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Jerusalem as Archetype of the Harmonious Islamic Urban Environment

S. Abdallah Schleifer
Professor, American University in Cairo

When we speak of Islamic Jerusalem, of *al-Quds*, The Holy, as it is most commonly known today in Arabic, we allude to a spiritual as well as a physical geography that has been visibly recognisable as such for more than 1,000 years. We speak now of the Old City or the Walled City which Creswell (who devoted a lifetime to the study of Muslim architecture) described as the most perfectly preserved example of a medieval Islamic city.

We are not dealing with the largely Arab-owned but semi-colonial-in-spirit New City which spread along the Western rim of the city in the late nineteenth century, expanded dramatically during the covert condominium of shared authority of British Mandate and Jewish Agency, and fell to the Israelis in the 1948 War.

But Islamic Jerusalem in the old Arab chronicles and geographical dictionaries also incorporates all of those sites of profound sacred import to the Islamic tradition which range from just beyond the shadows of the city's walls - such as the tomb of Nabi Daoud (the Prophet-King David) or the Mount of Olives where Nabi Isa (Jesus) ascended directly to Heaven - or that rest in distant sight of the Holy City's dominating skyline such as the tomb of Nabi Samu'il (the Prophet Samuel).[1]

Jerusalem is the holiest of the holy in what God describes, in the Qur'an, as the Holy Land. (Qur'an V:21 - surah al-Ma'ida, the surah which means "The Table Spread" and which seems to allude to the Last Supper.)

This spiritual conception of space is reflected in one of the oldest terms the Muslims use for Jerusalem - *al-Bait al-Muqadas*. Derived from Qur'anic usage for purity and for the glorification of Allah's name, it is used interchangeably to mean the Holy House or Temple (better known now as *Haram al-Sharif* - the Noble Sanctuary), the Holy City and even the Holy Land in a similar manner to the use of *Bait al-Haram* to describe, according to context, the Ka'aba in Makkah, the sanctuary, *haram*, that enclosed the Ka'aba, Makkah itself and its outlying districts.

It is my intention to consider briefly five factors that help define Islamic Jerusalem as the archetypal harmonious Islamic urban environment.

The first is the centrality of Islamic Jerusalem as a model for the overwhelmingly Muslim Middle East. The reverence with which this city is held in the religious consciousness of the Muslims is a reflection of the same spiritual centrality that prompted the Prophet Muhammad in a well known hadith (canonic tradition) to designate Jerusalem along with Makkah and Madinah as the three centres of equal merit to which the faithful could "journey" for prayer and pilgrimage.[2]

It is of such centrality as to have been the first direction, *qibla*, of Muslim prayer and to be revered as such in the religious consciousness of the Muslim. Al-Yaqut devotes as many pages of his remarkable thirteenth century geographical dictionary to Jerusalem as he does to Makkah and Madinah and an entire sub-division of Arabic literature - the *fada'il al-Quds* books, devoted to extolling the spiritual virtues of Jerusalem - flourished from at least the ninth century to the eighteenth, inspiring as well as guiding the millions of Muslims who have made *ziyarah* (formal visits) to the Holy City.[3]

Whoever has observed the proliferation of Islamic calendars and other popular artefacts that feature pictures of the Dome of the Rock from one end of the Muslim world to the other, or whoever recalls that President Sadat in part justified his peace initiative as a bold attempt to rescue Islamic Jerusalem and

lost his life partly because he had clearly failed to do so, or whoever remembers that Iranian military morale during the First Gulf War was in part sustained despite truly punishing losses by the image of Iraq as an alleged barrier on the road to Jerusalem, cannot doubt that the Holy City retains its centrality in Muslim religious consciousness.

Yet in the particularities of its claim to archetype, Islamic Jerusalem in contrast to Makkah and Madinah - cities of the homogeneric Arabian homeland - stands as a model for much of a Middle East that traditionally contained a mosaic of religious, ethnic and linguistic communities within the unifying field of a broadly defined Islamic civilisation. This was a civilisation that drew its characteristic qualities as a social order from Islam without restricting participation in that civilisation to Muslims.

Secondly, Jerusalem is central to the Muslim consciousness of Islam as both heir and seal of Semitic monotheism - of an Islam perceived of simultaneously as the primordial religion that incorporates all the prophetic figures of the Bible as primordial Muslims, as well as an Islam perceived of as a community of believers specific in time and bound by its acknowledgement of Muhammad as the final Prophet.

Adam and Lot, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and Solomon, Jesus, Mary, John and Zakariya - all are associated in one manner or another by the Qur'an and hadith with Jerusalem. "All the prophets have prayed in Jerusalem" is a saying attributed to Muhammad, and the additional popular traditional accounts collected in the "Virtues of Jerusalem" literature elaborate upon and extend the associations which are further reinforced in the prayers of the Muslim pilgrim in Jerusalem as he or she visits the many sites identified with the earlier prophets.

The most direct link between this primordial Islam and the Islam that emerged in seventh century Arabia is effected by the Prophet Muhammad's miraculous journey by night to Jerusalem and his ascension from there to Heaven.

The Qur'anic text, according to its meaning in English, reads: "Glory to God Who carried His servant for a journey by

night, from the Sacred Mosque, *Masjid al-Haram*, to the Farthest Mosque, *Masjid al Aqsa*, whose precincts We did bless - in order that We might show him some of Our signs." (Qur'an XVII: 1)

The interpretation of this verse and the explanation of this miraculous experience are to be found in the classical commentaries on the Qur'an, in the canonic collections of hadith and in the nearly contemporary biographies of the Prophet. Escorted by the Angel Gabriel and mounted on a mysterious winged animal called *al-Buraq*, the Prophet was carried by night from Makkah to Jerusalem. There on the site of the Temple - the farthest mosque - Muhammad is met by the prophets who preceded him (most notably by Abraham, Moses and Jesus); there he leads the preceding prophets in prayer and there he receives additional Revelation. Then, from the same sacred rock prefigured in centuries of Jerusalem's sacred history, the Prophet ascended to Heaven by a ladder of light and was led by stages to the seventh heaven to experience the Beatific Vision. The descent and return to Makkah were accomplished during the same night, before dawn, but the entire experience took but a minute or so of prosaic or worldly time.

It is instructive that the Qur'anic allusion to this miraculous link between primordial Islam and the Islam of seventh century Arabia is the first *ayat* (verse) of the 17th sura that has been titled either *al-Isra'* - "The Night Journey", or "Bani Isra'il" - "The Children of Israel."

For the Arabian army advancing upon Jerusalem only a few years after the death of the Prophet, as well as for the many thousands of Palestinian Jews and Judeo-Christians in the neighbouring countryside who rallied to their banner, the coming of Islam was the fulfilment of biblical prophecy.[4] From that perspective, the clearing of the desolate temple site by the Caliph Umar, the re-institution of regular prayer in this *Haram al-Sharif* and its ongoing beautification and visible sanctity in the years that follow under the Ummayad dynasty are all signs of the

Temple Rebuilt, and interpreted as such in the earliest chronicle, that of the eighth century Byzantine historian, Theophanes.[5]

The earliest known Jewish apocalyptic texts that relate the coming of Islam indicate that even those Palestinian Jews who did not embrace Islam appear to have welcomed it as the vehicle of their redemption prophesied in Isaiah XXI:13, and the texts acknowledge in the literary form of apocalyptic prophecy that "some of Israel" will embrace "the religion of Ishmael."[6] More than two centuries later, the Rabbi Saadia Ha'Goan, in his Responsa, rails against the "Jewish Ishmaelites" among the Muslims of Jerusalem.[7]

The third factor is the centrality of Jerusalem for Muslim spirituality or mysticism. Salman al Farsi, one of the Prophet's companions most closely associated with the transmission of the spiritual path, *tariqa*, is buried in Jerusalem as is Rabia al Adawiya al Basra, one of the great saints, *awliya'*, of the earliest generations. Sufyan al-Thawri, Ibrahim Adham, Bayazid Bistami, and Abu'l Najib al-Suhrawardi are among the many Sufis drawn to Jerusalem in earliest centuries of Islam and their regard is echoed in the spiritual fever that informs the developing "Virtues of Jerusalem" literature - a literature largely developed by Sufis including such prominent figures as the sixteenth century Egyptian, Sha'rani and the eighteenth century Syrian, Abdul Ghani al-Nabulsi.

Al-Ghazali journeyed to Jerusalem when he abandoned his public life as a renowned scholar of the spiritual path, and it was in Jerusalem that he began his opus, the *Ihya ulum al-Din* which inspired an ethical renewal of medieval Islam.

To understand this we must consider that there are two types of relationships between God and man in Islam. The first (the affirmation of which is the basis of salvation for the Muslim) involves the descent from a transcendent God to man via the Prophet as passive vehicle of the final Revelation. this relationship which is profoundly transcendental is acknowledged in obligatory worship, structured around the ritual recitation of the Qur'an. The symbol of this relationship is the Ka'aba, or

Makkah - where Revelation begins and which serves as the *qibla* or direction of worship.

The other relationship is ascendant, the spiritual aspiration of the pietist to journey in this life towards an Omnipresent and Imminent God - to a God Who says He is closer to us than our own jugular vein. The inescapable metaphor for that journeying on a spiritual path is the Prophet's *isra' wa al-miraj* - the miraculous journey to Jerusalem, the ascension to Heaven and the Beatific Vision.

Thus, Makkah and Jerusalem are the two poles. Mediating them is the Prophet and his adopted city Madinah. I speak here of the Prophet in the present tense, in order to express the vivid way his light still illuminates the consciousness of millions of practising Muslims. In Madinah he implements a divinely ordained social order on the basis of the sacred law, *shari'a*, contained within Revelation. And there he also serves as source and instructor for the supererogatory spiritual practices also contained within Revelation which will be elaborated upon as the methodology of *tasawwuf* or Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam.

Ibn Arabi, the thirteenth century spiritual master, suggests a similar but far more profound polarity in one of his poems - Jerusalem as the station of Holiness and Purity in a spiritual geography wherein Makkah is the perfect heart which contains the Truth and Madinah is the place where the spiritual adept seeks the ability to see God in everything.[8]

Symbolic of the Prophet's mediating role between Jerusalem and Makkah is the manner in which Muslims will inscribe above the *mihrab* or sanctuary-like recess that points towards Makkah, that portion of a Qur'anic verse which alludes to the *mihrab* of *al-Haram* in Jerusalem:

> Whenever Zackariah went into the sanctuary (*mihrab*) where she was, he found that she had food. He said, O Maryam! Whence cometh unto thee this (food)? She answered, it is from God. God giveth without stint to whom He will. (III:37)

It is in the unitary nature of Islam that these poles mediated by the Prophet are inseparable. The spiritual malaise reflected in the moral as well as physical weakness of the secularised Muslim world on the one hand, and the lack of moral equilibrium, the lack of generosity and the extremism manifest in much of the contemporary Islamic Revival on the other hand, reflects a contemporary breakdown of that unitary nature.

In the first case, secularised elites of Muslim societies tolerate personal spiritual aspiration within their societies but deny themselves and their societies the moral support that would be available by legitimising their political authority by acknowledging the higher authority of sacred law. In the second case, a militant social-religious solidarity denies priority to the traditional practice of a personal spiritual purification which must always play a moderating role.

To celebrate the Prophet's birthday or the birthday of any of his family or his saintly followers is to celebrate his journey to Jerusalem and his ascension to Heaven and to meditate upon this. There is a wonderful Palestinian custom, still preserved when I lived in Jerusalem, that whenever there is some special goodness in our life - the birth of a child, his or her memorisation of the first subdivision of the Qur'an, his or her graduation, an important promotion - it is at precisely that moment that is the Prophet's birthday, *Mawlid al-Nabi*, and the recitation in his honour vividly recalls his miraculous journey to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, the object of Islamic militance by its very existence as the shadow of a celestial city and the citadel of Islamic spirituality, must be a reminder to the militant of traditional Islamic priorities.

Jerusalem, as indicated in the introduction, is also a symbol of the Islamic city as a "pluralist" civilisation. This is the fourth factor. Twice conquered in the historically significant sense by Muslim armies, its non-Muslim native inhabitants were in both cases allowed to remain and guaranteed their lives, property and religious practices. The terms of the second

conquest by Sultan Salah al-Din so epitomised chivalry that he was immortalised in European literature.

Certainly the contemporary Muslim world, particularly where Muslim values are theoretically again in ascendancy, would benefit much from this historic sense of Islamic Jerusalem as the political stage where was made manifest such Islamic virtues as generosity, magnanimity and nobility. But the existence of "pluralism" in Islamic civilisation has to do with more than the magnanimity of individual rulers. All that the Caliph Umar conceded to the Byzantine Patriarch at the gate into Jerusalem was guaranteed by sacred law, except, interestingly, the one provision the Muslims ultimately did not abide by, in fact, thoroughly violated. That was the Patriarch's insistence, according to local tradition, that the Byzantine ban on Jews living in Jerusalem be maintained by the Muslims.

And while the Jewish population never numbered more than a few thousand and often far less up until the early nineteenth century, Jerusalem was to share with Safed the reputation as the great centre of Jewish Palestinian mystical thought, particularly in the first century of Ottoman rule.

Since Muslim cities could not truly develop their own autonomous law by virtue of the cosmopolitan way in which jurisprudence developed and its sacred association of sources, those same legal rights were acknowledged to a greater or lesser degree throughout the Muslim world, and in the Jerusalem region as in Syria, it is only in the mid-nineteenth century after several decades of subversion of the primacy of Islamic law and the local Muslim economy under the guise of modernisation as well as Ottoman economic and legal capitulations to the West that we read of significant communal attacks against non-Muslim minorities, tragically self-identified as the beneficiaries of the semi-colonial forces dismantling the Islamic political economy.

When one reads the accounts of travellers to the Holy City one realises that most of the sectarian quarrels that the travellers complain about occurred within the broadly defined religious communities and not between one community and

another. This also suggests that, given the sensitivity inescapably associated with holy sites, there was a certain providential factor at work in the particular harmony that Islamic Jerusalem experienced - a harmony based upon the providentially complementary quality of the traditional, orthodox sensibilities that prevailed until fairly recently in all three religious communities.

The Christian communities have no shrines from which they are excluded on the *Haram al-Sharif*, nor do they acknowledge the Haram but as that site of desolation prophesied by Jesus; the very desolation in which the Muslims found it. And at least as late as the summer of 1968 when I left Jerusalem, the Chief Rabbis of Israel were still insisting that observant Orthodox Jews should not enter *al-Haram* area until the coming of the Messiah. That Jewish Fundamentalist groups like the Temple Revivalists do continuously attempt to enter *al-Haram* (and now, under Likud, are protected by Israeli security forces when they do so) is an indication of their departure from orthodoxy. Of course from the perspective of those Palestinian Jews and Judeo-Christians who embraced Islam 1,400 years ago - a perspective implicitly advanced by the Qur'an and one which I must admit to sharing personally - the Temple *is* rebuilt and whoever would destroy *al-Haram* destroys the Temple.

It is providential that all three orthodox religious communities, one in possession of *al-Haram*, one indifferent to its contemporary status and one in a profoundly self-perceived exile have awaited in their respective places the coming of the Messiah, or, in the case of the Muslims and the Christians, for his second coming.

The veneration with which orthodox Muslims providentially view the prophets of both Old and New Testament assured in principle that no shrines would be desecrated, and frequently Muslim notables were called upon to mediate inter-Christian disputes over access and control of Christian shrines. To avoid the possibility of encroachment, a status quo convention evolved during Mamluk and Ottoman Islamic rule

and was more or less honoured by the British Mandate authorities - a convention based upon extended and recognised ownership and usages of the shrines.

At the time of the Mamluks and the first centuries of Ottoman rule, there were no secular, much less religious Jewish nationalist parties to advance ownership claims even on the Wailing Wall, *al-Buraq wall*; the status quo was primarily a way to protect Christian sects from encroaching upon each other or to protect them from Muslim encroachment.

Here too is both a model and a challenge. Either all parties respect that status quo or risk perpetual religious war. The status quo was first torn to shreds in 1948. Since then, hundreds of thousands of visitors to Israel, perhaps millions, have toured the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust without any sense that they were desecrating the site of a Sufi prayer hall and hospice, or have visited what is now the synagogue of King David's tomb without quite grasping that they were desecrating, with their shoes, the mosque of Nabi Daoud.

Since 1967 the situation has worsened. The shrine of the Moroccan Saint, Shu'aib Abu Madyan (whose grandfather Sidi Abu Madyan was one of the great muhaditheen and Sufi guides of the twelfth century)[9] along with an entire quarter surrounding the shrine, the Magharaba quarter, was demolished by Israeli bulldozers a few days after the fall of the city. Within a year the prayer hall of the Abu Saud family adjacent to the quarter was also demolished.

There have been repeated and increasingly aggressive intrusions on to *al-Haram al-Sharif* by Israeli Temple Revivalists. At *al-Haram Ibrahim* (the tomb of the prophet Abraham) a sister sanctuary in the West Bank city of Hebron to *al-Haram al-Sharif*, Jewish worshippers wear their shoes and carry wine into the mosque. The choice between restoration of the status quo convention or a permanent invitation to *jihad* is a central issue that must be explored if the Middle East is ever to be a harmonious environment.

Finally, I would suggest that the Old City of Jerusalem, as Creswell implied, can serve as the model for urban planners, architects and restorationists working in the Islamic world. All the hallmarks of the traditional Islamic city are still apparent:

- The compressed, spinal-cord quality of the main *suq* or bazaar.
- The centrality of the foremost Jumma' mosque and the educational institutions, *zawiyas* and hospices clustered about it.
- A very refined sense of public, semi-public and private space in transition from *suq* to quarter to neighbourhood, to compound to house, and house to home.
- The outward homogeneity and modesty of residential architectural form that resulted naturally from local material use, the introverted nature of the traditional Muslim home, and the traditional Muslim virtue of modesty married to the traditional distaste for conspicuous consumption which in turn reflects the Islamic spirit of public conformity.
- Control of vehicular traffic - cars were barred from nearly all of the Old City, and in the most intimate residential areas even animal drawn carts were barred by street barriers to preserve the privacy and tranquillity of the neighbourhood.
- The City walls define limits. Limits are profoundly important to Muslim sensibility, which is also manifest in the twisting street patterns. The effect is aesthetically pleasing. Everyone can appreciate the new vistas produced by a twisting city street, but the cause I would suggest is in part metaphysical, which is why the turning street is so comforting to those who are in direct contact with the experience - as pedestrians. Only Allah is Infinite and man in his creations does not imitate the Nature of the Creator. And within these finite limits the uses of space become more ingenious and more organically creative - on-site design by rule of eye rather than off-site design by scale.
- The homogeneity and inwardness of Quarters. One of the virtues of a traditional quarter and the even smaller units of

residence in a Muslim city (and one still encounters this in old Cairo harats) is a healthy suspicion of strangers, coupled with the redeeming ritual politeness and hospitality offered those with a legitimate reason to visit the quarter. Hundreds of studies of the breakdown of law and order in many of the major Western cities have suggested that the stronger the ties of neighbourhood or quarter the less likely there will be crime and anti-social behaviour.

Unfortunately even before 1967 quarter life had already lost some of its lustre due to the voluntary migration of Arab elites from the Old City to the New before 1948 or to the new Arab suburbs east of the Old City after 1948. This reduced the natural leadership role of old family elites within the quarters and weakened the mutual patronage system or mutual aid exchanges of rich and poor members of extended families and client families which, along with other tradition factors such as *sharaf* (honour) and the nobility of piety, did much to offset the differences in wealth. Since the 1967 occupation this process has taken on a qualitatively different aspect. The occupation, harassment, arrests, expulsions, deportation, torture and the acculturating impact of Israeli popular culture on Arab youth have contributed to a certain social demoralisation in the Old City quarters inconceivable prior to 1967.[10]

The almost communal autonomy assured to those quarters that reflected ethnic or religious divergence from the Arab-Islamic norm of the Old City provided security and self-assurance to the inhabitants of these quarters and sparkle to the overall urban tone. Again, this aspect of Islamic Jerusalem as urban archetype has progressively deteriorated. First came the flight or expulsion of the old Jewish Quarter inhabitants in 1948 - a tragedy for if we exclude the 1,000 or so Zionist fighters who infiltrated into the Quarter to the dismay of most of the Quarter's apolitical elders, there were few Jewish communities in Palestine of longer standing and of more compatibility within an Islamic urban civilisation than the original and by-and-large non-political Orthodox inhabitants of the pre-1948 Jewish Quarter. Indeed one

of the tragedies of political Zionism is that it has so often been peaceful, non-Zionist Jewish communities in Palestine and elsewhere in the Arab world who paid the price of Zionist provocateurism. At the same time post-1967 emigration has reduced the number of Palestinian Christian residents in the Armenian and Christian Quarters.

(The relatively deserted Jewish Quarter quickly filled up with Palestinian refugees from the New City, who were to be denied, like all 1948 Palestinian refugees, an opportunity to return to their homes. These refugees were made homeless for a second time in 1967 when they were expelled from this almost entirely Arab-owned quarter of the Old City as "squatters". The new residents in the "rehabilitated" Jewish Quarter are to a great degree extremist religious Zionists who see themselves as the advance guard in the destruction of the Muslim presence in the City.)

- Control of tourism. The Jordanian prohibition of night-clubs anywhere in the Arab city and the prohibition of the sale of alcohol at least within the Muslim quarter of the Old City did much to set a certain moral tone to tourism, far more than has been done in most other Muslim countries. But the city also rather uniquely did its own psychic policing - the sacred quality of so much of the Old City public life prior to 1967 so intimidated most visitors that even those without a religious sensibility found themselves adopting the demeanour of pilgrims.

There is a message here for any effort throughout the Muslim world at "Madinah" restoration. If we are concerned with preservation in its fullest sense and authenticity, then the spiritual ambience of the old cities must be as much our concern as their physical rescue and restoration. That means encouraging religious tourism and minimalising gratuitous tourism.

The very biblical exotic nature of Islamic Jerusalem also provided a sufficient culture shock to discourage Western tour groups from wandering off a few main thoroughfares, while providing a welcome spiritual ambience for Christian pilgrims

recalling The Stations of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa. To perceive more easily the moral implications of mindless, gratuitous tourism - a tourism of idle curiosity - I think of what would have been the implication of busloads of rich, oddly dressed Arabs driving through the residential neighbourhood in a New Your City suburb where I grew up 50 years ago, and their periodically piling out of their buses to just look around at the way we natives of Forest Hills lived.

I must confess that I now fear for Islamic Jerusalem what has happened to the traditional quarter of pre-1948 Jaffa - a technically brilliant restoration job worthy of study - the physical frame of Jaffa's Islamic core preserved, the inner structure rewired, reinforced and replastered. But the moral implications are, to say the least, deeply disturbing - the transfer of a once vital but morally conservative Arab quarter into a *Muslim-frie* Israeli bohemian artistic quarter and red light district. May God spare Jerusalem such a restoration.

But consider the implications of the changing nature of tourism to the Islamic city. Before 1967 the dominant motif for non-Muslim visitors was pilgrimage. After 1967 the dominant motif for thousands of Israeli visitors who poured in late Friday afternoon and evening and all day Saturday was to find a convenient place to violate the Jewish Sabbath. Is the destiny of Islamic Jerusalem (even if restored to Arab rule as a Palestinian capital but also as a borough of a "unified Jerusalem") to become the sin city of an intrinsically secular Israel?

- Preservation. The near total architectural integrity of the Old City up until 1967 and in what still remains, should be inspiration of the old cities of the Middle East. Even the modern Arab suburbs to the east maintained a certain linkage to the Old City by building on a low-rise scale and using locally quarried stone, at the very least for facing material. This sort of linkage must be stimulated and increased - the old Madinahs preserved not only for their own sake but as a model of authentic values for the larger and newer quarters.

The major reason why Islamic Jerusalem in all of its quarters was so perfectly preserved prior to 1967 was because Jordanian law respected the principle of *waqf*, most adequately translated as "pious foundation".[11] There are two types of *waqf* - what we might classify as regular and family. Both share the following characteristics: that a property is endowed and made inalienable in the lifetime of its owner and its ownership returns to God, to be administered inevitably by religious scholars (and thus once a source of support and independence for this critically important mediating group - a position undermined by the nationalisation of *waqf* administration in most of the Muslim world).

In the regular *waqf*, the proceeds of the revenues of the *waqf* (rents, proceeds of agricultural sales, etc.) are designated in perpetuity for purposes pleasing to God - for the benefit of mosques, schools, hospitals, hospices; the maintenance of scholars and assistance to the poor, the widowed, the orphans and travellers. Family *waqf* designates one's heirs as immediate beneficiaries but the proceeds are to revert to communal purpose upon extinction of the family line. In either case every document of foundation dedicating property as *waqf* lays down a provision that it is inalienable, and that the document of foundation is irrevocable.

In Jerusalem, where almost all of the Old City was *waqf* and much of that family *waqf*, this had two effects. The first constituted a form of extended family social security. When rents of a family *waqf* are subdivided by 20 or 30 owners the returns are so minimal that the wealthier members of the family customarily leave their shares in for redivision among the poorer members.

But most important, the inalienability of the *waqf* property, family or regular, drastically reduces land speculation and the inevitable destruction of neighbourhoods that result when restoration improves the land values of a community - as in the gentrification process in American and West European cities. Jordan's respect for the family *waqf*, perhaps more than any other

factor, enabled the city's architectural fabric to survive, for if the profit at stake is sufficient, private interest usually overwhelms zoning when no other restraints are at work. To the Muslim world, the success until 1967 in Islamic Jerusalem of the *waqf*, both private and regular, in stabilising urban land values and sustaining community, merits serious study, re-evaluation and, I hope, revival.

The landscape of Islamic Jerusalem has suffered drastic blows since 1967. Large areas of *waqf*, both regular and family have been appropriated by the Israeli authorities; as in the case of the Magharaba Quarter, many of these properties have been demolished. At the same time, extensive archaeological excavation on *waqf*-administered land has been carried out along the southwestern and western wall of the *Haram al-Sharif* despite protests by the *Awqaf* authorities - excavations that the Muslim Council of Jerusalem fear threaten the safety of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, which does not rest on a firm foundation like the Dome of the Rock and has been brought down before by earthquakes.

These excavations are far more dangerous for that reason, yet far less publicised than the highly publicised and protested tourist tunnel which runs alongside the Haram's Western wall. The southwest corner excavations also provide an entry point for recent alleged Israeli excavations into the vulnerable underground chambers of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[12]

As for whoever would usurp a *waqf* and particularly the unambiguously "regular" characteristic of a *waqf* such as written and registered in 1320 by Shaikh Abu Madyan - whose Magharaba Quarter *waqf* was obliterated by the Israeli Government in June 1997 - let his endowment speak for itself:

> *It is unlawful for any governor, official or tyrant to abolish this waqf or part of it, or change it or endeavour to abolish it or part of it. He who does so or helps towards it, disobeys God and rebels against Him and deserves His curse. Amen.*

(This paper was delivered at the International Academic Conference on Islamic Jerusalem organised by the Academy at the School of Oriental and African Studies, September 2nd 1997)

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1 Muk'dassi, the tenth century historian whose chronicle of Jerusalem is one of the earliest available manuscripts of its kind, wrote that "the territory of the Holy City is counted as all the country that lies within a radius of 40 miles from Jerusalem and includes many villages . . . This then is the land Allah - may He be exalted! - has called blessed. (Quran XXI:71)" Extensively quoted in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*. Beirut: Khayats Reprint, 1965, p. 86.

2 Al-Yaqut, *Mugam al-Buldan*, Vol 5, Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1984, p. 166

3 See discussion of *Fuda'il al Quds* by Walid Khalidi, introduction to Le Strange. Also A.L. Tibawi, *Jerusalem*. Beirut: I.P.S., 1969, and complete translation of two examples of *fuda'il* literature by Charles D. Matthews, *The Book of Arousing Souls*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949. The most recent detailed discussion of this literature and scholarship related to it appears in Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

4 A.N. Pollak, "The Origin of the Country's Arabs", in *Molad*. 1967, pp. 297-303.

5 Le Strange, op.cit. p. 90.

6 Bernard Lewis, "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History", *BSOAS* XIII (1949-51) for translation of these texts.

7 Pollak, op.cit.

8 R.A. Nicholson, trans., *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*. London: Theosophical Society Reprint, 1972, pp. 122-123.

9 Among his disciples are counted such spiritual luminaries as Abdul Qadr al-Jilani, Muhyi-Din Ibn 'Arabi and Abu Hassan al-Shazali.

10 Albert Aghazarian, Jamileh Freij and Majda Batsh, "Growing Up in Jerusalem", *Middle East Report*, no. 182, May - June 1993.

11 My discussion of *waqf*, and in particular my quotation of the *waqf* of Abu Madyan which appears at the end of this paper has been taken from A.L. Tibawi, *The Islamic Pious Foundations in Jerusalem*., London: Islamic Cultural Centre, 1978, and his earlier work, *Jerusalem: Its Place in Islam and Arab History*, Beirut: I.P.S., 1969.

12 "Interview with Mayor Salah: Israeli excavations beneath Al Aqsa Mosque continuing", *The Holy City Briefings*, 1:1 May 1997. p.3.