



Jerusalem as a Global Issue and Analysis of Caliph Umar's Jerusalem Covenant/Al-Amān in the Context of Its Contribution to Global Peace

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Abstract

This article aims to examine why Jerusalem, which has maintained its importance as a religious, cultural and political center throughout history, has become a global issue today, from a historical perspective and in the context of peace experiences. Since ancient times, this city, which is considered sacred by the three major Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam, has changed hands many times throughout history and has always been at the center of religious, political, and sociocultural dynamics. Within this context, particular attention is given to the peace document known as the “Jerusalem covenant (amannama/the Assurance of Safety)”, declared by Caliph Umar following his conquest of Jerusalem in 638. This document is regarded as a significant source that deserves close examination, both historically and in terms of its relevance today. The central question of the study is how Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant, which adopted an approach aimed at protecting a multi-religious and multicultural structure, might contribute to global peace in today's complex conflict environment. Jerusalem is not merely a geopolitical zone; it is also a multidimensional space situated at the intersection of religious affiliations, identity struggles, and international politics. Therefore, the governance approaches and peace practices developed here are not only historical examples but also hold potential as models that can shed light on current issues. In this research, al-Tabarī's 11-volume work titled *Tārīhu al-Tabarī (Tārīhu al-Rusul wa'l-mulūk)* was analysed by using the literature review method. In addition, other sources of hadith and history have been utilized to contribute to our research. Within this framework, the article adopts a qualitative research approach, using historical document analysis and literature review techniques. The Jerusalem covenant of Caliph Umar has been analyzed within the socio-political context of the period and his conception of conquest. The document has also been comparatively analyzed alongside modern human rights norms, principles of multiculturalism, and contemporary international legal instruments. Furthermore, Jerusalem's current political situation, religious tensions in the city, the approaches of international actors toward Jerusalem, and processes of urban transformation have also been considered within the scope of this analysis. The analysis concludes that Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant demonstrated a remarkably advanced vision of tolerance and peace for its time. The assurance guaranteed fundamental rights to Christian and Jewish communities living in the city, such as freedom

of worship, personal and property security, and the right to own property. It explicitly prohibited forced conversions or restrictions on religious practices. In this regard, the document is not merely a conquest agreement but stands as a written peace charter institutionalizing the principle of coexistence in a multicultural society. One of the key conclusions of the article is that Jerusalem today is not solely a territorial or sovereignty conflict; it is also a multilayered global issue involving moral, religious, and cultural responsibilities. Caliph Umar's approach reveals a peace-oriented and inclusive governance model that goes beyond military victory and is rooted in justice. This approach is evaluated as a model of governance and peace that could serve as an example for contemporary international communities. Thus, the Jerusalem covenant emerges as an important historical reference point in modern peace studies, particularly in terms of governing multi-religious societies and promoting religious tolerance.

Keywords

Tafsir, Jerusalem, Bayt al-Maqdis, Caliph Umar, Covenant/al-Amān.



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Küresel Bir Mesele Olarak Kudüs ve Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs Emannamesi'nin Küresel Barışa Katkısı Bağlamında Analizi

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Öz

Bu makale, tarih boyunca dinî, kültürel ve politik bir merkez olarak önemini koruyan Kudüs'ün, günümüzde neden küresel bir mesele haline geldiğini tarihsel perspektifle ve barış tecrübeleri ekseninde ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Kadim dönemlerden bu yana Yahudilik, Hristiyanlık ve İslam gibi üç büyük semavî dinin kutsal kabul ettiği bu şehir, tarih boyunca defalarca el değiştirmiş ve her seferinde dini, siyasi ve sosyokültürel dengelerin merkezinde yer almıştır. Bu çerçevede, özellikle Hz. Ömer'in 638 yılında Kudüs'ü fethetmesinin ardından ilan ettiği ve "Kudüs Emannamesi" olarak bilinen barış belgesi hem tarihi hem de günümüz açısından dikkatle incelenmesi gereken önemli bir kaynak niteliği taşımaktadır. Çalışmanın temel problemi, Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs Emannamesi'nin çok dinli ve çok kültürlü bir yapıyı koruma altına alan yaklaşımının, günümüzün karmaşık çatışma ortamında küresel barışa nasıl bir katkı sunabileceği sorusudur. Kudüs, sadece jeopolitik bir alan değil; aynı zamanda dini aidiyetlerin, kimlik mücadelelerinin ve uluslararası politikaların kesişim noktasında yer alan çok boyutlu bir yapıdır. Bu nedenle burada geliştirilen yönetim anlayışları ve barış pratikleri, yalnızca tarihi birer örnek değil, aynı zamanda bugüne ışık tutabilecek potansiyel modeller olarak da değerlendirilmektedir. Bu araştırmada literatür taraması yöntemi kullanılarak Taberî'nin *Târîhu't-Taberî (Târîhu'r-Rusûl ve'l-mülûk)* adlı 11 ciltlik eseri incelenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmamıza katkı sağlayacak diğer hadis ve tarih kaynaklarından da istifade edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda makale, nitel bir araştırma yöntemi benimseyerek tarihsel doküman analizi ve literatür taraması teknikleriyle hazırlanmıştır. Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs Emannamesi, dönemin sosyo-politik koşulları ve fetih anlayışı çerçevesinde incelenmiş; belge, modern insan hakları normları, çok kültürlülük ilkeleri ve çağdaş uluslararası hukuk belgeleriyle karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Aynı zamanda Kudüs'ün bugünkü politik durumu, şehirde yaşanan dini gerilimler, uluslararası aktörlerin Kudüs'e yönelik yaklaşımları ve kentsel dönüşüm süreçleri de bu analiz kapsamında değerlendirilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda, Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs Emannamesi'nin, dönemin şartları göz önüne alındığında oldukça ileri düzeyde bir hoşgörü ve barış vizyonu sunduğu görülmüştür. Emanname, şehirde yaşayan Hristiyan ve Yahudi topluluklara dini ibadet özgürlüğü, can ve mal güvenliği, mülk edinme hakkı gibi temel hakları garanti altına almış; zorla din değiştirme ya da ibadet kısıtlaması gibi uygulamaları açıkça yasaklamıştır. Bu yönüyle belge, sadece bir fetih anlaşması değil, aynı zamanda çok kültürlü bir toplumda barış içinde bir arada yaşama ilkesinin kurumsallaştığı yazılı bir barış metni olma özelliği taşımaktadır. Makalenin ulaştığı temel sonuçlardan biri,

Kudüs'ün bugün yalnızca bir toprak meselesi veya egemenlik çatışması değil; aynı zamanda ahlaki, dini ve kültürel sorumluluk içeren çok katmanlı bir küresel mesele olduğudur. Hz. Ömer'in yaklaşımı, bir askeri zaferin ötesinde, yönetime dair kapsayıcı ve adalet temelli bir barış anlayışı geliştirdiğini göstermektedir. Bu anlayış, çağdaş uluslararası toplumlar için örnek teşkil edebilecek bir yönetim ve barış modeli olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu nedenle Kudüs Emannamesi, modern barış çalışmalarında, çok dinli toplumların yönetimi ve dini hoşgörü açısından önemli bir tarihsel referans noktası olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Tefsir, Kudüs, Beytülmakdis, Hz. Ömer, Emanname.

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Introduction

The chronological history of Jerusalem dates back to 4500 BC. There is not enough information about the people of that period, but in the Early Bronze Age the inhabitants of the region were the Canaanites.¹ The ancient city of Jerusalem is considered a holy place for the religions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Jerusalem is important for Muslims. Because Jerusalem is the place where the al-Aqsa Mosque is located and it is stated in the Qur'an that the surroundings of the al-Aqsa Mosque are blessed. Jerusalem is the place where the Isra event of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) took place. This situation is pointed out in the Qur'an as follows: “Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing”.²

Jerusalem is described as the “holy land” in the following verse: “O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah's cause] and [thus] become losers”.³

The Prophet (pbuh) also mentioned the name of al-Aqsa Mosque in one of his hadiths as one of the three mosques that can be visited after al-Masjid al-Haram and al-Masjid al-Nabawi.⁴ Again, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said about Bayt al-Maqdis, “Go there and pray in it”.⁵ Bayt al-Maqdis is important for Muslims because it is the first qibla of Muslims. Indeed, after the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) migrated to Madina, he prayed facing the direction of

¹ Yusuf Alçiçek, *Ortadoğu'da Dini Jeopolitik: Kudüs'ün Semavi Dinler İçin Önemi* (Gaziantep: University of Gaziantep, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2017), 48.

² Isrâ' 17/1.

³ Mâ'ida 5/21.

⁴ Abū Abdillāh Muhammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi al-sahih*, ed. Muhammad Zuheyr b. Nasir al-Nasir (s.l.: Dāru Tawqī al-Najāt, 1422), “Fazlū's-salāt”, 1, 6; Abū al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī an-Neysābūrī, *al-Jāmi al-sahih*, ed. Muhammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī (Beyrūt: Dāru lhyā'i't-Turāsī'l-'Arabī, n.d.), “Hajj”, 415 (No. 3261), 511 (No. 3384); Abū Dāwūd Suleimān b. al-Ash'as al-Sijistānī, *al-Sunan*, ed. Muhammad Muhyiddīn Abdulhamīd (Saydā-Beyrūt: al-Mektebet al-'Asriyye, n.d.), “Menāsik”, 94; Abū Īsā Muhammad b. Īsā b. Sevre al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, ed. Bashshār Awwād Ma'rūf (Beyrūt: Dāru al-Gharbi al-Islāmī, 1998), “Salāt”, 126; Abū 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i, *al-Sunan* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1412/1992), “Masājid”, 10; Abū Muhammad 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Fazl al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan*, ed. Husayn Salīm Asad al-Dārānī (Su'udī Arabia: Dāru al-Mughnī li al-Nashr wa't-Tawzī', 1412/2000), “Salāt”, 132; Abū 'Abdillāh Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal al-Shaybānī, *al-Musnad*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnaūd et al. (s.l.: Messesat al-Risāla, 1421/2001), 12/116.

⁵ Abū Dāwūd, “Salāt”, 14.

Masjid al-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months before the verse, “So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram”.⁶ was revealed.⁷

Jerusalem is also an important and holy place for Christians. Jerusalem occupies an important place in the Bibles. According to the Bible of Mark, Jesus (pbuh) began his preaching activities in the Galilee region and upon their negative attitude, he headed towards Jerusalem, entered the city and cleansed the temple. When he encounters the reaction of the Jewish authorities, he announces that the city will be punished and the temple will be defiled. When he is crucified outside the city, the curtain of the temple is torn. Other Bibles make some additions to this information about Jerusalem. The Bible of John records that Jesus came to Jerusalem several times. According to the Bibles, Jesus’ earthly life ends in Jerusalem and the apostles receive the “holy spirit” there.⁸ The place where it is said that Prophet Jesus ascended to heaven (Church of the Resurrection/Mount of Olives) is in Jerusalem. Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, and Nazareth, where Jesus and Mary lived, are also within the borders of Jerusalem.⁹

Jerusalem is also considered sacred to Jews. The city of Jerusalem is mentioned only once in the Torah as Salem.¹⁰ The city’s transformation into a kingdom and center of worship begins with the Prophet David.¹¹ The construction of the temple during the time of Prophet Solomon (pbuh) gave Jerusalem a special sanctity; on the one hand, God’s promise that David’s reign would continue forever, and on the other hand, the acceptance of the temple as God’s eternal abode, sanctified the city. According to the prophet Jeremiah, Jerusalem will be called “the throne of the Lord, the land of righteousness, the mountain of holiness”.¹² Since Jerusalem is considered a place chosen by God¹³, the Jerusalem Temple is

⁶ al-Baqara 2/144.

⁷ Bukhārī, “Salât”, 31; “Tafsîr”, 11-12; Muslim, “Masâjîd”, 11-12; Abū Bakr Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-Hâlik b. Hallâd b. Ubaydillâh al-Bazzâr, *al-Musnad (al-Bahr al-Zahhar)*, ed. Mahfûzu al-Rahmân Zaynullâh et al. (al-Madînah al-Munawwara: Mektebat al-‘Ulûm wa’l-Hikam, 2009), 11/107-190; Muhammad b. Hibbân b. Ahmad Abū Hâtîm al-Tamîmî al-Bustî, *Sahîhu Ibn Hibbân*, ed. Shu’ayb al-Arnaoud (Beyrût: Messesat al-Risâla, 1414/1993), 4/617; Abū Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. ‘Alî b. Mûsâ al-Husrawjirdî al-Bayhaqî, *al-Sunan al-qubra*, ed. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qâdir ‘Atâ (Beyrût-Lebanon: Dârü’l-Kütübi’l-‘İlmiyye, 1424/2003), 2/3.

⁸ Ömer Faruk Harman, “Kudüs”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2002), 26/326.

⁹ Süleyman Özmen, “Dinî ve Hukuki Perspektife Göre Geçmişten Günümüze Kudüs’ün Önemi”, *Çukurova Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4/1 (Summer 2018), 46; Nazlı Karabulut, *Başlangıçtan Emevilere İslam Tarihinde Kudüs* (Çorum: University of Hitit, Institute of Social Sciences, Master’s Thesis, 2018), 21-22.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible* (İstanbul: The Holy Bible Company, 2003), Gen.14/18.

¹¹ 2 Sam.6-7; 1 Chr.21:18-22.

¹² Harman, “Kudüs”, 26/326.

¹³ 2 Kgs.21:4; Ps.132:13.

not only a place where sacrifices are offered but also the target of pilgrimage. According to Jewish law, the entire country is holy, but the city of Jerusalem is the holiest. The holiest place on earth, known as the “holy of holies,” is located in the temple in Jerusalem. Wherever Jews are and whenever they pray, they must always turn toward Jerusalem. The importance of Jerusalem in the worship life is based on the belief that the Jewish state will be established in these lands by the Messiah.¹⁴

Due to the aforementioned significance of Jerusalem, Muslims, Christians, and Jews have sought to gain control over this place. But when we examine the historical process, when the Jews dominated Jerusalem, they oppressed the Christians, and when the Christians dominated there, they oppressed the Jews. This situation prevented members of all religions from freely practicing their beliefs in that holy place and damaged the culture of living together. Similarly, the Jews and Christians who dominated Jerusalem expelled the Muslims from that place and did not allow them to practice their religion as they wished. However, whenever Muslims took control of Jerusalem, they respected the religious and conscience freedom of both Jews and Christians and allowed them to worship freely in their synagogues and churches.

The struggle to dominate the holy city Jerusalem continues today as it did in the past. The current war between Israel and Palestine, which all people are currently witnessing live, is a disproportionate and brutal example of the wars that have been going on between the heavenly religions in the holy place of Jerusalem since ancient times, with the monopolisation of power and capital. The problem of the holy place of Jerusalem constitutes the most obvious and important example of the problems that have been common to humanity since history and whose solution is becoming increasingly difficult. For this reason, Muslims have the responsibility to develop an attitude that can be described as humanitarian and moral to these problems we face in the world that is described as a global village. As Muslims, while the Qur'an and the Sunnah are our main sources in developing this attitude, examples of how they shed light on current problems are also important. In this paper, as one of the most important examples in history in the context of ensuring global peace in Jerusalem, Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant (amannama/the Assurance of Safety) will be the subject of research. Because when Jerusalem was conquered during the reign of Caliph Umar, the second caliph of Islam, peace was established in the city, which was sacred for all three religions. According to the covenant given by the caliph, the lives, properties, churches, crosses, the sick, the healthy, and other individuals of the people of Jerusalem are under protection. Within the framework of this covenant, the churches of the people of Jerusalem will not be used as dwellings, will not be destroyed, and the number of churches will not be reduced. No space

¹⁴ Harman, “Kudüs”, 26/326; Karabulut, *Başlangıçtan Emevilere İslam Tarihinde Kudüs*, 19; Rahim Ay, *Kudüs Şehri Siyasi Tarihi ve Üç Kutsal Dindeki Önemi* (Van: University of Yüzüncü Yıl, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 1997), 88-91.

inside churches will be narrowed, and no damage will be done to the crosses or goods within them. They will not be forced because of their religion and no harm will be done to any of them. Muslims, Christians and Jews lived in peace in the holy city of Jerusalem in accordance with this historical covenant of Caliph Umar. In this context, the example of the Jerusalem covenant will be examined in this study as an example of contribution to global peace in understanding the issue of the holy place Jerusalem for today's Muslims and solving it from a moral and humanitarian perspective.

The main purpose of this article is to analyze the role that Jerusalem plays in today's international relations and religious-social tensions as a global issue; in this context, to examine the Jerusalem covenant of Caliph Umar, a historical peace document, as a historical example and solution model for achieving global peace. The main problem of the research is why a permanent peace environment has not been achieved despite the multi-religious structure of Jerusalem and whether historical experiences, especially Caliph Umar's implementation, can provide a solution to today's conflicts. This study seeks answers to the following questions: Why has Jerusalem been a constant area of conflict throughout history? What principles is Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant based on? What kind of a peace environment has this Emanname provided in the historical context? How can this model contribute to today's global peace discussions?

Jerusalem has become a global issue that is closely followed not only by the Middle East but also by the entire world. The Jerusalem issue, which has been shaped specifically by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, carries the risk of deepening interfaith conflicts. Therefore, examining historical peace models in the context of Jerusalem is important in terms of showing how religious values can serve peace instead of conflict. In this context, Caliph Umar's Emanah is valuable in terms of showing what kind of application is possible for peace and pluralism in the historical heritage of Muslims. In addition, this document provides a practical example that emphasizes the peaceful aspect of Islamic political thought.

A great number of academic studies have been conducted on the historical, religious and political importance of Jerusalem. The sacredness of Jerusalem for the three heavenly religions, the struggles for sovereignty over the city and its historical development, Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant and Islam's approach to tolerance are among the frequently discussed topics in academic literature. However, these studies generally narrate historical events and Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant is not analyzed holistically with contemporary peace and human rights discussions. This article aims to fill this gap and examine the potential contribution of the Emanname to global peace in theoretical and practical terms.

The basic hypothesis of this study is that Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant is a historical model for establishing peace in multi-religious and multi-cultural societies and that this model can contribute to today's global peace efforts. In the context of this

hypothesis, the following assumptions will be made: Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant includes not only periodic but also universal peace principles. Historical peace models to be developed through the example of Jerusalem may also include principles that can be applied today.

This study is based on the historical and descriptive analysis method. By adopting the qualitative research method, a content analysis will be conducted in the light of historical documents, classical Islamic sources and contemporary academic literature. In addition, Caliph Umar's Jerusalem covenant will be compared with other historical peace documents with a comparative approach; it will be evaluated in terms of the continuity of peace and governance principles in multi-religious societies. The data will be interpreted using the document analysis method.

1. The Conquest of Jerusalem During the Reign of Caliph Umar

Jerusalem was conquered during the reign of the second Caliph, Caliph Umar. We can summarize the conquest of Jerusalem, which is described at length in history books, as follows: In the fifteenth year of the Hijra, after conquering Damascus, the commander of the Muslims, Abū Ubaydah, wrote a letter to the people of Jerusalem and invited them to believe in Allah and embrace Islam. He stated that if they did not accept this, they had to pay the jizya tax, otherwise they would fight against them. However, the people of Jerusalem did not accept his invitation. For this reason, Abū Ubayda left Said b. Zayd in his place in Damascus and went to Jerusalem. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he laid siege to the place and pressured the people into surrendering Jerusalem without bloodshed. Finally, the people of Jerusalem stated that they would agree to make peace on the condition that Umar b. al-Khattab came to Jerusalem in person. Abu Ubayda informed Caliph Umar about this matter by writing a letter. Caliph Umar consulted with the people on this matter. Uthman b. Affan told Caliph Umar not to go to Jerusalem so that the people of Jerusalem would be humiliated and their pride would be broken. Ali b. Abu Talib advised Caliph Umar to go to Jerusalem in order to lighten the burden on the Muslims due to the siege. He accepted the offer of Hz. Ali and set off towards Jerusalem. Caliph Umar left Caliph Ali in his place in Medina. Abbas b. Abdulmuttalib set out at the head of the vanguard. When Hz. Umar arrived in Damascus, he was welcomed by prominent commanders such as Abu Ubaydah, Khalid ibn al-Walid and Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan. Abu Ubayda got off his mount. Caliph Umar also got off. When Abu Ubayda moved to kiss Umar's hand, Umar also moved to kiss Abu Ubayda's foot. When Abu Ubayda gave up, Caliph Umar also gave up and continued on his way.¹⁵

When Caliph Umar arrived in Jerusalem, he gave the covenant/al-amān to the Christians there and ensured peace in Jerusalem. When Hz. Umar entered Jerusalem, he

¹⁵ Imâduddîn Abu al-Fidâ Ismâîl b. Kathîr al-Dimaskî, *al-Bidâya wa'n-nihâya* (s.l.: Dâru al-Fikr, 1407/1986), 7/55.

demanded that the Christians expel the Byzantines (Rums) from the city within three days. Then he entered the city. When he entered the city, he entered the Masjid al-Aqsa through the same gate that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) entered on the Night of Isra. There he performed the tahiyyatul-masjid prayer at the mihrab of the Prophet David. The next day, he led the Muslims in the morning prayer. In the first raka'ah of the morning prayer he recited the Sura Sad and in the second raka'ah he recited the Sura Isra. After the prayer he came to the rock where the Prophet (pbuh) stepped on during his ascension to heaven. Hz. Umar and the Muslims took the soil around the rock and carried it. The Caliph ordered the Jordanians to carry the remaining soil. Because that rock was the qibla of the Jews, the Byzantines turned that rock into a garbage dump. The reason why the Christians turned this place into a garbage dump was to take revenge on the Jews. Because the Jews had previously turned the place where Jesus was crucified into a garbage dump. That is why that place was called "garbage dump/kumame". Here, Caliph Umar and the Muslims cleared this place of garbage and ensured peace and tranquility in the holy city with the covenant/al-amān he gave to the Christians.¹⁶

2. Caliph Umar's Jerusalem Covenant/Al-Amān and Analysis in the Context of Its Contribution to Global Peace

The text of covenant/al-amān that Caliph Umar gave to the people of Jerusalem is as follows in Tabari's book, *Tarikh al-Tabari*:

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. This (covenant/al-amān) is the covenant that Allah's servant and emirul mumineen, Caliph Umar gave to the people of Iliya (Jerusalem). He gave this covenant for their lives, properties, churches, crosses, sick, healthy and other individuals. Their churches will not be turned into dwellings, they will not be destroyed, and the number of their churches will not be reduced. Nothing shall be taken from their churches or the items within. Crosses and other objects inside churches shall not be damaged. They will not be forced because of their religion and no harm will be done to any of them. None of the Jews will settle in Iliya (Jerusalem) alongside them. However, the people of Iliya (Jerusalem) will pay jizya like the people of other cities. They must expel the Romans and the thieves from there. The life and property of those leaving there will be protected until they reach a place where they can stay safely. Those who will stay there will be safe and will pay the jizya just like the people of Iliya. Anyone from the people of Iliya who wishes to leave with the Romans, along with their belongings, and evacuate their churches and crosses, will be safe until they reach a place where their lives, churches, and crosses will remain secure. Before the death of so and so person, whoever from among the people who were in that region (Jerusalem) (those who took refuge there) wishes to reside there, may reside there on condition that they pay the jizya, just like the people of Iliya. Whoever wishes may leave with the Romans, and whoever wishes may return to their families, and nothing shall be taken from them until they have harvested their crops. On the matters outlined in this covenant, as long

¹⁶ Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya wa'n-nihâya*, 7/55-61.

as they pay their jizya, the protection of Allah, His Messenger, the caliphs, and the believers is guaranteed for them. This is witnessed by Khalid ibn Walid, Amr ibn al-As, Abdurrahman ibn Awf and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. Hz. Umar wrote this covenant in the year 15 and gave it (to the people of Iliya).¹⁷

In accordance with this historical covenant of Hz. Umar, the lives and property of Christians in Jerusalem were secured and they were allowed to practice their religion freely. There are different interpretations of the statement in this covenant: "None of the Jews will settle in Iliya (Jerusalem) alongside them".¹⁸ According to some, this statement is not actually part of the original covenant, its authenticity is doubtful, and it was added later.¹⁹ Because in the covenant given to the people of Alexandria, it was stated that Jews could reside there.²⁰ Therefore, it is not possible for Hz. Umar, who was sensitive about rights and freedoms, to remain insensitive on this issue.²¹ According to some researchers, this expression is not originally from the text but seems to have been added later. Because the practices of Caliph Umar after the conquest of Jerusalem indicate that such an expression it can not be part of the original document.²² The fact that Hz. Umar brought 70 or 100 Jewish families from Tiberias and settled them in the south of the city also confirms this claim.²³ According to some, Hz. Umar probably implemented this practice as a precaution because he was aware of the hostility between Jews and Christians.²⁴

When this covenant is examined carefully, it is striking that people's most basic rights, namely their lives and property, are safeguarded and they are given the opportunity to practice their religion freely. Therefore, this situation is a historical document showing how much importance Caliph Umar gave to universal fundamental human rights. When we consider that when the Jews were in control of Jerusalem, they expelled the Christians from the city and turned their places of worship into garbage dumps, we can better understand

¹⁷ Abū Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī, *Tārīhu al-Tabarī (Tārīhu al-Rusul wa'l-mulūk)* (Beyrūt: Dāru al-Turās, 1387), 3/609.

¹⁸ Tabarī, *Tārīhu al-Tabarī (Tārīhu al-Rusul wa'l-mulūk)*, 3/609.

¹⁹ Muammer Gül, "Müslümanların Kudüs'ü Fethi", *Harran Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 8/2 (2001), 53.

²⁰ Abū al-Hasan Ahmad b. Yahyā b. Jābir b. Dāwūd al-Balāzurī, *Futūhu al-buldān*, trans. Mustafa Fayda (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1987), 197-198; Mustafa Yiğitoğlu, "Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs'ü Fethinden Sonra İzlediği Tapınak Dağı Politikası", *Türkiye İlahiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1/2 (2017), 138.

²¹ Yiğitoğlu, "Hz. Ömer'in Kudüs'ü Fethinden Sonra İzlediği Tapınak Dağı Politikası", 138.

²² Osman Aydın, "Kudüs'ün Fethi ve Hz. Ömer Emannamesi", *Pamukkale Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/1 (2020), 621.

²³ Nuh Arslantaş, *Yahudilere Göre Hz. Muhammed ve İslâmiyet* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011), 168; Aydın, "Kudüs'ün Fethi ve Hz. Ömer Emannamesi", 622.

²⁴ Mustafa Göregen, "Hz. Ömer Döneminde Kudüs'ün Müslümanlar Tarafından Fethi", *Uluslararası Hz. Ömer Sempozyumu*, ed. Ali Aksu (Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, 2018), 1/528.

how important the covenant of Hz. Umar is. Likewise, considering that the Jews turned their places of worship into garbage dumps when Christians dominated Jerusalem, it will be better understood how much importance this covenant gives to people's freedom of belief.

If the covenant of Caliph Umar ensured that Muslims, Christians and Jews could live in peace in Jerusalem in the past, we can say that it can ensure that members of all three religions can live in security today. When we consider that the ongoing conflict between the State of Israel, founded in 1948, and Palestine is still ongoing and has become a global issue, the importance of the Jerusalem covenant is better understood. In order to ensure global peace in Jerusalem, which is important for all three heavenly religions, the principles included in the Jerusalem covenant of Hz. Umar must be adopted and implemented today. In fact, when we examine the historical process, whenever Jerusalem came under Muslim rule, peace and tranquility were established in Jerusalem and members of all religions lived in security. History bears witness to the establishment of peace in Jerusalem during the period of Muslim rulers who followed the footsteps of Hz. Umar. Indeed, when Saladin (Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi) conquered Jerusalem in 1187, he applied the principles of Caliph Umar exactly and ensured peace in the city. Unfortunately, when Jerusalem was occupied by the Crusaders in 1099, almost all Muslims and Jews were massacred.²⁵ In fact, the Catholics who came to Jerusalem with the crusaders were not as tolerant as the Muslims were towards the Orthodox people who had previously lived there. When the Catholics came to Jerusalem, they began to humiliate the Orthodox Christians and tried to convert them to Catholic Christians.²⁶

After Caliph Umar, it is possible to observe the language of tolerance in the covenants issued by Muslim rulers who governed Jerusalem, such as Saladin (Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi), the Egyptian sultans Tahir al-Sayfi and Ashraf al-Sayfi, and Ottoman sultans like Fatih Sultan Mehmed, Kanuni Sultan Suleiman, IV. Murad, Ibrahim, IV. Mehmed, II. Suleiman, III. Osman, III. Mustafa and II. Mahmud. After his visit to Jerusalem, Yavuz Sultan Selim had two decrees prepared upon the request of the Armenian Patriarch Serkis and the Greek Patriarch Attalya. The only aspect that distinguishes these two decrees from the covenant of Hz. Umar is that the places that the two nations consider sacred in Jerusalem have some differences, so they are mentioned separately in both decrees. The fact that only Christians of Jerusalem were addressed in these two decrees of Yavuz Sultan Selim stems from the fact that only Christians lived in Jerusalem during the time of Hz. Umar. However, although the aforementioned decrees only addressed Christians, the general provisions on freedom of

²⁵ H. A. Nomiku, *Haçlı Seferleri*, trans. Kriton Dinçmen (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), 35; Urfalı Mateos, *Urfalı Mateos Vekayinamesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1987), 188; Fulcherius Carnotensis, *Kudüs Seferi Kutsal Toprakları Kurtarmak*, trans. İlcan Bihter Barlas (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2009), 102-104.

²⁶ Alçiçek, *Ortadoğu'da Dini Jeopolitik: Kudüs'ün Semavi Dinler İçin Önemi*, 51.

belief and worship also included the Jews, another non-Muslim community in Ottoman Jerusalem.²⁷ Today, the focus of the Israel-Palestine conflicts, Gaza came under Ottoman rule in 1516 during the reign of Sultan Selim I (Yavuz Sultan Selim), and during this time, Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together in peace in the city and its surroundings. This situation continued until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.²⁸

“The Jerusalem Model of the Caliph Umar”, which was successful in Jerusalem both during the reign of the Caliph Umar and the Muslim rulers after him, it has become inevitable that it be today to end the conflicts between Israel and Palestine. Because the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, which have been ongoing since the official establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, have become a global issue today. If the “Jerusalem Model of Caliph Umar” is not implemented, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not only be limited to Jerusalem and its surroundings, but will also negatively affect all countries in the Middle East. As a matter of fact, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which resumed on 7 October 2023, has been going on for a year and the conflicts have spread to Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and even Iran. There is a danger that the situation could continue to worsen, potentially spreading throughout the region and even reaching a point where it might trigger World War III. Therefore, it has become inevitable for all countries of the world, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations to take action and make efforts to end these conflicts that threaten global peace in order to ensure lasting peace in Jerusalem and the region. It is a fact that Israel wants to completely dominate Jerusalem and its surroundings and does not allow the presence of Muslims in the region. Considering that in the past, when both Jews and Christians dominated Jerusalem, they did not recognize the right of anyone other than themselves to live in peace in Jerusalem, it was inevitable that the holy region would come under Muslim rule again. Historical experience shows this. Therefore, this situation imposes a historical responsibility on Muslim societies and their leaders. This responsibility is for Muslims to be strong in the political, military, economic, technological and cultural fields and to make efforts to ensure peace both in Jerusalem and in the world.

Conclusion

In this study, an analysis has been conducted on the possibility of establishing peace in a sacred space by examining the example of the Covenant (Amannama/the Assurance of Safety) given by Islam's second Caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab, to the people of Jerusalem, based on the historical and religious significance of the city. The research explores both the content of the Jerusalem Covenant, which holds significance as an important document in Islamic political history, and its contribution to universal peace within its historical context and its relevance to the present day. The findings reveal that Caliph Umar's

²⁷ Abdullah Çakmak, “Osmanlı Kudüs'ünde Bir Arada Yaşama”, *Huzur Bekleyen Şehir Kudüs*, ed. Osman Aydın (İstanbul: İlim Yayma Vakfı Yayınları, 2020), 338-339.

²⁸ Mustafa Öksüz, “Non-Muslim Population in the Gaza Sanjak in the Sixteenth Century”, *Filistin Araştırmaları Dergisi* 15 (2024), 91, 98.

covenant not only addressed the political and religious needs of its time but also offered universal values in the context of human rights, religious freedom, and the principles of coexistence.

Jerusalem, being the meeting point of the three Abrahamic religions, has historically been a center of conflict and contention, especially marked by the struggle for sovereignty based on religious claims among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. One of the most striking realities that emerged during this historical process is that during periods when the city was governed by Muslims, the religious and cultural rights of other religious groups were preserved, and peace and social order could be established. Caliph Umar's Jerusalem Covenant is a written and principled document that embodies this historical experience.

When the articles of the covenant are examined carefully, a significant overlap can be seen between Islamic legal principles and the modern understanding of universal human rights. The guarantees provided for the protection of life, property, freedom of worship, property rights, and the prohibition of religious coercion can be considered an early historical counterpart to the modern-day concept of "human rights". In this regard, Caliph Umar's model for Jerusalem presents an example offering universal principles not only for the Islamic world but also for all societies with a global peace perspective.

The policy pursued by Caliph Umar during the conquest of Jerusalem was not one based on forceful occupation, but rather a peaceful surrender achieved through negotiation and compromise. This demonstrates that the concept of conquest was not merely a military and political victory, but one with moral, legal, and social dimensions. Caliph Umar personally traveling to Jerusalem to accept the city's surrender, directly communicating with the Christian population to offer them assurances, and showing sensitivity to the sanctity of the city represents a form of leadership that remains exemplary even today.

In response to the main questions posed at the beginning of the article, the following conclusions can be drawn: Jerusalem continues to be a global issue from past to present. Caliph Umar's covenant serves as a moral, legal, and historical model for resolving this issue. The covenant demonstrates that peace and tranquility in sacred spaces are achieved not through the use of force, but through a rule of law and justice-based governance. This clearly shows that achieving peace in regions of religious diversity is only possible by respecting everyone's beliefs, sacred values, and lifestyles.

The originality of this study lies in its treatment of Caliph Umar's Jerusalem Covenant not just as a historical document, but as a normative framework that can contribute to the construction of global peace in the context of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most existing literature on the topic is generally confined to historical narratives or religious perspectives and does not establish a link with contemporary peacebuilding theories. However, this article offers a new contribution by associating Caliph Umar's practice with modern concepts such as human rights, religious pluralism, and international peace law.

Nonetheless, the study has certain limitations. Firstly, there are variations in the covenant text across different sources, and particularly regarding expressions related to the residence of Jews in Jerusalem, there are differing opinions among historians about their accuracy. It is evident that source criticism is necessary in the analysis of such historical texts. Furthermore, due to the limited scope of the study, the continuity of peace practices in Jerusalem under other Muslim rulers (e.g., Salah al-Din Ayyubi or the Ottoman sultans) could not be examined in greater depth. This aspect presents an important area for future research.

Based on the findings of the article, the following recommendations can be made:

- The international community, particularly the United Nations and human rights organizations, can refer to historical documents and practices to establish peace in cities with significant religious and historical importance, such as Jerusalem. Caliph Umar's covenant offers universal principles in this regard.

- The Islamic world should evaluate Caliph Umar's model for Jerusalem not merely as a historical success, but as a potential solution approach to today's crises, and adopt this perspective when engaging with global issues.

- Parties seeking resolution and mediators in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could redefine the role of religious leadership and promote a faith-based language of peace. For Jerusalem is not merely a political issue, but also a realm of deep religious significance and sanctity.

- Future research could conduct comparative analyses of Caliph Umar's covenant with other examples (such as the Constitution of Medina, the edicts of Salah al-Din, or Ottoman firmans) to demonstrate the continuity of peacebuilding in Islamic legal tradition.

In conclusion, Caliph Umar's Jerusalem Covenant is more than a historical document, it is a peace model, a coexistence agreement, and a legacy of humanity. This covenant demonstrates that a social order based on mutual respect and rights, where religious and cultural diversity is seen as richness, can indeed be established. Today, conflicts justified by religion are evidently not rooted in the essence of the religions themselves, but in the misinterpretation of that essence. Caliph Umar's approach is a historical proof of how effectively Islam's principles of peace, justice, and compassion can be implemented in political practice.

In this context, the practices of Caliph Umar, which show that peace and coexistence are possible in a holy city like Jerusalem, present a historical call and a moral example for today's decision-makers, leaders, and societies. Unless a sincere, just, and universally principled will is demonstrated to resolve the conflicts around Jerusalem, inspired by this example, the instability in the region will continue to threaten not only the local population but all of humanity.

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