Standing Firm...

The Nakba of the Maghariba Quarter in Photographs
Forty Years under the Israeli Occupation

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نكبـة حـارة المغارـبة

"BAQOON" - The Mughrabi Quarter Catastrophe

باـقم: الشـيخ راـئد صـلاح
رئيس الحركة الإسلامية في الداخل الفلسطيني

الدكـان المبكر ًالضـمان الأول لما يعرف اليوم باسم حائط المغاربة، وسميّ باسم حائط المغاربة بسبب أن الرسلوـل صلى الله عليه وسلم قام بربط دابة البراق التي حملته من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى في هذا الحائط خلال رحلة الإسراء. ثم ترجل عنها ودخل إلى المسجد الأقصى من باب سميّ على ضوء ذلك باسم باب النبي. إلا أن هذا الباب بات يعرف فيما بعد باسم باب المغاربة.

وقد حمل هذا الحائط وهذا الباب اسم "المغاربة" بعد قرون من الزمان بسبب أن طبعته من مجاهدي المغرب الغربي تركت أوطانها وشدّت رحالها إلى المسجد الأقصى للرباط في رحابه المباركة لصيانة له ودفاعه عنه من اعتداءات الصليبيين الأوروبيين. وبعد أن سلقو المسجد الأقصى أسيراً، دخلت المغاربة وباب المغاربة في 1967 في يد الاحتلال الإسرائيلي عام 1967، في مرحلة معاناة بدأت منذ ذلك العام ولم تتوقف حتى الآن. فقد قامت المؤسسة الاحتالية الإسرائيلية بتدمير كل حارة المغاربة التي كانت تحت حائط المغاربة، ودمرت كل بيوت المسجد الأقصى عام 1967، لم تتردد المسجد الأقصى يومها أن تدمر كل مباني المسجد الأقصى، وأن تجرف كل قبورها. ثم لم تتردد المؤسسة الإسرائيلية أن تقيم بعد ذلك على أنقاض هذا الدمار ساحة أسمتها زوراً وبهتان باسم ساحة المبكى، وأصرت في نفس الوقت أن تحرم اسم حائط البراق وأخذت تطلق عليه زورا وبهتان اسم.

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By Sheikh Raed Salah
Head of the Islamic Movement inside the Green Line

The Al-Buraq Wall was the original name of what is known today as the Mughrabi Wall. It was given the name of the Al-Buraq Wall because the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) tied the buraq, his winged steed, which carried him from the Sacred Mosque (in Mecca) to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, to this wall during his Night Journey. He then dismounted it and entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque from a gate that was accordingly named the Gate of the Prophet. However, this gate subsequently became known as the Mughrabi Gate.

Centuries later, this wall and this gate assumed the name “Mughrabi” because of a vanguard of Islamic warriors from the western Maghreb who left their homelands, setting out to the Al-Aqsa Mosque to set up positions in its blessed courtyards, in order to protect and defend it from the assaults of the European crusaders. After the Al-Aqsa Mosque fell captive to the Israeli occupation in the year 1967 AD, the Mughrabi Wall and the Mughrabi Gate entered a period of suffering that began in that year and has not yet come to an end. The Israeli occupation establishment completely destroyed the entire Mughrabi Quarter, which stood adjacent to the Mughrabi Wall and Mughrabi Gate, in the first days after the fall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1967 AD. The Israeli establishment at that time did not hesitate to destroy all of the houses in the quarter, on top of whoever remained alive inside them, which resulted in their martyrdom beneath the rubble. Nor did the Israeli establishment at the time hesitate to destroy all of the quarter’s historical school buildings, or to destroy all of its mosques, or to bulldoze all of its tombs. Afterward, the Israeli establishment did not hesitate to establish a square on the ruins of that destruction, which is falsely and spuriously named the Wailing Square. At the same time it determined to corrupt the name of the Al-Buraq Wall and began to call it, falsely and spuriously, the Wailing Wall. The Israeli establishment then continued its assaults incessantly, until this very moment, on the Mughrabi Wall and the Mughrabi Gate, as part of its relentless attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Israeli occupation establishment then also commenced the crime of carrying out excavations beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque, beginning at the Mughrabi Wall and the Mughrabi Gate. It then continued the gradual destruction of the path leading to the Mughrabi Gate, until it completed the removal of the final stone in 2007 AD. Israel is continuing to carry out these damaging excavations and this devastating destruction. And today, here is the Israeli occupation establishment making preparations to construct a huge, solid bridge over the ruins of this devastation. The bridge that it intends to build has a load bearing capacity, according to the Israeli occupation plan, that allows Israeli military vehicles and whatever trucks, bulldozers and diggers are necessary to cross the bridge and enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in accordance with the whims of the Israeli occupation.

In order to document this unremitting gamut of Israeli crimes, the Al-Aqsa Association for the Restoration of Islamic Sanctities has created a large exhibition entitled, “Standing Firm” that speaks, through tens of photographs, of the tragedy of the Mughrabi Wall and the Mughrabi Gate from the year 1900 AD until today. The Al-Aqsa Association saw it as its duty to print the exhibition in this report, so that it will reach the greatest possible number of people in the Islamic, Arab and Palestinians worlds, imploring the Lord, Glorified be his Glory, that the photographs in this exhibition may contribute towards compelling every Muslim, every Arab and every Palestinian to work ceaselessly in support of noble Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
Jerusalem: A Holy City Whose Heart is the Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque

Jerusalem is a city that has been Arab in origin, character and identity since the dawn of history. It then became Arab-Islamic after it was liberated by Umar Bin al-Khattab in the year 637 AD, and is a sacred civilizational and religious symbol for Muslims and Christians. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, the beating heart of Jerusalem, is the first of the two qiblahs, the second mosque, and the third Holy Place, and the place of the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H) Night Journey and Ascension, the isra and mi’raj. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, sacred to Christians, is also located there.
The Maghariba Quarter – Densely Populated and Built upon for Hundreds of Years

Volunteers from countries of the Arab Maghreb (North Africa – Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya) joined the army of Salah Addin al-Ayyubi during his liberation of Jerusalem, Bait al-Maqdis, in the year 583 AH / 1187 AD. Out of love for the mosque and in order to defend it, the Maghrebi volunteers settled in the south western part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In the year 858 AH / 1189 AD King Al-Afdal ‘Ali ibn Salah Addin al-Ayyubi bequeathed the site adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Al-Buraq Wall to them as a religious endowment, or waqf. It was named the Maghariba Section or Quarter, and the gate was renamed the Maghariba Gate. Over hundreds of years the quarter became filled with residents and life, and came to contain many Islamic properties and Islamic waqf’ properties.
The Al-Buraq Mosque – A Symbol of the Ribat (Tying) since the Night Journey and Ascension

The Al-Buraq Mosque is situated beneath the Maghariba Gate to the north, parallel to the Al-Buraq Wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It consists of a barrel-shaped vault to which one can descend via a number of stairs leading down from the western portico within the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was known by its name because it is the location of the ring to which it is believed that the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) tied his buraq (a wing steed with a human head sent from heaven) on the night of the Night Journey and Ascension.
The Waqf Properties of the Maghariba Quarter are Documented

Before his death, Salah Addin al-Ayyubi entrusted the principality of Palestine and the Syria to his son, Al-Afdal Nur Addin ‘Ali. King Al-Afdal had a great interest in Jerusalem and its sacred objects and sites, and among the most important of his acts in Jerusalem was to bequeath the plot of land on which the Maghrebis were accustomed to living, adjacent to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, as a religious endowment to them, males and females alike. The waqf properties of the Maghariba Quarter were registered in a waqf deed that explains its borders and terms.
A Lively and Bustling Neighborhood

The people of the al-Maghariba Quarter lived very close to the affairs of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque; their quarter encompassed the old wall of Jerusalem to the south, and their life was full of vitality. They awoke early to perform the dawn prayer, in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and their day began in an energetic manner with the organization of their household concerns, to which the appearance of their homes bears testimony.

(An internal view of houses in the Maghariba Quarter from the northern aspect, in which the southern section of the old wall of Jerusalem appears in the distance)
A Justified Look-Out

West Jerusalem fell under Israeli occupation in 1948. East Jerusalem, including the Old City and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, remained under Jordanian sovereignty and control until 1967, and Jordanian army bases remained visible at sensitive sites close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, including in the Maghariba Quarter and its vicinity.
They Occupy the Old City

On June 7th, 1967, the third day of the Israeli aggression, Israeli armored vehicles and tanks advance to occupy the Old City of Jerusalem. Its military machinery enters via the Al-Asbat Gate and fires its shells towards the minaret of the Al-Asbat Gate. It then storms the Al-Asbat Gate – one of the gates of East Jerusalem – which is very close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
And the Al-Aqsa Mosque Falls Captive

What difficult moments when Israeli General Mordechai Gur, delightfully riding in a half-track car reiterated again and again over the microphone the fall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by stating, “Al-Aqsa is in our hands” – har habayit beyadaynu.
Joyful at their Occupation of the Al-Buraq Wall

Yitzhak Rabin – who was one of the commanders of the Israeli army during the occupation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem – wrote in his memoirs a description of their entry into Jerusalem as they were rushing towards the Al-Buraq Wall: “Our patience was thin... we would have lost a historical opportunity, the closer we got to the Wailing Wall – which is actually the Al-Buraq Wall – the greater the excitement grew... The Wailing Wall, that transformed Israel, not only in realizing the establishment of Israel, but also in the return to Jerusalem and the restoration of the area of the Wailing Wall to Israeli control, now that this dream had been accomplished I was amazed at how it had come into my possession!?” We say to him that the Al-Buraq Wall is not and will not be your property, because the occupier has not been able and will not be able to erase its Arab and Islamic character.
For the first time in the history of the Al-Buraq Wall and the square that faces it, the Israeli occupation army’s rabbi, Shlomo Goren, blew the “shofar” horn, voicing the elated joyfulness of the Jews at victory, and announcing in the speech that he gave in front of the Al-Buraq Wall that: “I speak to you from the Wailing Wall, the last remnant of our temple, for which we yearned for so long, so let us rejoice and be glad.” And at that moment the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Al-Buraq Wall groaned in pain and agony.
And the Crime of Destroying the Maghariba Quarter Begins

Four days after East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque fell under Israeli Occupation, and on the date of June 11th, 1967 specifically, Israeli bulldozers began to destroy the Maghariba Quarter and level it to the ground. They destroyed 138 buildings including four mosques and the al-Afdaliya School, as well as many waqf properties. They drove away around 125 families consisting of a total of approximately 1,000 people.

(The Maghariba Quarter has become a part of our memory after having been Islamic waqf property. Photographed by the Japanese photographer Harakawa)
After Seventy Years they Fulfill Herzl’s Dream

The godfather of the Zionist Movement, Theodor Herzl, proclaimed in the Swiss city of Basel “If one day we were to win Jerusalem for a moment, and I was still living and was able to do anything, I would not hesitate for a moment to remove everything that is not sacred to the Jews, and I would destroy all vestiges of the centuries that have gone by.”

Thus the first act of the Jews, four days after the occupation of East Jerusalem, was to take possession of the Al-Buraq Wall, after razing the Al-Buraq Square to the ground and transforming it into a square in which to perform their prayers, and to destroy eight hundred year old antiquities.
The Maghariba Quarter was destroyed and nothing of it survived except al-Khanqa’a al-Fakhriya (an Islamic religious house that consist of four halls among them a mosque and a school), most of the facilities of which are located in the south western corner of the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the right of the Maghariba Gate. It can be traced back to its waqf donar, Qadi Fakhr al-Din Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Fadlallah, commander of the Islamic armies, who died in 732 AH / 1331 AD, and consists of ten buildings, the most well-known of which are a mosque and a school.
An Ignoble Ending

How can those who do not respect the sanctity of Islamic history, antiquities and waqf properties leave even one last trace of them? Thus was the case of the Israeli bulldozers, which on June 16th, 1969 completely destroyed the al-Khanqa al-Fakhriya, leaving nothing of it intact except for three rooms and a mosque that enters onto the bounds of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.
تحفريات للتزييف

بالتزامن مع الاحتلال الإسرائيلي لحائط البراق بدأ فرق الحفريات الأثرية الاسرائيلية بالمرحلة الأولى من حفرياتها تحت حرم المسجد الأقصى ومحيطه القريب. وتوزعت الحفريات في أكثر من أربعين موقعًا. أبرزها في أسفل الحائط الجنوبي للمسجد الأقصى على امتداد 70 متراً. أما المرحلة الثانية فقد امتدت 80 متراً حيث انتهت المرحلة الأولى حتى تصل إلى باب المغاربة مارة بمباني الخانقى الفخري واستمرت باتجاه الشمال أسفل المدرسة التنكزية. أي أن الحفريات تركزت في محور حائط البراق. وكان المساعي يهدف إلى محاولة إيجاد آثار يمكنهم من خلالها تزويج التاريخ والمعالم، ولكن هيهات هيهات !!.

Excavations for Fabrication

Simultaneously with the Israeli occupation of the Al-Buraq Wall, Israeli archaeological excavation teams commenced the first stage of their excavations under the campus of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its close surroundings. The excavations were spread out over more than forty sites, the most prominent of which was underneath the southern wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, extending over seventy meters. The second stage extended for eighty meters from where the first stage had ended and reached the Maghariba Gate, passing next to the buildings of the al-Khanqa al-Fakhriya and continuing to the north beneath the Tankaziya School. Thus, the excavations were concentrated on the axis of the Al-Buraq Wall. The effort was aimed locating archeological findings that would allow them to fabricate history and landmarks, but how wrong they were!

(Excavations beneath the western wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, 1967)
The Policy of Judaizing the Site

There is nothing more indicative of the fact that the excavations in the surroundings of the Al-Aqsa Mosque were conducted for political purposes than the frequent and routine visits of the political leaders of the Israeli establishment to these excavations. The effacement of Islamic and Arab landmarks and giving new names to Jewish the site constituted an attempt on the part of the Israelis to Judaize the site, even by force. Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, accompanied by Mazar, an Israeli archeologist, Teddy Kulak, the head of the Jewish municipality of Jerusalem, and Yigal Alon, paid a visit to the excavations at the Al-Buraq Wall and the south western corner of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
Ben-Gurion and the Third Temple

East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque were occupied, the Maghariba Quarter was destroyed and the Al-Buraq Square became a place of prayer for Jews. One day David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of the Israeli government, with Ezer Weitzman to his right and Shimon Perez to his left, came to talk once more about his deluded dream, stating that, “Israeli has no value without Jerusalem, and Jerusalem has no value without the temple.” Or perhaps he wanted to place the first brick in the realization of his dream and to impose a fait accompli.
We had a Home and we had a Homeland

The people of the Maghariba Quater were driven out; some of them went to live in refugee camps in the city of Jerusalem and others were expelled to Jordan. However, out of longing some of them returned to examine what had befallen their neighborhood. Four of them, headed by Faraj, point to the signs of the ruin that the Israeli hand of destruction had brought to bear and the remains of household objects and utensils beneath the rubble.
A Witness among Them Bore Witness

The Israelis continued to deny that residents in the Maghariba Quarter were inside their houses during the demolition and destruction operations, despite the fact that the commissioner of the Islamic waqf in the area explained, using a wide range of evidence, that the demolition operations had been conducted while the residents were inside their homes and that the Palestinian dwellers had been buried alive had been buried under the rubble. The Israelis maintained the lie until the Israeli officers who had participated in the crime repentlessly acknowledged the truth of what they had done. One of the most prominent of these officers was Eitan Ben Moshe.
Insistence on the Islamic Nature of the Maghariba Gate

Although Israeli forces seized control over the Maghariba Gate and confiscated its keys directly after the occupation of 1967, Muslims have insisted on the Islamic nature of the gate. And in spite of the Israeli harassment and strictures, Muslims have continued to approach the areas of Jerusalem close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque via the Maghariba Gate.
The Maghariba Gate for Tourists and Jewish Extremists

The Israeli establishment exploited the events of the First Intifada of 1987 in order to increase the oppression against Muslims entering the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque through the Maghariba Gate. Their numbers diminished when the Israeli establishment made the gate a main entrance for foreign tourists and extremists from Jewish groups, and then closed off it completely to Muslim worshippers following the Al-Aqsa Intifada of 2000.
Collapse as a Result of a Deliberate Act

Nothing of the Maghariba Quarter survived other than a road that was originally a part of Islamic buildings and antiquities and was used by Muslims as a path through which to enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was decided to call this the Maghariba path. Due to the ongoing Israeli excavations beneath the ground, the gate leading to this path collapsed on December 15th, 2004. With the passing of days it would be revealed that the collapse occurred as a result of a deliberate action order to accomplish a future plan.
A Temporary Bridge for a Contrived Deception

The Israeli establishment prevented the Islamic Waqf Council in Jerusalem from carrying out renovations to the path leading to the Maghariba Gate after it collapsed as a result of the Israeli excavations. It planned to leave the site to be destroyed through subsidence due to digging and neglect. The Israeli establishment erected a temporary wooden bridge in place of the path as a way of allowing Jewish groups to get in as well as visits by foreign tourists, which is indicative of a contrived Israeli deception.

(A temporary wooden bridge put in place of the path leading to the Maghariba Gate, April 20th, 2005. Photographed by Iyad al-Na’il - Al-Resalah Association)
تحذير استباقي
على مكان مطل على ساحة وحائط البراق وجانبه طريق باب المغاربة ووقف الشَّيخ عكراة صبري رئيس الهيئة الإسلامية العليا في القدس والشَّيخ رائد صلاح رئيس الحركة الإسلامية في الداخل الفلسطيني قبل ظهر الخميس 1/2/2007م بحذران من أن جريمة هدم طريق باب المغاربة ستقع يوم الأحد 4/2/2007م صباحاً وأمسك الشَّيخ صلاح الوثائق وكشف عن الحقائق وحذر من الجريمة واستناد العالم الإسلامي والعبري ونقلت التحذيرات الاستباقية من على شاشات الفضائيات والمذيعات والصحف.

A Forewarning
At a location that overlooks the Al-Buraq Square and the Al-Buraq Wall, adjacent to the path to the Maghraba Gate, Sheikh Ekrama Sabri, the head of the Higher Islamic Council in Jerusalem, and Sheikh Raed Salah, the Head of the Islamic Movement in 1948 Palestine, gave a warning on Thursday February 1st, 2007, before noon, that the crime of destroying the path to the Maghariba Gate would take place on the following Sunday, February 4th, 2007 in the morning. Sheikh Salah grasped the documentary evidence, laid the facts open, warned against the crime, called for help from the Islamic and Arab worlds, and issued forewarnings via satellite channels, radio and newspapers.
A Great Crime

On the morning of Tuesday, February 6th, 2007, large Israeli bulldozers began to destroy the path leading to the Maghariba Gate. They ripped up the Ottoman pavement and started to tear into the western side of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, and then proceeded to demolish two rooms in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.
The Caps of the Temple

Forty years after the occupation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the seizure of the Al-Buraq Wall and its use for Jewish religious rites, two Jewish men stand titillated by the joy of the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate. They recall the dreams of the Rabbi Meir Yehuda Janis, who worked as a commissioner for the Al-Buraq Square through the Jewish Ministry of Religions in 1983. At that time, expressing a deluded dream, he said that, “You will see when the time comes to build the temple on its genuine location that the Wailing Wall will not be the temple.”
Arrest and Expulsion

The Israeli establishment wanted to quickly abort all attempts to oppose the crime of the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate, or to stir up the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim street to take action to stop the crime. It saw in Sheikh Raed Salah and his sit-down protest with the people of Jerusalem and members of the Islamic Movement someone with the ability to halt the criminal destruction or to mobilize public opinion. Thus all the Israeli establishment could do was to arrest Sheikh Raed Salah on the morning of February 7th, 2007 during his protest in front of the Maghariba Gate. They gave him a speedy moot trial that ruled to prevent him from coming within a distance of 150 meters of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. However, on the following morning he was standing in protest close to Al-Aqsa, composed, reserving for himself the right to enter the mosque.
A Resistant Prayer Niche that Bears Witness

While the apparatus of destruction was ruining Arab and Islamic antiquities, what had been concealed or hidden beneath the rubble came to light. An Israeli archeologist admitted that after the collapse of the path to the Maghariba Gate in 2004 they had found a prayer room and prayer niche, or mihrab, but had covered up the fact out of fear of calls from Muslims to reclaim the stolen waqf properties. However, fate was more powerful than their deception and the truth was uncovered. Nevertheless, they continued with their destruction, unconcerned.
Sedative Pills and an Army of Diggers

The scenes of Israeli bulldozers being broadcast live as they destroy the path to the Maghariba Gate adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque prompted a wave of harsh statements condemning the crime. As is usual for the Israeli establishment, which administers sedative pills, it falsely claims to have halted the excavations. However, in reality it had immediately replaced the large bulldozers with hundreds of people to dig, or what could be described as “an army of diggers,” which continued to dig up and destroy the path to the Maghariba Gate, and removed tens of cubic meters of Islamic and Arab antiquities.
Killing off our Waqf Properties

All of the related international resolutions are in consensus over the prohibition on the destruction of archeological buildings that are located under the occupation, but the Israeli establishment has refrained from applying these resolutions at a time when the institutions of the international community have been unable to impose its decisions on Israel. The international community has until today remained silent when Arab and Islamic antiquities within the path to the Maghariba Gate were uncovered. These antiquities, which are clearly of an Arab and Islamic character, appeared just days after the commencement of the destruction of the path leading to the Maghariba Gate, but Israel was able to kill off a valuable part of the waqf properties of Muslims in noble Jerusalem in cold blood.
A Crime inside Bags

Before the eyes of the entire world, Arabs and non-Arabs, the hands of the diggers destroy Islamic antiquities and kill them off, piece by piece, turning them into dust and scattered stones. Then they put them into bags similar to the bags into which a criminal places his crime before burying and hiding it, and then the case is closed forever. This is what is being done to our antiquities.
Many have wondered to where these bags that are collected daily are taken. After hours upon hours of digging, demolition, destruction and then collection, they are carried into trailers by a crane and then head off to an unknown location. But where are the landmarks and antiquities of our Arab and Islamic heritage being taken away to?
Our Antiquities in a Rubbish Dump

The settlement of Ma’ale Adumim – a Jewish settlement established on sacred Palestinian land in a frantic attempt to Judaize Jerusalem – and a site designated for the collection of refuse is where trucks transporting bags of antiquities from the path to the Maghariba Gate are headed in order to be cast onto it. As is the custom of the Israeli establishment, the place for Arab and Islamic antiquities in Jerusalem is a waste dump and no more.
The Barricades of the Oppressors and the Perseverance of Those Who Glorify Allah by much Prayers and Invocations

These are the words of God in His Book, which described as oppressors those who forbid Alla's name by glorified and mentioned much in Alla's mosques and strive for their ruin. For them there is disgrace in this world, and they will have a great to torment in the hereafter; the Israeli establishment did not suffice with destroying a section of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, but during the first Friday of these events forbad muslims from reaching to Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayers. Even the elderly were prevented from praying after military blockades and police barricades were erected. However, the people of Jerusalem determined to reach the mosque despite the suffering and the police searches because their right is stronger than the deception of the oppressors.
Buried Malice

The worshipers had completed two prostrations of the Friday prayers, and begun the glorification of God and the prayer for forgiveness, or istighfar, when, to the sounds of sonic bombs, smoke grenades and rubber bullets, their istighfar and their prayers were cut off. They had committed no sin other than to have emphasized their right to pray in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and rejected the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate, which they would have done even if a spy balloon were circling above, or the gates and walls of Al-Aqsa were turned into a military barracks. And it was a matter of just seconds before the courtyard of Al-Aqsa filled with heavily armed soldiers confronting those who were defenseless, except for their trust in God. It is a buried malice!
دماء سالت على سطح المسجد الأقصى بعدما حوصر المصلون وأغلق المسجد بالجنازير. انها دماء زكية تُذكّر دماء الجرحى والموجوعين الذين ما زال رصاص الدمدم مغروس في أجسادهم منذ مجزرة الأقصى عام 1990م، ونinionن في الشهداء الذين سقطوا على عتبات الصخرة المشرفة وهم ركع سجد، لم يرموا حجرا إنيما تمرفت جياعهم تعبدا لله، فكان جرائهم الرصاص يستيل دماءهم طاهرة زكية تشكو الى الله كل جبار عنيد.

Blood flowed over the carpets of the Al-Aqsa Mosque once the worshippers had been surrounded and the mosque had been closed off by armored vehicles. It was pure blood that remind us the blood of the injured and the suffering, in whose bodies explosive bullets are still implanted from the Al-Aqsa massacre of 1990, and yearns and longs for the martyrs who fell on the stairs of the honorable Dome of the Rock while kneeling and praying. They did not throw stones; rather, their foreheads were marked from worshipping God. Their punishment was bullets that caused their blood to flow, clean and pure, appealing to God about every proud obstinate.
God is Great

The stormy weather and torrential rain of Sunday, February 4th, 2007 delayed the perpetration of the crime. The crime took place on the morning of February 6th, 2007 at 6:30. At 8:00 Sheikh Raed Salah arrives hurriedly… a policeman calls out and shouts: Where are you going to?… Sheikh Raed goes forward unperturbed… at a distance of meters a police wall prevents him from reaching the location of the crime of the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate. He protest all day long to the sound of the bulldozers and the malicious looks of the police. Their hands on the trigger of their guns say it all, and the Sheikh silently repeats: God is greater than your power.
Nous sommes déterminées malgré notre souffrance

In a loud voice, with raised hands and with burning resolution, women convened in Jerusalem and announced to the world, meters away from the Maghariba Gate within the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque: We reject the crime, we reject brutality, we reject deadly silence, we reject cowardice and fear, we reject humiliation and disgrace, we refuse to weep only, and we say this in the name of every Arab Muslim woman and every proud woman among humankind, we will not be silent for we are resolute in spite of our suffering.
We Have Been Here for Thousands of Years

The arab jebusite the original inhabitants of Jerusalem never disappeared or were forgotten. Generation after generation multiplied for six thousand years, flying the flag. The Arab Canaanites founded Jerusalem, to deliver it to those who succeeded them on Jabal al-Duhur (Mount of Olives) and Silwan today. The Muslims and Christians of Jerusalem welcomed Umar Bin al-Khattab, liberator and spreading peace and security, until recent times, and although today outsiders have entered into it, the origin remains, where it has been for thousands of years.

(Overflowed from the Naqab, the Triangle and the Galilee sitting in protest in front of the Maghariba Gate, February 12th, 2007. Photographed by Mahmoud Na’iel - Al-Aqsa Association)
"BAQOON" -  The Mughrabi Quarter Catastrophe

A Cry from the Heart

The storms subsided, a fading voice emanates from Cairo, from Amman, from Damascus, from Jakarta, from Mecca, from Morocco, from Algeria, from Istanbul, from wounded Baghdad. Female students called out to each other at that time, the Al-Aqsa Mosque is being destroyed, and so will we remain silent?! The Al-Aqsa Mosque is being gnawed away, so will we stay quiet?! Thus spoke female pupils in schools in Jerusalem. They left their classes from Silwan, the southern garrison village of the Al-Aqsa Mosque; they broke the wall of silence and quiet and cried out open-mouthed... Help us...
Your Night has Almost Become Dawn

Beneath a tree to the right of the Maghariba Gate on the southern wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque tens of Palestinians from inside the green line areas and noble Jerusalem, in their midst Sheikh Kamal Khatib, the Deputy Head of the Islamic Movement in the green line area, spent the night of the second day after the criminal destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate in the bitter cold. They prayed at sunset and in the evening after a long day of protesting and, close to the old wall of Jerusalem, they clung together cloaking themselves with patience and, addressing Jerusalem, they said, your night has almost become dawn.

(QDH Al-Qoq - The Maghariba Quarter Catastrophe)

(A night protest close to the Maghariba Gate / the southern wall of Jerusalem, February 7th, 2007. Photographed by Iyad al-Na’il - Al-Resalah Association)
The Guardian of the Waqf are Defiant

The guardians of the Waqf in Jerusalem were accustomed to entering the sites of sacred waqf properties when they wished without obtaining permission or a permit from anyone. However, under the occupation all basic truths change, when hundred of soldiers of the Israeli occupation stand and encircle the delegation of officials responsible for the waqf properties in Jerusalem, and prevent them from entering the area in which the excavations and demolitions are taking place on the path to the Maghariba Gate. Sheikh Abdel Azeem Salhab, the Director of the Waqf Council in Jerusalem, speaking in the name of the Council, states, we shall continue to defy the occupation and to reveal its crimes.
The protestors were prevented from standing in front of the Mugharbi Gate, and were surrounded by lines of policemen wearing black clothes and glasses. The spokesman for the Islamic Movement, Mr. Saleh Lutfi, and the Director of the Al-Aqsa Association, Sheikh Ali Abu Sheikha, stood in protest against their violent conduct. But they are deaf, dumb and do not understand.
No text document.
I am at Your Service, Al-Aqsa

Tens of thousands marched in the streets of the city of Nazareth in the proud Galilee, tens of thousands of men, women and children responded to the call of Al-Aqsa, responded to the call of Jerusalem and responded to the call of duty. Al-Aqsa is secure in our joint care, and the demonstrators waited for such demonstrations to break out in various countries... in aid of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

(40,000 people take part in a demonstration called for by the Islamic movement in support of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Nazareth on February 9th, 2007. Photographed by Iyad al-Na‘īl - Al-Resalah Association).
We will not Budge

A water hose is aimed, military cavalry forces are at the ready, the special forces are unruly, blocking the ascending path to the Asbat Gate. The distance from the Al-Aqsa Mosque is just meters. Get back, get back, get back, move further and further away, for you will not enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque today, said the army.

Young men, defenseless except for their belief in Great God, stood in wisdom and purpose… they resisted… their feet were nailed to the ground. We will not budge… we will pray here, O people, for your reward and recompense is like that of someone who prayed inside the campus of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. Such was the opinion of the religious scholars of the people of Jerusalem.
The Meeting Place of al-Sawana

In the previous week the crowds had dispersed. They prayed alone and in small groups throughout the alleyways of Jerusalem, sometimes with a prayer leader to direct the Friday prayers and sometimes without. There were barriers and roads were closed, for praying was forbidden in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, “As a punishment to you Muslims for your opposition to the destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque,” or so said the occupier. Tens after tens and then hundreds after hundreds found their way to congregate at the closest point to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and performed the Friday prayers crowded together. Before them was the Friday prayer leader advising and directing.

(Crowds of worshippers in the courtyards of the Sandouqa family in the quarter of al-Sawana in Jerusalem, close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Friday, February 16th, 2007. Photographed by Mahmoud Na'il - Al-Aqsa Association)
Cowardice and Barbarity

A Palestinian child from Jerusalem of ten years of age performed the Friday prayers with the worshippers. His house is located nearby and so he resolved to join the group to pray rather than praying in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as the occupier had set an age limit. The child prayed and stood for a short time. His mother called him in order to reassure herself. He took some steps back towards his house. O child, you defy orders and you challenge the siege. Don’t you see our rifles, and our military boots and helmets? They dragged him back and threw him to the ground. He put out his hand to prevent himself from falling. They grabbed him before he could stand up, and carried him to a military jeep before he could escape... but they were “obstructed” and then they fell to the ground.

 Jenny and Horrible

A Palestinian child from Jerusalem of ten years of age performed the Friday prayers with the worshippers. His house is located nearby and so he resolved to join the group to pray rather than praying in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as the occupier had set an age limit. The child prayed and stood for a short time. His mother called him in order to reassure herself. He took some steps back towards his house. O child, you defy orders and you challenge the siege. Don’t you see our rifles, and our military boots and helmets? They dragged him back and threw him to the ground. He put out his hand to prevent himself from falling. They grabbed him before he could stand up, and carried him to a military jeep before he could escape... but they were “obstructed” and then they fell to the ground.

 desn وهمجيـة

جنود العسكري الإسرائيلي تعتنـق طفل فلسطيني مقدسي في العاشرة من عمره صلـى الجمعة مع المصلين، بـيته مجاور فاـنصمـ ناوبًا صلاة الجماعة، عوـضا عن صلاة في المسجد الأقصـي، فـالجيل جدـه المحترل، صلى الطفل، وقف قـليلا، اتصلت أمـه للطمـئن، مشى خطوات راجعـا نحو بيته، أنها الطفل تعـصـي الأَم، وتحدد الحصار، لا ترى بناطننا وبسطاتينا وحذـونا العسكريـة، جرجروه، رموه أرضًا، وضع به كـي لا يقع، أسرعوا به قبل أن يقف على رجليه، هاتوا به إلى الجيب العسكري قبل أن يفلت... ولكنهم «تعترفونا» ومن ثم وقعوا أَرضاً...
الحِي وادي الجوز – قلعة المرابطين

أربعون عاماً هي العمر الاحتلال الإسرائيلي للمسجد الأقصى وشرق القدس. أربعون عاماً عمل فيها الأخطبوط الصهيوني بـد ودم وتهويه المكان والإنسان، ليتوبى الحجر والبشر، وكشفت أحداث باب المغاربة أن المؤسسة الإسرائيلية خابت وفشلته أن تبعد أهل القدس عن قضيتهم الأقصى قضية المسجد الأقصى المبارك. وحاولت المؤسسة الإسرائيلية أن تفصل الأهل العام وكان أهل القدس يضجرون من فعاليات التصدّي لهدم طريق باب المغاربة. فكان الرد العملي والفعلي أقوى من كل أكاذيب المؤسسة الإسرائيلية وأبناؤها الإعلامية. هنا في حي وادي الجوز على بعد 150 متراً عن المسجد الأقصى ضرب المقدسيون أروع أمثلة الالتفاف حول قضية المسجد الأقصى. هنا تفجرت مرة واحدة معادن الخير في الرجال والنساء والأطفال، معادن الخير التي ما كنت يوماً من الإيام، ولكنها المعادن التي تبرز عند الاحترام وقت الشدائد والمحن. هنا انطلق الاعتصام بداية بالقرب من حسبا وادي الجوز. انتقل بعدها إلى الشارع الرئيسي في حي وادي الجوز، وتحوى أيام في ساحة بهذ. وثبت أيضاً على سقف آل الحلواني، هنا في حي وادي الجوز لساعات الحلال والمال يرد كل صياح ومساء «كلنا الأقصى حماة»، ودعا المرابطين لدفاعاً عن المسجد الأقصى المبارك.

The Neighborhood of Wadi al-Jouz – A Fortress of Garrisoned Troops

Forty years is the age of the Israeli occupation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and East Jerusalem. For forty years the Zionist octopus has used its hand, its deception and its cunning to Judaize the place and the person, to Judaize the stones and the men. The events of the Maghariba Gate have revealed that the Israeli establishment has failed, suffered a setback, and has not succeeded to detach the people of Jerusalem from their fundamental issue, the issue of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Israeli establishment has tried to mislead public opinion that the people of Jerusalem had become exasperated with the activities in resistance to the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate. But the real, actual response was stronger than all the lies of the Israeli establishment’s media spokesmen. Here in Wadi al-Jouz, 150 meters from the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalemites provided the clearest examples of rallying around the issue of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Here the essence of goodness at once emanated from men, women and children; the essence of goodness that was not concealed for a single day, but that rises to prominence when put to the test, in times of adversity and hardships. Here the protest began, beginning from close to the Wadi al-Jouz Hisba. From there it moved to the main street in Wadi al-Jouz. For a few days it moved to the yard of a house, and it finally settled on the roof of the al-Halwani family. Here in the area of Wadi al-Jouz, it is said repeatedly, every morning and evening, “We are all guardians of Al-Aqsa,” and the area has become a fortress of garrisoned troops defending the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.
The Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher are Alike

The Christians of Jerusalem, and in particular Dr. Atallah, the Archbishop of the Roman Orthodox Church, in Jerusalem, have repeated time and again that the aggression against the Al-Aqsa Mosque is aggression against the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Thus the message from Jerusalem was clear: a message of unity in the face of aggression that does not differentiate between Islamic and Christian waqf properties, and robs them both. The participation of our Christian brothers is evident in every action and activity of solidarity with the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the waqf properties of noble Jerusalem.

(Muslim and Christian religious leaders in Jerusalem protest in Wadi al-Jouz and declare their position against the aggression, February 21st, 2007.)

(القيادات الدينية الإسلامية والمسحية في القدس تتعتصم في وادي الجوز ونُجِهَ.)

 المسجد الأقصى وكنيسة القيامة سيّان

ردّها مرة بعد مرة الأهل المسيحيون في القدس ومقامتهم المطران د.عطلا الله – رئيس أساقفة الروم الأرثوذكس سياستيا القدس – بأن الاعتداء على المسجد الأقصى هو اعتداء على كنيسة القيامة. فكانت رسالة القدس واضحة، رسالة الوحدة في وجه العدوان الذي لا يفرق بين الأوقاف الإسلامية والهجرية، بسّلب هذه وذلك. للتفجّر مشتركة الأخوة المسيحيين في كل نشاط وفعالية تضامنية مع المسجد الأقصى المبارك وأوقاف القدس الشريف.

مؤسسات الأقصى
The March of Honorable Women in the Courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque

Thousands of women set off from the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque towards the site of the protest in Wadi al-Jouz in a huge march. They are honorable women who announced without hesitation: We will not leave Al-Aqsa alone, we are the protectors of Al-Aqsa; we are “Muslim Women for Al-Aqsa.”

(The organization “Muslim Women for Al-Aqsa” organizes a women’s march in Wadi al-Jouz in support of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. February 22th, 2007. Photographed by Mahmoud Na’il - Al-Aqsa Association)
The Sound of The Freewomen Frightened Them

In a quiet and orderly manner the women’s march proceeded through the streets of Jerusalem. Thousands of women joined it and with united voices and hearts they said, “We are all protectors of Al-Aqsa.” The occupiers trembled in fear, and so they attacked the women with cavalry units and attempted to assault them. But the women resisted and confronted their horses and cavalry troops firmly, and so they retreated, frustrated.
A Military Order – The Hotel Is Closed

The families of Jerusalem signed a covenant of commitment and allegiance, Muslims and Christians alike, to safeguard the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The signing ceremony was to be announced in the Commodore Hotel. However, the chief commander of the Israeli police issued a military order – prohibited activity – to close the hotel. So let us move to the Ambassador Hotel, said the leaders... A military order is issued within minutes. The Ambassador Hotel is closed by military order. But the press conference must be held. So let it be held then in the street, so that the truth may be revealed to the world.
"BAQOON" - The Mughrabi Quarter Catastrophe

Alaqsa Foundation

(val-rouh val-dam nafdik ya aqsi)

From the Occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the perseverant Naqab, they gathered in Wadi al-Jouz to announce their allegiance to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. They are opposed to the destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate. Sonic bombs are fired into their midst, and then the Israeli police arrest Sheikh Raed Salah, who raises up his voice shouting, “With spirit and with blood we vouch for your safety, Al-Aqsa.”

With Spirit and With Blood We Vouch for Your Safety, Al-Aqsa

 آل الحلواني
الطفل محمد علي الحلواني يجلس في حضن أبيه أبو ياسر، على سقف بيتهم في حي وادي الجوز، حيث استمر الاعتصام على ناحية الشعاع الرئيسي عشراً على الأقل اعتراجاً على استمرار المؤسسة الإسرائيلية هدم طريق باب المغاربة، وأصبح تجمع العشرات وأحياناً المئات وأخرى الألاف对方 مضاعف المؤسسة الإسرائيلية. أخذت تتخلأ الفرص لتفريق الجمع والاجتماع، اعتقل الشيخ رائد صلاح وفرضت المحكمة الإسرائيلية عليه قرار ميعه من الاجتماع بأكثر من سبعة أشخاص في مكان عام. وقف السيد علي ياسر الحلواني بل وآل الحلواني ليفتحوا بيوتهم ويجعلوا سقف بيتهم الخاص مكاناً للاجتماع العام، وتحمل أبو ياسر وأخوته وأهل المنطقة الإسرائيلية واقتحامات عناصر الشرطة والمخابرات، وأبوا إلا أن يكون بيت وسقف آل الحلواني بيتاً للجمع و حل اعتصام دائم.

The Al-Helwani Family

The child Mohammed Ali al-Helwani sits in the arms of his father Yasser, on the roof of their home in Wadi al-Jouz, where the demonstration has continued on the side of the main road for tens of days in protest against the Israeli establishment’s continuing destruction of the path to the Maghariba Gate. The assembly, which at times numbered tens, sometimes hundreds and at other times thousands of people, deprived the Israeli establishment of sleep. And so it began to watch for opportunities to disperse the group and the gathering. It arrested Sheikh Raed Salah and an Israeli court issued a decision to ban him from meeting more than seven people in a public place. Mr. Ali Yasser al-Helwani – indeed, the whole al-Helwani family – opened up their homes and turned the roofs of their private houses into an alternative location for the public meeting. Abu Yasser, his brothers and relatives endured the Israeli harassments and break-ins by the police and the secret services, and only desired that the house and roof of the al-Helwani family would be a house for all and a place of permanent protest.

(On the right, Ali Yasser al-Helwani and his son Mohammad on the roof of their house, embracing the protest for the sake of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. March 20th, 2007. Photographed by Mahmoud Na’il - Al-Aqsa Association)

Photographed by Mahmoud Na'il - Al-Aqsa Association.

Or rather, a demonstration roof, but the symbolism of the word still casts its shadow over the listener. The tent placed on the roof might only give shade to individuals, but it attracts hundreds of men, women, children and traders on a daily basis around the clock, day and night. Indeed, over time it became a meeting place and an advisory council permanently in session in order to confer over the latest developments relating to the state of the plans and how to implement them in an indefatigable effort to find a way to stop the Israeli crimes against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Demonstration Tent
A child spends most of his time in a nursery school playing and drawing; an hour rocking in the see-saw, another coloring in a drawing, and most of the time he remains innocent and smiling. The child in Jerusalem is born into the heart of suffering and grows with suffering. At the same time he lives with the concerns of his city and his people, and from the first moment that he blinks his eyes he sees the pain of Jerusalem and the pain of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In childhood in Jerusalem the time for playing and rocking on a see-saw is limited, so that adult men can participate in activities to support the issue of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.
The Minister of Provisions

Mr. “Abu Karim”, an unknown soldier, was entitled by merit to be designated the Minister of Provisions. Thousands participated in protests in support of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Wadi al-Jouz held for over four months from February 7th, 2007 to June 2007. These protestors, who stay for many hours at the protest site, are in need of basic provisions from liquids to food. This is what “Abu Karim” undertook to do in coordination with the good and generous people of noble Jerusalem. Not for a single day was a glass of water lacking for a thirsty or fasting person, or a cup of coffee for a guest, or a meal for breakfast, lunch or dinner, or a fast-breaking meal for a person fasting on Mondays or Thursdays. This he does without tiring, but with the munificence of Jerusalem.
The Destruction and Gnawing Continues

A delegation from UNESCO and a Turkish delegation came. Meetings were held, statements were distributed, objections were issued, the marches set off, warnings were released, and the satellite stations spoke. But the tool of destruction and gnawing continued to eat away at the western side of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Here they are, a meter or less away from the Prophet’s Gate / the Maghariba Gate, the gate of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

"BAQQOON" - The Mughrabi Quarter Catastrophe

Foto: Mahmoud Na'il - Al-Aqsa Association

الحفريات الاسرائيلية تأكل وتهدم آخر الآثار الإسلامية في طريق باب المغاربة /باب المسجد الأقصى المبارك.

(Israeli excavations eat away and destroy the last of the Islamic antiquities in the path leading to the Maghariba Gate. March 28th, 2007.
Photographed by Mahmoud Na’il - Al-Aqsa Association)
The Plan for the Families of Jerusalem to Sit and Guard Takes Off

With the continuation of the loathsome crime against the path leading to the Maghariba Gate and the escalation of the imminent dangers to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, in particular the rise in the daily incursions by Jewish groups into the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the performance of Jewish religious rites within its courtyards, it was necessary to continue the protest in Wadi al-Jouz, located close to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The strategic plan to protect the Al-Aqsa Mosque, named “The Plan for the Families of Noble Jerusalem to Sit and Guard in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque,” begins, so that all of the families of Jerusalem and its neighborhoods play a part in the guarding, from the early morning and permanently, in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.