considered as key to understanding the importance of history and historical methodology in the study of Islam and Muslims and IslamicJerusalem Studies, and an important base to give this methodology its importance and high rank among the principles of this academic field.

The author goes on to discuss some of the orientalist’s and Israeli academics’ claims regarding the relationship between Muslims and IslamicJerusalem, especially the claims regarding the first Muslim conquest of IslamicJerusalem and the ‘Umar Assurance of Safety as being a legend. In answering some of these claims, it seems that the author also attempts to give an example of the line argument and discussions might take among the researchers in the new field of inquiry of IslamicJerusalem Studies, as well as crowning the book by answering some of the arguments and claims that might be raised in the minds of some readers, especially when studying the ‘Umar Assurance of Safety to the people of Aelia.

The author concludes by summarising the character and importance of IslamicJerusalem and IslamicJerusalem Studies. He also clearly states the relationships and links among the different concepts that have been brought up throughout the book, such as the Barakah, Aman, ‘Adl, Lita‘ārafū and Tadāfu’. The author had drawn a diagram showing these links, and concludes that IslamicJerusalem is an inclusive region that should be opened up to all humanity on the basis of being the land of hope for all humans, and on the basis too of the Qur’ānic

expression “Lita‘ārafū” as a main principle of the relationship among the humans, which leads ultimately to the enabling of all humanity to live together in safety and enjoy the Barakah of this region, which is not restricted to any specific race of religion but is Lil‘ālamīn to everyone in the universe.

A number of positive points made by this book can be summarised; it introduces a new understanding of Islamicjerusalem as a region, and a new understanding of the vision of this region, a vision which includes everyone in the universe Lil‘ālamīn and one based on justice and equality. A very important contribution made by the book is the new Barakah Circle Theory of Islamicjerusalem, which is hoped to aid the understanding and solving of some problematic issues in the history of that region. It should also be mentioned that the book introduces a new understanding of the history of this region, and a new understanding of the relationship between Prophet Muhammad and Islamicjerusalem through the new theory of the “Prophet’s Plan towards the conquest of Islamicjerusalem”.

This book is truly a revolution in the studies related to this region and, as such, it can be considered as a major contribution to international academia, especially in the humanities. It is expected to open many gates to further debate, discussion, and research in different parts of the world, and to open up new horizons when looking at Islamicjerusalem and its great human history.

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