

Al-Quds/ Jerusalem -- the capital

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Al-Quds is, literally, the holy city, for believers, Jewish, Christian, Muslim alike, called by non-Muslims Jerusalem (from "City of Shalem" after a Canaanite deity, during the early Canaanite period (approximately 2400 BCE)).

What is Zionism? But before that, what is Zion, an inspiration for Zionists and non-Zionists alike? Zion is a place name often used as a synonym for Jerusalem. The word is first found in 2 Samuel 5:7 which dates from 540 BC, and refers there to a specific mountain near Jerusalem (Mount Zion), on which a fortress stood which David allegedly conquered.

The term Tzion came to designate the area of Jerusalem where the fortress stood, and

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later became a metonym for Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem itself, and "the World to Come", the Jewish understanding of the hereafter. In the Kabbalah, a more esoteric reference is made to Tzion being the spiritual point from which reality emerges, located in the Holy of Holies of the First, Second and Third Temples.

Judaism's tribalism (and its offspring Zionism) suffers from what Alfred Whitehead called "misplaced concreteness", where abstract belief is treated as if it were a concrete real event or physical entity. It's fine in literature as metonymy, where a reified abstraction is intended as a figure of speech, and actually understood as such, but the use of reification in logical reasoning or rhetoric is misleading and in this case, disastrous. God is not on a hilltop requiring you to steal the property and build a replica of a mythical temple to fulfill a "covenant" with him.

It really doesn't matter who 'governs' al-Quds, as long as it is an open city to all monotheists, Jewish, Christian, Muslim alike. Since it was founded, 2,500 years ago, it first passed from one empire to another -- Assyrian, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, British. For a brief century in the 2nd--1st centuries BC, it was nominally under Jewish sovereignty, though under Roman control.

From the 7th--20th centuries, it was under Muslim control. That was the best period for al-Quds. All lived in peace, except, of course, for the 11th--12th centuries of pillage and rape which is glorified in the Christian West as the Crusades.

As imperialism in its capitalist form encircled the globe in the 19th--20th centuries, it fell into the lap of the Brits. Through subterfuge and betrayal of the covenant with the Arab natives, who longed for independence from the yoke of the Turks, it was made a colony (mandate) of the empire of the day.

Jewish influence in the British elites resulted in a promise to establish a Jewish state as the final piece in the imperial puzzle of the day -- a stepping stone to India. After another period of perfidy to the Arabs, it finally came under Jewish, or rather Zionist control.

Zionism is a nationalist political movement of Jews and Jewish culture that supports what it views as the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland in the territory it defines as the historic Land of Israel. It emerged in the late 19th century in central and eastern Europe as a national revival movement. In Jewish history, where myth has always transcended fact, Jews see themselves as in exile everywhere, and everywhere in search of the Promised Land, for that magical 'see you next year in Jerusalem' moment.

Trump's decision to make this official is not really a new step. Merely another betrayal of promises made at the very founding of Israel in 1948. Since then, the so-called peace process has acted as a subterfuge for the Zionist project of total control of the Holy Lands.

Is it possible to continue to tolerate this long history of betrayal? It seems the Arab governments are helpless to stop it. If we could be assured that Jewish control of the land of al-Quds would bring peace and equality among the Muslim, Christian and Jewish natives -- and the Jewish immigrants -- we could perhaps accept this blatant act of imperialism in the interests of peace.

But there is no evidence to date of this goodwill on the part of the occupiers. On the contrary, the past 70 years of Jewish, rather Zionist, control, suggests that only further suffering and injustice can be expected.

Al-Quds should indeed be the natural, foreordained capital of the Holy Lands, but it will be the capital of Palestine, Palestine-Israel, or -- in the interests of compromise -- Israel-Palestine. The world can only thank far-off Iran for its steadfast support for a just peace in Palestine that will make this happen.

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