

## INTERPRETATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL AS A STATE ACCORDING TO THE BARAKAH CIRCLE THEORY OF BAYT AL-MAQDIS

Mehmet Şirin CENGİZ\*

**ABSTRACT:** *Bayt al-Maqdis has witnessed the birth of three Abrahamic religions. The city is also unique for long being the place in which members of these religions have lived together as neighbours. However, it has always been a targeted territory in which Western powers desired power and domination over the region. The Crusaders' period (1098-1187) and the ongoing Israeli occupation are dark pages in the history of the city and region. This is especially with respect to the establishment of the Zionist Israeli state in the Middle East, which has led to several, economic, cultural, and political conflicts affecting the region to this day. With reference to this uniqueness of Bayt al-Maqdis, this paper aims to interpret the occupation of Bayt al-Maqdis and the establishment of Israel as a state in the heart of the Muslim East, along with its multi-dimensional consequences, according to the Barakah Circle Theory of IslamicJerusalem introduced by Abd al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi.*

**KEYWORDS:** Palestine, IslamicJerusalem, Israel, Barakah Circle Theory, Barakah, Hawlahu.



### INTRODUCTION

“Eyes shining, mouths open, triumphant, they savoured the right of domination.” The quote is from Chapter 1 of the *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954).<sup>1</sup> As the boys explore the island, they claim ownership of it, claiming the ‘right of domination’. The boys feel entitled to the land, and Jack’s obsession in hunting pigs is a reflection of his entitlement and desire to hold power. This quote illustrates Golding’s assertion that the desire for power and the aptitude for ‘domination’ exists in everyone and will emerge if given the opportunity. Similarly, the ‘Middle East’ and *IslamicJerusalem*<sup>2</sup> have always been a target territory in which Western powers have sought to claim power and domination of the region for various reasons since the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since then, and right up to the current establishment of Israel as a state, the region has been dominated, colonised and ruled directly by the Western powers. This domination continues even today under different forms. Establishment of Israel as a state is a reflection of this desire for domination.

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\* PhD Candidate, Middle Eastern Studies, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey, [mehmetsirincengiz@gmail.com](mailto:mehmetsirincengiz@gmail.com), ORCID: 0000-0001-8387-3541.

Bayt al-Maqdis is a unique city in which the members of the three Abrahamic religions have lived very close to each other as neighbours on relatively very narrow land. This is a situation has been encountered in Islamic cities such as Cordoba and Istanbul. However, it should be emphasised that Bayt al-Maqdis has a special place amongst all these cities. The city has an exceptional place in the history of religion and civilisation of humankind, with such landmarks as the Church of the Resurrection and Al-Aqsa Mosque (al-Harem al-Sharif), including al-Jami' al-Aqsa, Dome of the Rock, the Buraq Wall and other religious-historical structures. Throughout history, the city experienced times of religious and cultural peace and tranquillity under Muslim rule. The Crusader period (1098-1187) and the ongoing Israeli occupation remain as dark pages in the history of the city and region. This is especially with respect to the establishment of the state of Israel in the 'Middle East' which has led to several economic, cultural, political and many other issues that have affected the region until now. Specifically, Palestine has been a core problem at both the regional and international level. Said has argued that with respect to the "Question of Palestine", *"as outcast, as transnational, extraterritorial being, as oppressed nonentity inside Israel, the Palestinian is confirmed as central to, or at the core of, the Middle East problem"* (1992: 169). With reference to this uniqueness of Bayt al-Maqdis, this paper aims to interpret the occupation of Bayt al-Maqdis and the establishment of Israel as a state in the heart of the Middle East, along with its multi-dimensional consequences, according to the Barakah Circle Theory of Islamicjerusalem introduced by Abd al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi (al-Maqdisi).

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The political effects of geography have been discussed since at least the ancient Greek era. The term emerged as a result of these arguments. Geopolitics was first coined as a term by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén and is defined briefly as *"... the science which deals with the influence of geographic factors on the creation and existence of states and the analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations"* (Haggman, 1998). Western scholars, including Alfred Thayer Mahan, Halford Mackinder and Friedrich Ratzel have attempted to describe historical events and contemporary problems using their own theories of geopolitics. There have been scholars of geography such as Gamal Hamdan (1928-1993) whose work encompassed the consideration of geography along with history, sociology, politics and culture, but the attempts of these scholars were either limited to one specific location and were still far from developing any theories of geopolitics. Thus, all previous theories of geopolitics were developed by Western politics. The new theory of geopolitics, the Barakah Circle Theory of Islamicjerusalem, introduced by El-Awaisi (2006) has a unique significance in terms of having been developed by a Muslim and Eastern scholar to enable the understanding of the significance of Islamicjerusalem as a region and in interpreting historical and current issues both at national and international levels.

The Barakah Circle Theory of IslamicJerusalem is based on two key concepts, *barakah* and *hawlahu*, derived from the Qur'an and adopted to the well-known "Circle Theory" in political science: *Barakah* meaning blessing, richness, fertility, and *Hawlahu* carrying the meaning of surrounding (Qur'an, 21:71, 21:81, 34:18, and 7:137). According to the verse, *Barakah* flourishes in circles from the Al-Aqsa Mosque to other parts of the world. The richness of the land has been referred to in several writings. The English poet George Sandys, for instance, spoke of the land as "... a land that flowed with milk and honey; in the midst as it were of the habitable world, and under a temperate clime; adorned with beautiful mountains and luxuriant valleys; the rocks producing excellent waters; and no part empty of delight or profit" (cited in Said, 1992: 11). The English historian and author Edward Gibbon (1846) addresses to the extraordinary fertility of the land's soil, the opulence and beauty of its cities and purity of its air. In the works of the medieval Arab and Muslim geographers, the region is also described as "*Filastin is watered by the rains and the dew. Its trees and its ploughed lands do not need artificial irrigation; and it is only in Nablus that you find the running waters applied to this purpose. Filastin is the most fertile of the Syrian provinces*" (Said, 1992: 11). Placing Al-Aqsa Mosque and Bayt al-Maqdis to the centre of the theory as the first circle, the second circle covers Bilad Al-Sham (Historical Syria), some parts of Egypt and Eastern Mediterranean Sea while the third circle covers lands in Turkey, the rest of Egypt, Iraq, parts of Saudi Arabia and the Mediterranean Sea. Politically speaking, the main argument of the theory is that all circles are linked to one another and those who control the first circle will control the rest of the world.

Being in the centre and first circle of the theory, what makes Bayt al-Maqdis and the first circle so important for the theory? The city of Al-Quds and the region of Palestine have had several names throughout history and some of these names continue to change due to several reasons while other names have perished (El-Awaisi K, 2011). El-Awaisi introduces a new terminology to define Bayt al-Maqdis and to address the significance of the first circle and the region within the borders of this circle:

IslamicJerusalem (one word) is a unique region laden with a rich historical background, religious significances, cultural attachments, competing political and religious claims, international interests and various aspects that affect the rest of the world in both historical and contemporary contexts. It has a central frame of reference and a vital nature with three principal intertwined elements: its geographical location (land and boundaries), its people (population), and its unique and creative inclusive version, to administer that land and its people, as a model for multiculturalism, cultural engagement and Aman (peaceful co-existence and mutual respect) (El-Awaisi, 2006: 11).

With reference to the definition, the first significance of the region is its historical background. The history of Palestine dates back to the Late Bronze Age and throughout this approximately 3500 years, it was home to many civilisations including Canaanites, Romans, Persians, Arabs and Ottomans. The region also

witnessed the birth of three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This religious and historical diversity has led the followers of these religions to make political and territorial claims over the land, giving rise to some of the most apparent sources of current conflict in the region.

The region also has geopolitical importance at the national and international level. According to the Barakah Circle Theory, there are four geopolitically and strategically vital countries: Turkey as the centre of non-Arab Muslims in the north, Egypt as the centre of Arab Muslims in the South, together with Iraq and Syria. IslamicJerusalem, being at the centre of the “Middle East” and these four countries, ties these territories and functions as a bridge between the Arab and non-Arab Muslims of the region. Moreover, it is the gate to the “Middle East”, the Arab World, and the other regions of Asia by being at the junction of Asia, Africa and Europe. This geographical location along with its multi-religious and multicultural dimensions have made it a land of wars, conflicts and struggles and a target for the Western powers.

Yet, as clearly stated by El-Awaisi, in addition to being the centre of Barakah and hope, together with its rich resources and landscapes, there are also three other elements that should be highlighted: including its geographical location, its people with different religious and ethnic entities, and its unique and creative inclusive version. These can be the reference for a model of multiculturalism, cultural engagement and peaceful co-existence and mutual respect, which is suggested as being the only path towards ending the ongoing conflicts.

## DISCUSSION

Bayt al-Maqdis, home to the first *Qiblah* of Muslims, is an Islamic city notable for its historical and religious identity, architectural structure, and pluralist inclusive culture. It was described by Dante Alighieri as “*the city of peace and the centre of the universe*”, and in Pope Paul VI’s words, “*it is the world’s centre for religion and peace*” (cited in El-Khatib, 2001). After the conquest by the second Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab in 637-638 AD, the city became under Arab Muslim rule and began to operate a new life by the end of the seventh century. Said (1992) describes this new life that began almost immediately after the Muslim takeover: its boundaries, characteristics -including its name in Arabic- and social and political structure changed. Moreover, it became known as a famous region throughout the Muslim World as much for its fertility and beauty as well as for its religious significance. The reason for its religious significance and its conquering by the Muslims was that the region was mentioned in numerous Qur’anic verses. Bayt al-Maqdis witnessed, as the Qur’an states (Qur’an 17:1), a miraculous Night Journey, *Al-Isra’*, by the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Jerusalem, and the heavenly Ascension, *Al-Mi’raj*, when the prophet ascended from Jerusalem to Heaven (El-Khatib, 2001; El-Awaisi, 1998). After the conquest, Caliph Umar assures an *Aman*, (Assurance of Safety), by which he declared the recognition of the rights of Christians and Jews (El-Awaisi, 2000). The churches were not destroyed and were

instead taken under Muslim protection and left to their owners. In the framework of the rights recognised by Islamic law, Jewish and Christian communities were granted the rights to order their own religious affairs. Bayt al-Maqdis, in which the followers of the three Abrahamic religions lived together (Kazmouz, 2011), has been the centre of religious and ethnic pluralism, travel, aesthetic sensibility and multi-national trade for hundreds of years, with the exception of the Crusader's invasion between 1099 and 1187. This period of peace continued during the rule of Salah al-Din Al-Ayubi (1187-1193) and later the Mamluks and Ottomans (1517-1917). It can be fairly asserted that the position of non-Muslim communities under Muslim rule was far better than the suppressive Medieval Christian rule, especially for the Jews.

This period of peace started to deteriorate during the imperialistic movements of the Western powers. The first attempt was during the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon. One year after Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he attempted to invade Palestine. He also issued a proclamation in 1799, offering Palestine as a homeland to Jews under France's protection (Weider, 1998). The French desire to establish a state for the Jews demonstrates itself in the words of Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869). After his trip to the region in 1832, he declared that the collapse of the Ottoman state was near and suggested that the French Government undertake an imperial or colonial project to take control of the 'Holy Land' (Said, 1992; Marks, 1970). The ideas of Lamartine and other Western politicians led to the emergence of an idea based on emptying the land to be populated by a more deserving power. The words of Lamartine formed the basis for the modern Zionist thinking and slogan formulated by Israel Zangwill for Palestine toward the end of the century: a land without people, for a people without land. Although the French could not realise this colonial and imperialistic desire, the attempts continued with the British trying to control the region through establishing a state for the Jews. The establishment of such a state was considered as a step and tool for the British government to shape the future of the region. This decision was negotiated by the Western powers in the Convention of London in 1840 (Cargill, 1840).

Years after the Convention, the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland. In 1896, the journalist Theodor Herzl published a book called "Der Judenstaat", the Jewish State, and the ideas in this book were discussed in this Congress. Herzl advocated the establishment of the Jews' own state and developed this idea, especially against anti-Semitism in Europe. At the end of the Congress, the Basel Program was published. This document envisaged the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the launch of the World Zionism Organisation to achieve this goal. This document, therefore, aimed towards the establishment of a Zionist state without a land.

In accordance with the recommendations of Lamartine, the first step to take was to empty the land with the help of Western powers and to locate the Jewish

settler-colonists (Masalha, 2018). Before 1897, very few Zionist immigrants were in the region. By 1903, the number had already reached 25,000. Most of these immigrants came from Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation. They lived with almost half a million Arab residents of the region. Between 1904 and 1914, a second wave of 40,000 migrants arrived at Palestine. The main motivation behind these colonial settlements appears in the words of British politician and Foreign Minister, Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), who described the commitment of the Western Powers to Zionism:

The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far greater import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 [Palestine] Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land (cited in Masalha, 2018: 307).

Yet the settlement was not as large as desired because of Ottoman rule in Palestine and its environs during the First World War. This situation persisted until Sharif Hussain, supported by Britain, helped end the Ottoman rule in the region. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war, Britain occupied the region by the end of 1917. On 25 April 1920, with the decision of the League of Nations, Britain was given authority through its mandate of the region. When the British convinced the Arabs of a revolt against the Ottomans, they made promises to the Arabs for a change of authority. The most significant of these promises was the establishment of a sovereign and united Arab state. Egyptian mandate commander Sir Henry McMahon (1862-1949) promised independence to the Arabs. However, France and England, as the victorious states of the war, divided the region between themselves with the Sykes-Picot Treaty, which was signed secretly in 1916. In Palestine, it envisaged the establishment of an international administration. In 1917, Arthur Balfour vowed to establish a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine through his letter to the representative of the Zionists, Lord Rothschild, known as the 'Balfour Declaration'.

Between 1917 and 1947, when Palestine was under the British mandate, Zionists completed the necessary work (military, political and social necessities) with the help and support of Western states before they declared their independence to the world. In 1947, England handed over the responsibility for solving the Zionist-Arab conflict to the League of Nations. The region was shaken by Zionist violence. The Jews now constituted one third of the population through the increasing number of immigrants, yet only six percent of the land was in their hands. However, the population gap was filled with the wave of immigrants fleeing from Nazi persecution (during the Holocaust) in Europe. More people meant the need for more land in which to relocate them, which was soon to be realised by the United Nations (UN). A UN Special Committee proposed to divide the region between Palestinian and Jews. Representatives of the Palestinians, known as the Arab High Committee, rejected the offer but Jewish representatives accepted it. The sharing plan left 56.47 percent of the Palestinian land to the

Jewish state and 43.53 percent to an Arab state. According to the plan, Jerusalem would be under international rule. On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly approved the plan with a vote of 33 countries. 13 countries voted against and 10 countries abstained. This UN partition plan resulted in the dominance of Jews, who had once been the minority group.

However, the plan rejected by the Palestinians was never implemented. On May 15 1948, Britain declared its intention to stop its mandate over Palestine. The decision came into force when the last British troops left the area. With the approval of the USA, the establishment of the Zionist Israeli state, was announced to the world in Tel Aviv on 14 May 1948 (Yazar, 1991). Palestinians called this “اللكبة”, the “catastrophe”. Palestinians experienced more violence following the dominance of the United States of America. US policy was even harsher than the British one. The United States had planned to admit more Jewish refugees in the region. This marked the rise of American support for Zionism. With the support of the USA, the Jewish parties accelerated in their mobilisation of power, which was used for the continuation of the “cleansing operations” by the Jewish militia in Arab villages. The massacres, such as Deir Yasin, carried out in the region before the establishment of this state, were in fact a signal of a new and greater instability in the ‘Middle East’ which continues with the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories (Yasar et al., 2003).

As mentioned earlier, Bayt al-Maqdis is the only holy city on earth in which the members of three Abrahamic religions lived very close to each other as neighbours in a very narrow space of land. The new definition introduced by El-Awaisi (2006) confirms the spiritual and historical significance of the Bayt al-Maqdis to the three Abrahamic faiths by addressing its three elements: its geographical location, its people and its unique and creative inclusive version.

However, in line with the colonial and imperial aims of the Western states, the attempts and later establishment of a Zionist Jewish state in the Middle East in 1948 have caused undeniable negative consequences. El-Awaisi also refers to this point in his argument that the Israeli state is a threat for the people of Palestine, the region, the concept of peace (its unique and creative inclusive version), as well as the political order of the region. In our understanding of the theory and the definition of IslamicJerusalem, El-Awaisi does not address only the Muslim community but, as he highlights with respect to the ‘inclusiveness’ of the region, he also refers to non-Muslims, including the local Christians and even the Jews who had already been residing in Palestine. Edouard Sa’ab also mentions that Israel as a Zionist state is based on racial discrimination and writes that:

The State of Israel has emerged, not as a humanitarian refuge, but as the incarnation of neo-racism, which discriminates between Jews and Arabs, Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, and even between Western and Eastern Israeli citizens (cited in Harkabi, 2017: 323).

However, the cruellest violence, or ‘massacre’ to use the correct terminology, was directed towards the Palestinians. The Palestinians had been pushed out of their properties and homeland that they still believe they are entitled to. While the Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France divided the Middle East during World War I, and the 1917 Balfour Declaration a year later officially opened the Palestinian territories to the Jews, the region was left to anarchy during the British mandate period (1920-48). Yasar et al. (2003) argues that the Jews, who failed to overcome Abdulhamid II (Öke, 1982), were now in this land where the Sultan took great measures against the Jewish settlements. After the collapse of the Ottomans, they began to systematically attack and commit many types of violence against Muslims and Christians through terrorist groups such as Haganah (1920-48), Stern/Lehi (1940-48) and Irgun (1931-48). Said gives two examples of this violence: the first example is illustrated by the remarks of Moshe Dayan in Haaretz in April 1969, saying:

We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. In considerable areas of the country we bought the lands from the Arabs [the total area was about 6 percent]. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you, because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat-in the place of Jibta, [Kibbutz] Sarid -in the place of Haneifs and Kefar Yehoshua- in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population (cited in Said, 1978: 4).

Said (1992: 14) calls the Jewish settlements and the violence used to establish them as ‘systematic destruction’ and refers to one outraged Israeli, Professor Israel Shahak, who reckons that:

...almost four hundred villages were thus eliminated, ... these villages were destroyed completely, with their houses, garden-walls, and even cemeteries and tombstones, so that literally a stone does not remain standing, and visitors are passing and being told that it was all desert.

In the bipolar system of the Cold War, the situation in Palestine did not change much. Israel conquered the entirety of the Palestinian territories, including Eastern Jerusalem, in the War of 1967 and expanded its territory three times larger. The war in 1973 completely strengthened Israel's positions. After each war and massacres, new people were added to the caravan of Palestinian refugees. More than 200 decisions taken at the United Nations (UN) have returned from the Security Council with a US veto, or those decisions without any sanction remained as written articles with respect to the arbitrary practices of Israel. These practices of Israel prove that Israel functions as the garrison and a ‘buffer’ state of the Western powers, especially the USA to realise their modern



colonial and imperialistic aims in the region. Said (1992: 225) recalls the harsh and destructive US policy after the establishment of Israel:

During the three years between 1974 and 1977, the United States played an astonishingly destructive and irresponsible role. Henry Kissinger and the two presidents he served gave Israel more arms in a shorter period of time than ever in its history. U.S. policy was deliberately to ignore the Palestinians, to try to whittle down Arab nationalist sentiment in the region, to force political movement into bilateral, step-by-step processes. Always a domestic U.S. issue, the question of Palestine seemed transmuted into a question of how Palestine could be made to disappear into Egyptian or Syrian or Saudi policy.

The establishment of the Israeli state also started a series of Arab-Israeli wars and political disorder in the region. The Arab-Israeli wars started in 1948 revealed the discrepancies and insincerities of the Arab countries on the issue of Palestine, as well as the strong Western support behind the Zionists. In the 1967 War, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, who had lost their lands to Israel, approached the problem as a domestic policy and pursued the rectification of their own losses. However, not having a common plan of action or intention caused an inevitable result that the process would work against Palestine. Although these Arab countries seemed to have supported the Palestinians, their main motivations were to continue their own rule in their sovereign states, and it must be said that they created a genuine sense that they have followed the popular sense of nationalist involvement in the Palestinian tragedy. We can see the proofs of this dilemma especially after the 1967 War. On the one hand, the Arab countries one after another attempted for peace with Israel and for recognising Israel's existence. On the other hand, although the Palestinian cause was one of the top issues on every Arab government's agenda, the number of Palestinians that died at the hands of Arab governments was high. Even today, Said points to the contradiction that there is no room for the Palestinians in the peace negotiations to claim their rights, but neither the other Arab governments nor the Western powers are holding seats for them.

The word has gone out to the world now that Palestinians must be involved in the peace process; but if you were to look for a Palestinian so involved you would not find one. Instead the leaders of Egypt, Israel, the United States, and others speak for the Palestinian, formulating his goals for him, his norms of conduct. One senses that all doors are open to the Palestinian in theory, none in reality (Said, 1992: 170)

According to the Barakah Circle Theory of IslamicJerusalem, Bayt al-Maqdis, or IslamicJerusalem in El-Awaisi's new definition, is the core of the region. Those who succeed in controlling the core will control the whole region and the whole world. IslamicJerusalem also functions as a bridge with its geo-strategic and geo-political location, which ensures control of the Mediterranean Sea and the whole region. Colonial and imperialistic invasion projects, which started with the thoughts of Bonaparte and Lamartine, lost its unity as a result of the British 'divide

and rule' policy and as a result divided the region into small de-facto states. After the mandate period, the establishment of Israel as a 'buffer state' in the core of the region was announced to the world. Since then, Israel has been used by Western powers, especially the USA, as an instrument to continue their imperialistic and hegemonic existence in the region. As is also proved by the Barakah Circle Theory, there could not be any better place than Palestine to begin constructing the modern hegemonic system. Before the establishment of Israel, Britain was following these aims, and while the name of the governing power changed, the system remained and continued in the same way in accordance with requirements of the hegemonic system.

Said (1978) also affirms that these interests of the Western powers in the Middle East were not innocent but contained imperial purposes. Said, in his famous book *Orientalism*, described this situation as modern imperialism. It is possible here to establish a connection with Said's "Orientalism" and the establishment of Israel. Orientalism creates a stereotypical image for both the East and the West. The West is seen as rational, developed, human, democratic, superior in all aspects, while the East is just the opposite. Israel and its state structure and policies are shown to the world as the representative of the Western World. Moreover, Ilia Xypolia argues that:

The stereotypes created by Orientalism contribute to the construction of a hegemonic system designed to dominate the Orient and thus promote Western imperialism. Therefore, Western imperialism still uses Orientalism as a significant instrument (Xypolia, 2011: 27).

Today, the core of the 'Middle East' region is invaded by Israel. The argument is that, as stated by Gamal Hamdan, Israel is a sum of dweller Jews collected from different parts of the world (cited in Harkabi, 2017) that never broke its ties with their previous residences, and they serve a wider and larger orientalist aim for the Western powers (mainly the USA). The existence of Israel, therefore, provides them several opportunities to secure their dominance over the states of the region. Said's expressions are of unique significance in showing US policy against the unity between the governments of the region:

...structures of Arab unity and concentrated in a short-sighted way upon retaining the jealously maintained barriers separating states in the area. Few commentators have remarked that the whole trend in U.S. thinking about the area, revealed in the Interim Agreements of 1975 between Israel and Syria and Egypt, encouraged thought neither about the past nor the future but only the present, that is, the (historically very unstable) status quo. The essence of this trend, whose climax was the Camp David agreements, has been to shrink the unit of political attention and importance; instead of seeing things in their dynamic wholeness, regimes in the region were encouraged by the United States to see them frozen in their present discreteness. .... The relations between states, between cohabiting communities, between the problems of the present and those of the past and future-all these seemed to be declared

null and void... The United States took it upon itself to mediate between the states, the people, and the institutions, making its interests its own highly marketable view of things-the substitute for regional cooperation between states and communities (Said, 1992: 170).

It is clear from the above quotes that the policy of the US to separate the unity of the Muslim states is a carbon copy of those of Bonaparte, Lamartine and the Brits. This plan could not be better achieved than by the buffer state of Israel, which was described by Hamdan, who was the first to refute the lie stating that the current Jews are descendants of the Israelites, as “*a patched-up state containing various races speaking various different languages and representing various continents*” (cited in Harkabi, 2017: 323). The British and French invasions prior to the establishment of Israel divided the political unity of the Ottomans and Egypt. Egypt’s significance was mentioned by Egyptian scholar Gamal Hamad (1928-1993), who was one of many Muslim scholars assassinated by Israel. In his famous book, *Egyptian Personality* (1970, cited in Barakat, 1993: 4), he emphasises the significance of Egypt for the Arab world stating that “*Egypt has always been the meeting place of the Arab family*” and resembles the place of Egypt in the Arab world to Cairo in Egypt. He argues that “*If it is true that there is no Arab unity without Egyptian leadership, it is probably as true to say that Egypt would lose its leadership among the Arabs by failing to regain Palestine for the Arabs.*”

This absence of Egypt leads to ongoing struggles for power between the states of the region. States including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are attempting to fill the gap and are claiming the leadership of the Arab and Muslim World with the support of Israel. It is possible to associate these struggles with Said’s ‘*Orientalism*’ as the Westerners did not only conquer the region militarily but also ideologically.

Similar negative consequences are also experienced by the other three significant states of the region according to the Barakah Circle Theory: Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Both Iraq and Syria experienced political disorder after the Gulf War in 1990-1991, several American invasions of Iraq and the ongoing war in Syria. While there are no states in Syria and Iraq with ongoing wars, Egypt can be named as a failed state with regard to its political dependence on Israel and the USA. Turkey, as the potential leader of non-Arab Muslims, until recently has not established any relations with the rest of the ‘Middle East’ mainly because of several military coups and the shadowing of US policies. Thus, it is possible to argue that the only condition for the re-awakening of the region and the Muslim World is the unity of Egypt as the power of the Arab Muslims and Turkey as the power of the non-Arab Muslims. It will then be possible to end the existence and dominance of Israel and the other Western powers.

## CONCLUSION

Molla Sadra (1571-1641), who considers living with other people as the indispensable element of human existence and wisdom, states that city life and civilisation can be reached by living with different people in harmony (cited in Kalin, 2016). Bayt al-Maqdis was one of the most unique examples of civilisation with its geographical location and its people living in peace and harmony despite its religious and ethnic diversity. However, the catastrophe that Palestine had been subjected to by Zionism is unprecedented in the history of the modern world and the Muslim World. Hegemonic, imperialistic and expansionist existence of the Western powers in the 'Middle East', including France, Britain and the USA resulted in the establishment of the Israeli state in the heart of the region, which has been the biggest dilemma to this harmonious and peaceful land with its unique and creative inclusive entity. Moreover, the Zionist Israeli threat does not only target the Holy Land in Palestine and the Arab and Muslim Worlds, but it extends to the entire world, so the liberation of Palestine will only be possible with the unity of the Muslim World. The other threats to the unity of the Muslim World include foreign influence, the rift among Muslims and Arabs, the weakness of the Muslim World and the loss of social justice and political tyranny.

To resolve the Zionist threat and to re-establish these elements defined by El-Awaisi, resolving Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi cases is of significant urgency. This will be the first step in re-forming the unity among the Muslim countries, especially in liberating Egypt and attempting to strengthen the relations between the states of the region especially between Turkey and Egypt. Moreover, de-activation of the monarchs and tyrants are considered key factors to take the first step in the liberation of Bayt Al Maqdis (the first circle) for an ultimate peace process.

Above all these treats, I consider knowledge as the only 'saviour' for the Muslim World. The main cause of the Palestinian catastrophe, in addition to the cowardice and disunity, is the distance to knowledge and intellectual impotence. That is why Zionists demanded a state for the Jews in Palestine and the Arabs acquiesced. Therefore, the Muslim World is required to produce knowledge again, as it was once impossible to conceive of Western civilisation without Muslim sciences, including al-Khwarizmi's algebra, medical and philosophical teachings of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), or the rationality of Ibn Rushd. But, more importantly, the Muslims are obliged to remember that scholarship can give man the ability to harness nature.

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## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Golding, William. (1959) *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Berkley.
- <sup>2</sup> Several names have been used for IslamicJerusalem throughout the history including Jerusalem, Al-Quds and Bayt al-Maqdis. These names were used either to refer to the city or sometimes with a wider connotation. For a detailed study on the names of IslamicJerusalem, refer to El-Awaisi, K. (2011). From Aelia to Al-Quds: The Names of IslamicJerusalem in the Early Muslim Period. *Mukaddime*, 4(4); El-Awaisi, K. (2007). The names of IslamicJerusalem in the Prophetic period. *Journal of IslamicJerusalem Studies*, vol. 8, summer 2007; and El-Awaisi, K. (2007) *Mapping IslamicJerusalem*. Dundee: ALMI Press.