

Normalization with Enemy or Support for Brethren?: The Debate on the Muslims' Visits to the Israeli-occupied Jerusalem

YAMAMOTO Kensuke

Abstract

In the wake of the Arab-Israeli normalization in 2020, many analysts have made a huge effort to find out the immediate factors for that move. However, there has been a tendency to ignore what seems to be indirect or irrelevant in a quest for a lean description about the transformation in the Arab-Israeli relationship. For a more comprehensive understanding of the recent move, this paper deals with the case of the debate on Muslims' visits to Israeli-occupied Jerusalem. Since 1967, when Israel occupied the eastern part of Jerusalem, whether Arab Muslims would be allowed to visit their holy sites there has been a topic of debate. The majority of Arab Muslims believed that they should avoid such visits, which might be misinterpreted as their acceptance of the Israeli authority over occupied Jerusalem. However, in the 2010s, some Muslim thinkers and politicians began initiatives to urge Arab Muslims to visit Jerusalem's holy sites in order to give assistance to the local Palestinians who were oppressed by the Israeli occupation policies. While initially such callings were heavily criticized, in the middle of the 2010s, the idea of visiting Jerusalem under the Israeli rule gained status as one legitimate option. By reviewing the debate of the 2010s, this paper will reveal an overlooked dimension of the Arab-Israeli rapprochement and attempt to describe the changes in their relationship in a wider sense.

1. Introduction

2020 will be a historical year in many respects. For Middle Eastern specialists in particular, it will be remembered as the year of Arab-Israeli rapprochement. In September 2020, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Israel inked a peace treaty at a ceremony held at the White House in Washington D.C., which evoked the Oslo Accords signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in the same month 27 years earlier. Following the UAE and Bahrain, in October 2020, Sudan and Morocco decided to make peace with Israel as well. It is often said that more countries, mainly the Gulf monarchies, will join such a wave of rapprochement [*al-Jazeera* 2020. Sep. 22].

It is obvious that various domestic circumstances in the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and

* Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)

Morocco have resulted in rapprochement with Israel. However, some common factors have been noted [Jones and Guzansky 2019; Miller 2020; Rahman 2019; Ulrichsen 2018]. First, the move was facilitated by the necessity of security cooperation, which included a sharing of military and surveillance technologies. Political upheaval in the Middle East after the Arab Spring (2011–12) and the expansion of Iran’s influence provided a significant context for this. Second, the Arab desire for a better relationship with the US government under the Trump administration prompted closer ties with Israel, which has traditionally been the strongest US ally in the region. Third, covert commercial ties between Arab countries and Israel have existed for decades and recently accelerated.

These factors definitely played a direct role in bringing Israel and Arab countries much closer. On the other hand, an excessively sophisticated explanation for the Arab-Israeli rapprochement would ignore elements except those evidently related to that move, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the transformation in the Arab-Israeli relationship. For instance, the gradual upgrading in Arab-Israeli sports contacts such as in Judo competitions and cycling events [Darazī 2018] should not be overlooked when identifying changes in the broader relationship, even if this trend was not directly linked to the governmental rapprochement. Then what is required amid the growing academic and public interest in Arab-Israeli relations is a perspective that goes beyond the immediate causes of their rapprochement to view the transformation as broadly similar to a crustal movement.¹

In this context, this paper deals with the debate on whether visits by Muslims to Israeli-occupied Jerusalem can be permitted or not. First of all, based on some famous traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad,² visiting Jerusalem has been highly recommended throughout Islamic history. However, since 1967 when Israeli forces occupied the eastern part of Jerusalem, including the sacred places located there, visiting Jerusalem has long been avoided, out of concern that such visits would amount to Muslim recognition of the Israeli authority over Jerusalem. Such opposition can be said to have been one of the examples of the Arab boycott [Husain 2013]. Nevertheless, opposition to visiting Israeli-occupied Jerusalem has become diluted in Arab Islamic discourse since the 2010s.

This paper attempts to examine how the thinking around visits by Muslims to occupied Jerusalem changed and how such a taboo was broken in the 2010s. Surely, this transformation

1 Although it is not exactly what the paper tries to say, the following remarks are helpful in that it shed light on the phenomenon other than governmental relations. The Arab-Israeli rapprochement will be out into the open, “after what can be described as a prelude, through a gradual progress that ultimately leads to a popular mood that accepts it, or at least does not oppose it after imposing it as a *fait accompli*” [Darazī 2017: 4].

2 The most popular one is the following tradition narrated by Abū Hurayra. “You should not set up for a journey to visit any place other than the following three mosques (with the expectation of receiving greater reward); al-Ḥarām Mosque, this mosque of mine (the Prophet’s Mosque in Madīna), and al-Aqsa Mosque.” This paper call this as “Hadith by Abū Hurayra.”

means only that the hesitation to be involved with Israel has reduced and does not directly lead to building Arab-Israeli relations. However, still, it may deserve attention as one element of the intra-Arab dynamics that indicate changes in Arab Muslim views about ties with Israel.

While a few studies have introduced aspects of this debate [ACRPS 2012; Bartal and Rubinstein-Shemer 2019: Ch.6; Ḥammāmī 2012], hardly any comprehensive study has been conducted. Moreover, most of the literature saw the debate almost solely in dichotomous terms, so no attention was paid to the diversities and fluidities within each party. The following chapters will emphasize various motivations and intentions behind the respective positions. For the sake of convenience, those who oppose visits by Muslims to occupied Jerusalem are called “opponents,” while those who support them are called “advocators.”

2. Logic of “Opponents”: Boycott and Anti-normalization

In September 1967 at the Arab League’s Khartoum summit, Arab states decided on “Three Nos,” namely, “no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel.” Certainly, the Arab boycotts of Israel gradually lost substance, as illustrated by the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1979. However, strong opposition has remained to visiting occupied Jerusalem, to which both Arabs and Muslims have a great symbolic attachment. The most notable opponents have been the Shaykhs of al-Azhar, one of the most prestigious academic institutions of Sunni Islam, and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (1926–), one of the most influential contemporary Sunni Islamic scholars.

(1) al-Azhar and Traditional Ban on the Visit to Jerusalem

On the issue of visiting Jerusalem, particular importance has been attached to the behavior of one Shaykh of al-Azhar. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (1910–1978) who served as Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar from 1973 to 1978. He is said to have refused to accompany Anwar al-Sadat, the President of Egypt at that time, when he visited Jerusalem to make peace with Israel in 1977. Although the details and backgrounds of his anecdotal refusal have not been well known, many people to date regard him as a forerunner of the “opponents” bloc [‘Affāna 2012: 16; Muntadā al-‘Ulamā’ 2015].

Additionally, Jād al-Ḥaqq ‘Alī Jād al-Ḥaqq (1917–1996), who served as Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar from 1982 to 1996, articulated his opposition to the visit and to normalization³: “There is no peace with the Jewish usurpers and no peace without the liberation of the Arab land.” He added, “The Muslim who goes to Jerusalem is guilty, guilty...The priority for Muslims is to

3 For the Arab countries, “normalization” roughly means to build relations with Israel diplomatically, economically or culturally, while formally in the International Relations it refers to an end to the hostile relations and a transition from (often armed) conflict to normal inter-state relations. Both of the “opponents” and “advocators” use this word, but their controversy is over the interpretation of normalization, which is apparent in the remarks of Maḥmūd al-Habbāsh (see chapter 3).

refrain from visiting Jerusalem until it is cleansed from the pollution of Jewish usurpers, it is returned to its inhabitants in peace, and the invocation of Allah and the call for prayers become loud there” [Jād al-Ḥaqq n.d.]. These remarks came just as some Muslims began to think about visiting Jerusalem after the Oslo Accords. In addition to the legendary behavior of Shaykh Maḥmūd, his words have been widely treated by “opponents” as slogans. [‘Affāna 2012: 16; Muntadā al-‘Ulamā’ 2015].

Al-Azhar has repeatedly issued official statements opposing visits to Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation. For example, Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭanṭāwī (1928–2010), who was Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar from 1996 to 2010, declared that visiting Jerusalem would not take place under the Israeli occupation, and this applied to all al-Azharite scholars. He went on to say, “I reject the visit to Jerusalem which is shackled by chains of the Israeli occupation forces because any Muslim’s visit there at present is considered to be a recognition of the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation and to be a dedication to its tyrannical control” [*Qanāt al-‘Arabīya* 2009. Apr. 26].⁴ In addition, when ‘Alī Jum‘a (1952–), the then-Grand Mufti of Egypt, made a controversial visit to Jerusalem in April 2012 (see chapter 3), the Islamic Research Academy of al-Azhar held an emergency session and clarified its position that al-Azhar refused the normalization of relations with Israel, and the visit to Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque, as long as both were under the Israeli occupation [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 20]. The fact that, with some exception,⁵ al-Azhar has persistently opposed visits to occupied Jerusalem, even after Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel and deepened security cooperation, seems to have a certain significance in the Sunni world.

(2) Fatwa of al-Qaraḍāwī: Crystallization of “Opponents” Stance

Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī has opposed visits to occupied Jerusalem as strongly as, or even more harshly than, the Shaykhs of al-Azhar. It is al-Qaraḍāwī who has been seen as a staunch enemy by the “advocators” (see chapters 3 and 4). In a way, it may be no exaggeration to claim that the recent debate over the permissibility of visiting occupied Jerusalem has revolved around whether to support al-Qaraḍāwī or oppose him, rather than around the issue itself.

In 1997, in the al-Jazīra television program “Shariah and Life (al-Sharī‘a wa al-Ḥayāt),” al-Qaraḍāwī said that he had issued a fatwa (legal opinion), about a year earlier, expressing opposition to visiting Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation. He offered the following

4 Besides Shaykhs referred above, Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib (1946–), Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar since 2010, stated clearly, “[i]n my estimation, the visit to Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation does not achieve a benefit (maṣlaḥa) and does not contribute to protect the sacred sites” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2010. Oct. 1].

5 In spite of the critical stance of al-Azhar, there have been a few Islamic scholars affiliated to al-Azhar who has considered the visit to Jerusalem to be permitted or rather be recommended [Ḥammāmī 2012: 23–24; *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Mar. 6]. In 2001, Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī himself made a statement hinting at endorsement toward the appeals for visiting Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation, which brought about a lot of criticisms of him [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2001. Jan. 16; Jan. 17; Jan. 21].

explanation: “As long as Jerusalem remains under spears of the Israelis and under its control, the one who visits it must take permission from Israel... Israel stamps his passport... this is not permissible at all. This [visit] means that we admit they [Israelis] are the owners of Jerusalem, they hold its rein, they issue the permit, and they accept and refuse as they want. No, we should boycott... We pledge to Allah that we won’t pray at al-Aqsa Mosque until its liberation from the clutches of Jews” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2004. Mar. 6].

The fatwa he issued around 1996 is compiled in [al-Qaraḍāwī 2003]. Answering the question of whether visiting Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation is permissible or not, al-Qaraḍāwī begins his fatwa with the view that the teachings of Islam require Muslims to reclaim their usurped land by sacrificing their fortune and themselves. If Muslims fail to defend their homeland and cannot take it back, according to him, “then the religion imposes on them the boycott of their enemy, that is, the economic, social and cultural boycott” [al-Qaraḍāwī 2003: 474]. After affirming that boycotting the enemy is rooted in the traditions of Islam, he claims, “The journey or travel to the enemy state of the Zionist, except for the Palestinians, is illegal, even if it is the so-called religious tourism or the visit to al-Aqsa Mosque. Allah didn’t ask Muslims to visit the mosque while it is a prisoner under the yoke of the Jewish state, and it is under the guard of Zionists’ spears. Rather, what Muslims were asked to do is its liberation, its salvation from their [Zionists’] hands, and restoration of it and its surroundings to the Islamic domain” [al-Qaraḍāwī 2003: 476]. Of course, he does not deny Muslims’ attachment to Jerusalem and the religious virtue of visiting it, so he says, “We keep the touch of desire [to visit] burning until we pray there, God willing, after the liberation of it and its return to the natives, that is the nation of Arab and Islam” [al-Qaraḍāwī 2003: 476].

Whereas in another fatwa banning a compromise on the Arab Muslim ownership of Jerusalem, al-Qaraḍāwī explains at length the religious importance of Jerusalem and Palestine [al-Qaraḍāwī 2003: 464–467], in the fatwa referred to above, he hardly mentions its holiness in Islam. One possible reason for this is a criticism against the “advocators” who strongly emphasize the religious virtue of visiting Jerusalem even under the Israeli occupation (see chapters 3 and 4). Al-Qaraḍāwī viewed this issue as a thoroughly political one related to the war and occupation, rather than as a religious one. This may also be apparent from the fact that although the question was about permissibility of visiting Jerusalem, he started by explaining the general legal rules on plundered Muslim lands.

3. Birth of “Advocators”: Individual Callings and Dawn of Heated Controversy

While sporadic opposition to the traditional boycott on visits to Israeli-occupied Jerusalem had emerged already in the 1990s, such calls had been pushed to the margin of political and religious discourses by the dominant views. However, the atmosphere has gradually changed since the 2010s. The longstanding opposition to visiting Jerusalem has become reexamined.

The idea was that visiting Jerusalem is a highly recommended religious practice under any political circumstances and such a collective tour will lead to political, social, and economic assistance toward the Palestinians. This new thinking was launched by some individual appeals.

(1) Campaigns by Three “Maḥmūd”

Maḥmūd Ḥamdī Zaqzūq (1933–2020), who served as Egypt’s Minister of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) from 1995 to 2011, has been seen as one of the first advocates for visiting Jerusalem. While serving as a member of the Islamic Research Academy and Council of Senior Scholars of al-Azhar, his way of thinking deviated from the official stance of the Grand Shaykhs of al-Azhar. Around 1995, Zaqzūq started to call for Muslims worldwide to visit Jerusalem.

According to his understanding, the visit to Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation was to confirm the Islamic right to Jerusalem and to show the world that the problem of Jerusalem concerned all Muslims, not just Palestinians [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2001. Jan. 23; *Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2007. Sep. 30]. Moreover, he stressed that visiting occupied Jerusalem represented the greatest support for the Palestinian cause and revealed his ambition to visit Jerusalem even with an Israeli visa [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2010. Aug. 8]. As a matter of course, many scholars of al-Azhar, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, and other Islamic thinkers affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) have harshly criticized his appeals as a form of normalization [*Qanāt al-‘Arabīya* 2009. Apr. 26; *Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2007. Sep. 30; 2010. Jul. 13]. For his part, in 2018, responding to these past accusations, he contended that visiting Jerusalem could not be an act of normalization because it would bring about economic benefits for the Palestinians in Jerusalem [Zaqzūq 2018: 3–4].

When advocating the visit, he emphasized the holiness of Jerusalem by referring to the verses of al-Quran, and the importance of the visit from the Hadith by Abū Hurayra (see footnote 2). Furthermore, as a refutation against the traditional ban on the visit, he cited a historical event, in which the Prophet Muhammad, before the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya, sought permission from the Quraysh tribe to perform the pilgrimage at Ka‘ba under pagan rule [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2010. Jun. 29; Zaqzūq 2018: 5]. Zaqzūq asked ironically “Did Muhammad want to recognize the polytheists’ authority over al-Ḥarām mosque and the legitimacy of erected idols around Ka‘ba?” [Zaqzūq 2018: 5].

Ultimately, Zaqzūq’s attempts did not produce concrete results. Of greater significance for the “advocators” were appeals made by Mahmud Abbas (1935–), the President of the Palestinian Authority (PA) since 2004, and Maḥmūd al-Habbāsh (1963–) who was the PA’s Minister of Aqwaf from 2009 to 2014 and had long worked as a religious adviser for Abbas. Since 2012, they have engaged vigorously in PR activities and started to receive significant attention in the media, while already around 2010, they initiated the campaign recommending

that Muslims visit Jerusalem [Hammāmī 2012: 21–23].⁶

Abbas has repeatedly pressed Arabs and Muslims to visit Jerusalem even under the Israeli occupation. In an international conference concerning Jerusalem held in Doha in February 2012, he stated, “The influx of crowds there [Jerusalem] and the overcrowding of its streets and sacred places there, will strengthen the steadfastness (ṣumūd) of its citizens, and contribute to protecting and consolidating the identity, history, and heritage of the city... and will remind the occupiers that the issue of Jerusalem is the issue of every Arab, Muslim and every Christian” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Feb. 27]. Comparing occupied Jerusalem to the prisoner and Israel to the prison guard, he went on to state, “visiting the prisoner is a support for him, and it does not mean, under any circumstances, a normalization with the prison guard” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Feb. 27].

Abbas made these claims based on his own religious and historical understanding. At the Arab Summit of 2012 held in Baghdad, Abbas invited all Muslims to come to Jerusalem and stated, “it is not forbidden to visit Jerusalem. There is no word either in al-Quran or in Sunna, and it has not happened in the history that anyone, any of the muftis, of the judges, of the religious man, prohibit the visit to Jerusalem. The city has fallen under many occupations, and anyone who says visiting Jerusalem is prohibited has not come” [Wafā n.d.]. Such a “quasi-fatwa” of Abbas has been the subject of huge criticisms from the Islamic scholars (see the chapter 5).

In total agreement with Abbas, Maḥmūd al-Habbāsh, as his religious adviser, prepared a theoretical argument to counter the traditional stance of the “opponents,” represented by Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, and played a major role in building a rationale for advocating the visit to Jerusalem even under the Israeli occupation.⁷ His message, as indicated in the title of his book published in 2012, is that visiting Jerusalem is a strongly encouraged act of religious practice, and an act of political necessity [al-Habbāsh 2012].

Concerning the religious basis, al-Habbāsh stated in an al-Jazīra discussion program that “[v]isiting Jerusalem is a command legitimated by Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad... a command for all Muslims and in all circumstances...” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2010. Jul. 17]. Further, al-Habbāsh, by citing a number of Hadith, claimed in his book that visiting Jerusalem was a legitimate religious right (ḥaqq mashrū‘) and religious virtue (faḍīla dīniya) [al-Habbāsh 2012: 31–38]. He even insisted, “no one will prevent it [the visit] except an oppressor and no one says anything against it except a lying slanderer” [al-Habbāsh 2012: 33].

6 al-Habbāsh invited Zaqqūq to visit Jerusalem in 2010, unfulfilled though, and made sure that they were like-minded concerning the debate on the visit [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2010. Jun. 29]. Preceding Abbas and al-Habbāsh, in 2001, Barakāt al-Farā, the then deputy ambassador of Palestine in Egypt, had called on Shaykh Ṭanṭāwī and gained his partial approval on the visit to Jerusalem [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2001. Jan. 16] (see footnote 5).

7 Consistent with the position of Abbas and al-Habbāsh, many high-ranking officials in the PA and members of Fatah, the party lead by Abbas, have taken a similar position [Melhem 2015].

Regarding the political importance, similarly to Zaqqūq and Abbas, he raised the following points: “First, when Arabs and Muslims collectively arrive in Jerusalem... such a visit would raise the morale of the Palestinians, who will feel by this visit that they are not alone. Second, this is a confirmation of the Arab and Islamic right in Jerusalem and, third, a strong message to the world and Israel that Jerusalem is not only the Palestinian responsibility but the Arab and Islamic responsibility” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2010. Jul. 17]. In his book, in addition to these points, he remarked on the economic benefit for the Palestinians, pointing out that Muslim visits will contribute to reviving the local Palestinian economy through their purchasing activities, which renders assistance to the Palestinians’ steadfastness [al-Habbāsh 2012: 44–48].

One of the main goals of al-Habbāsh in publishing the book was to counter the fatwa of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī.⁸ First, he problematized the procedure of al-Qaraḍāwī’s interpretation. He questioned the validity of al-Qaraḍāwī’s view that denies the Prophet’s command to visit Jerusalem, which is clearly stated in the Hadith [al-Habbāsh 2012: 50–51]. In addition, he pointed out that it was inappropriate to categorically equate the visit with the act of normalization by arguing that it needed to be considered in terms of the intentions of each visitor and the benefits for the local Palestinians [al-Habbāsh 2012: 52–53]. Second, he attempted to justify his thesis with the following historical evidence. In addition to the behavior of the Prophet Muhammad, al-Habbāsh asserted that when the prophet had urged his followers to visit Jerusalem, it was under Roman authority, but the prophet had not imposed any conditions on Muslim visits [al-Habbāsh 2012: 57–58]. Furthermore, al-Habbāsh argued that although Jerusalem had ever been occupied by a foreign power (notably the Crusaders and the British Empire), no fatwa was issued prohibiting Muslims from visiting Jerusalem [al-Habbāsh 2012: 58–59]. Finally, he criticized the fatwa of al-Qaraḍāwī as a stance that helped the Israeli occupation policies by carrying out no concrete measures and resulted in isolating the Palestinians and impoverishing their lives [al-Habbāsh 2012: 60–63].

(2) Surprising Visits by Two “‘Alī”

Appeals to visit Jerusalem by Abbas and al-Habbāsh in 2012 received a great deal of attention, chiefly because, coinciding with their appeals, two internationally renowned religious figures visited Jerusalem. In April 2012, a famous Sufi leader, al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jifrī (1971–), visited Jerusalem, and two weeks later ‘Alī Jum‘a, the Grand Mufti of Egypt at that time, followed him. Their visits had a major impact on the Arab Islamic world, which brought about a heated controversy.

al-Jifrī visited Jerusalem on April 4, escorted by the Jordanian prince Hāshim bin

⁸ In 2012, al-Qaraḍāwī once again issued a statement to prohibit the visit to the occupied Jerusalem as a form of normalization, in the wake of the remarks made by Mahmud Abbas [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Feb. 29].

al-Ḥusayn (1981–), the youngest brother of King Abdullah II (1962–). His visit took place just one month after Mahmud Abbas had called for it and amid the atmosphere of controversy [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 8; 2012. Apr. 9]. According to his statement, he visited Jerusalem “longing for the first Qibla and the place of Isrā’ by the Prophet Muhammad,” adding, “I consulted with some of the greatest Islamic scholars of Umma⁹ and I asked Allah for guidance whether or not to set up for a journey (shadd al-riḥāl) to al-Aqsa Mosque. The heart became delighted for this and the journey was facilitated on Wednesday, April 4 in 2012” [al-Jifri 2012a]. Against the criticisms by some scholars and the Islamic Movements that this visit was an act of normalization, he justified the visit on his Facebook page by citing the historical evidence similar to that of Zaqqūq and al-Habbāsh and by referring to a fatwa of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Bāz (1910–1999), which could allegedly be interpreted as a permission to visit Jerusalem [al-Jifri 2012b; 2012c; 2012d].¹⁰ Further, he emphasized the need to show solidarity with the Palestinians and the political and economic benefits for them.¹¹ He also urged Muslims and Christians worldwide “to visit Jerusalem in groups with well-informed guides and to coordinate with the defenders (murābiṭīn) there to arrange the visit to al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 8].¹²

Two weeks after al-Jifri, Jum‘a visited Jerusalem on April 18, invited and accompanied by the Jordanian Prince Ghāzī bin Muḥammad (1966–), the religious adviser of the King Abdullah II. His visit received more coverage than al-Jifri’s one and sparked a widespread argument. Perhaps the fact that the then-current holder of the public office (the Grand Mufti) visited the occupied Jerusalem was received by the public with great shock. Al-Qaraḍāwī once again issued a statement banning visits to the occupied Jerusalem, and the Islamic Movements such as Muslim Brotherhood followed suit [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2012. Apr. 20]. The students of al-Azhar along with other activists took to the streets and even demanded his resignation as Grand Mufti. On the other hand, al-Habbāsh and al-Jifri praised Jum‘a’s visit as a courageous

9 In an interview with Skāy News, al-Jifri revealed he had talked about his intention to visit Jerusalem with ‘Alī Jum‘a, ‘Abd Allāh bin Bayya, and ‘Umar bin Ḥafīz [Skāy 2012. Apr. 25].

10 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Bāz served as Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia from 1993 until his death. In the fatwa, the question was “In light of the understanding between Arabs and Jews, is it permissible to visit Al-Aqsa Mosque and pray in it, especially in case of approval from the Arab countries?” He just answered as follows: “Visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque and praying there is Sunnah if possible” by referring to Hadith by Abū Hurayra [Muntadā al-‘Ulamā’ 2015]. It appears that his fatwa dealt with the general rules on the visit to Jerusalem and did not specifically argue about validity of the Muslims’ visits under the Israeli occupation.

11 Concerning the problem of the Israeli VISA, firstly al-Jifri claimed that his visit was organized by Jordanian government, so there was no Israeli stamp on his passport. But, at the same time, he proposed that if the Muslims tried to do more for al-Aqsa Mosque, the Arab Islamic countries should review the current system of treating the Israeli VISA in their countries [Skāy 2012. Apr. 25]. Here it seems that al-Jifri considered the problem of the Israeli VISA to be a minor issue and put much value on the practical achievement.

12 His remarks have features common to the other “advocators” and give a glimpse of his spiritual elements. When he preached in Cardiff in May 2012, al-Jifri encouraged Western Muslims to visit Jerusalem with emphasis on feelings of spirits, while at the same time, he urged them to stay in Palestinian hotels and purchase from Palestinian shops as a solidarity [al-Jifri 2012].

move [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 20].

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, after he came back from Jerusalem, al-Azhar held an emergency meeting. In the subsequent press conference, Jum‘a recounted that his visit was an informal one and was not in his official capacity as the Grand Mufti [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 20]. Further, he conveyed his understanding that the Jordanian authorities had arranged his whole visit, so the Israeli government had had no part in it. According to his adviser, Jum‘a rejected any kind of normalization and did not consider his visit to be an instance of normalization because “the Royal Hashemite Court supervised his sacred visits to Jerusalem” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 19].¹³ Further, in response to a question about the permissibility of Egyptians visiting Jerusalem, he first noted that “[o]ur failure to go to Jerusalem and leave it to the Israelis made them consider it theirs” and avoided giving a clear answer by just saying, “Opinions are different, and it is not permitted to abuse each other” [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 20].

A few years later, Jum‘a started to speak more openly in detail about Muslim visits to Jerusalem. He often criticized both al-Qaraḏāwī and the MB on the grounds that their ban on visits to Jerusalem increased Israeli control over Jerusalem¹⁴: “the MB was the one that built the idea of not visiting al-Aqsa throughout the past decades, eventually it misled many people, and the city became in the Jewish hands. Therefore, we must violate the calls by this terrorist group and visit there [Jerusalem]” [*Bawwāba al-Shurūq* 2017. Jun. 23]. He considered Muslim visits to be an important form of support for the brethren in need: “I say to those who claim that visiting Jerusalem is a recognition of the legitimacy of the occupation, did this happen? ... We go to Jerusalem to support and help our Palestinian brothers so that everyone knows that these are Arab lands and will remain so” [*al-Miṣrī al-Yawm* 2015. May. 30].

One feature of his remarks was to connect the issue of the ban on visits to Jerusalem with decreasing Muslim attachment to Jerusalem. In other words, he aimed at countering the traditional religious interpretation whereby banning visits resulted in severing Muslim ties with Jerusalem: “The interruption of the visit made Jerusalem merely a news subject and not a living thing in our hearts... There is an entire generation of people who have lived and died without seeing Jerusalem because of this ignorant [al-Qaraḏāwī’s] fatwa. In my view, the solution to this issue is to return Jerusalem to our hearts by visiting it” [Jum‘a 2014]. In a lecture at a mosque in 2017, he observed that visiting Jerusalem would increase the attachment

13 An Israeli senior official asserted every visit by the Arab officials, including the one by Jum‘a, took place only in coordination with the Israeli authorities [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2012. Apr. 20]. Basically, as Hammāmī [2012] pointed out, when entering historical Palestine even from the Jordanian border point, the Israeli government always has a final word to decide whether or not the one is permitted to enter. So, as a matter of fact, everyone who visit Israel/Palestine including Jerusalem were given permission from the state of Israel [Hammāmī 2012: 17–20].

14 Jum‘a has been an outspoken critic for MB. He employed religious reasoning to justify the harsh repression by ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, the President of Egypt from 2014 [al-Anani 2020].

to Jerusalem in the Muslim hearts: “You should visit to love it, because far from eye, far from heart” [Jum‘a 2017]. The reason why he took up the issue of the Muslim mind may have been related to his mystical elements. He recounted how his visit became possible, concerning his attachment to Jerusalem and communication with Allah [Jum‘a 2017].¹⁵

While al-Jifri and Jum‘a visited Jerusalem separately around the same period, it is worth noting that they actually had a close relationship. Reportedly, the Abu Dhabi (UAE) royal family played a major role as a hub in connecting the two. In 2005, Abu Dhabi established the Taba Institution, which was headed by al-Jifri and was expected to preach peaceful Sufism as a form of “moderate Islam” that Abu Dhabi tried to present to the world. An op-ed article in al-Jazira noted that al-Jifri’s decision to visit to the occupied Jerusalem, which went against the longstanding anti-normalization view, was part of his attempts to represent “moderate Islam” against “radical political Islam,” which may be represented by al-Qaraḍāwī [Futūḥ 2018]. Jum‘a, who had also been known as a symbol of Sufi leadership, became a member of the Taba Institution in 2010 at least and had been considered to be a pro-UAE figure who along with al-Jifri contributed to spreading the teachings of “moderate Islam” [Amasha 2020].

Apart from the individual campaigns, in 2012, a Jordanian Royal NGO, MABDA (Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought) published a book entitled “Why Should Muslims Visit al-Masjid al-Aqsa?” [Kailani 2012]. After reviewing some Hadith, the author justified his opinion by citing the historical example of the Prophet Muhammad and pointing to the absence of any fatwa prohibition during the Crusaders’ rule, as had al-Habbāsh [Kailani 2012: 26–29]. Then the names of famous “advocators” were raised such as Ramaḍān al-Būṭī (1929–2013), the Grand Mufti of Syria at that time, in addition to the figures referred to above [Kailani 2012: 31–34].

Further, Kailani cast doubt asking, “Is normalization the true purpose and result of visiting Jerusalem?” He criticized the traditional ban on Muslims visits, which benefits the occupiers as free service for them [Kailani 2012: 35]. Then, together with the other “advocators,” he made the following claim: “Visiting Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is first: a religious duty; second: a way of cementing our connection to our holy sites and third: a way of keeping us aware of the plots to destroy and remove our holy sites from existence. Visiting Jerusalem is also a way of supporting the steadfast Jerusalemites as they withstand the harm they face at the hands of the occupation; and a way for them to know that they are not alone in the struggle to maintain the Holy City’s authentic identity” [Kailani 2012: 35].

15 In 2017, in his lecture at a mosque about the backstage of his visit, Jum‘a accounted as follows: “I remember for years. I was sitting at pulpit behind me. I prayed to God not to take me to him unless I prayed at al-Aqsa [mosque]. Hours after the [Friday] sermon, a senior Jordanian official called me and said to me ‘On Wednesday we will go to Jerusalem’... Will you come with me?’... I told ‘Did you listen to the sermon?’ He said, ‘Which sermon?’ I said, ‘Friday sermon.’ He said, ‘No. I didn’t go there’” [Jum‘a 2017].

4. Growth of “Advocators”: Consensus-building and Endorsement of Official Body

The move to break the traditional prohibition on visits to the occupied Jerusalem was gained greater force through the conference entitled “Road to Jerusalem” held in 2014, at which most of the “advocators” gathered with a few “opponents.” Such consensus-building on the permission to visit was eventually developed into an official endorsement and Islamic tourism promotion by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2015. Through this process, the views of “advocators” have become expressed in more moderate words, rather than in the confrontational stances of previous years. Consequently, visiting Jerusalem even under the Israeli occupation certainly became one of the options, if not a mainstream position.

(1) Conference in Jordan and Fatwa of “Advocators”

In April 2014, the “Road to Jerusalem” conference was held in Amman, organized mainly by the Palestine Committee of the Arab Parliament, the Muslim World League (Rābiṭa al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī), and The World Islamic Science and Education University based in Jordan. Over 150 Islamic scholars and politicians and some other Christian personalities participated. “Advocators” included Jordanian royals; Jum‘a; al-Habbāsh; and Muḥammad Ḥusayn (1966–), the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and “opponents” included ‘Ikrima Ṣabrī (1939–) the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and ‘Alī al-Qara Dāghī (1949–), the Secretary-General of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) (for the stance of IUMS, see chapter 5).¹⁶ According to the official spokesman of the conference, its main aim was to argue generally about the effective measures to counter the intensifying Israeli policies in Jerusalem and the city’s Judaization [*al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* 2014. Apr. 30]. However, the chief topic of this conference was the permissibility of visiting Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation.

The final resolution of the “Road to Jerusalem” conference listed tens of necessary actions and future projects to deal with the crisis of Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation, most of which were very typical remarks. The subsequent resolution stated that the scholars had agreed to issue a fatwa, after three days of comprehensive discussions.

After citing Hadith to recommend visits to Jerusalem, the resolution first specifically encouraged some segments of the Muslim population to visit Jerusalem: “First: The scholars participating in the Road to Jerusalem Conference see that there is no prevention (lā ḥaraj) for the following segments to visit al-Aqsa Mosque: 1. Palestinians wherever they may be and regardless of their nationalities. 2: Muslims with passports from countries outside the Islamic World” [*al-Madīna al-Ikhhārīya* 2014. May. 5]. On this point, the other press statement said that the fatwa “left the gate of Ijtihad open regarding the right of the rest of the world’s

¹⁶ Another famous participant was Muḥammad al-‘Arīfī, a famous Saudi preacher and alleged supporter for MB. He announced he will visit Jerusalem in 2010, but he changed his mind under pressure [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2010. Apr. 7].

Muslims to visit al-Aqsa Mosque” [*al-Dustūr* 2014. May. 1]. So, the fatwa did not necessarily limit the permitted visitors only to the Palestinians and to the Muslims living outside the Islamic countries, but at the same time, it did not encourage the Muslim visit in full scale. Such an idea of segmentation was unprecedented in the previous individual campaigns.¹⁷

Second, the fatwa imposed some conditions for visits to Jerusalem: “1. That it does not lead to normalization with the occupation which may cause harm to the Palestinian cause. 2. That the visit supports and assists the Palestinians and not the occupiers. Here we affirm that any transactions including buying, selling, dealings, accommodations, and transportation must benefit the Palestinians and the Jerusalemites and none other than them. 3. That visitors enter with Palestinian or Jordanian tourist groups. 4. It is preferred that trips to al-Aqsa Mosque be within the routes of Umrah and Hajj trips as much as possible” [*al-Madīna al-Ikhhārīya* 2014. May. 5]. The underlying idea was that Muslim visits to Jerusalem could be permitted insofar as they served the public interest of the local Palestinian society, and by this point, the visits would not be a form of normalization from their perspective.

Although the words in the fatwa were carefully chosen, and the conditioning of visitors was a kind of appeasement for the “opponents,” eventually the fatwa was thought by many to be a counter to the longstanding prohibition on visits to Jerusalem. Again, the MB in each country criticized the decision of the “Road to Jerusalem” conference as an implicit form of normalization. Further, one participant reportedly criticized that the organizers for “wanting to take the conference to one track to permit Arabs’ and Muslims’ visits to Jerusalem, under the pretext of increasing the number of Muslims in the al-Aqsa Mosque” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2014. Apr. 30]. Some of the participants also recounted that Prince Ghāzī even asked the Islamic scholars to issue a fatwa permitting a visit to Jerusalem to support the steadfastness of the Palestinians [*al-‘Arabī al-Jadīd* 2014. Apr. 30; *Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2014. Apr. 30].¹⁸ Anyway, from short-term historical perspective, it was a remarkable breakthrough that a fatwa to permit the Muslim visits to Jerusalem was issued, in the form of a collective consensus, at least outwardly, rather than in the form of individual actions or statements, as had been the case before.

(2) OIC: Islamic Tourism Promotion and Permissive Fatwa

In the aftermath of the conference in Jordan, a series of promotional activities by OIC represented another significant step forward for the “advocators.” First, on November 27 in

17 Recommendations of the OIC workshop which will be discussed in the next section set similar segment. This kind of segmentation can be found in some “opponents” such as ‘Ikrima Ṣabrī, the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who permitted the visits performed only by the Palestinians and the Muslims outside the Arab Islamic countries, because they will not cause the normalization problem [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2010. Jul. 18].

18 Reportedly by this behavior of Prince Ghāzī, Muḥammed Rashīd Qabbānī, the Grand Mufti of Lebanon at that time, got angry and returned his country without waiting for the final resolution of the meeting.

2014, in his speech to an assembly of one OIC organ, Iyād Madanī (1946–), the Secretary-General of the OIC stated that member states had selected Jerusalem as the Islamic Tourism Capital for 2015 [OIC 2014 Dec.1]. Then, as early as January 2015, he visited Palestine and attended the exhibition entitled “Jerusalem in Memory” held in Ramallah, which was organized by the OIC-affiliated Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture. Madanī was welcomed by Mahmud Abbas and other high-ranking officers. There he called for coordination between the tourism ministers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Palestine, to find a mechanism to allow tens of thousands of tourists to visit Jerusalem by connecting with Umrah (minor pilgrimage) [OIC Journal 2015. No.28]. After Ramallah, he paid a visit to al-Aqsa Mosque and stated, “Coming to the mosque is a right for me as well as every Muslim... It is our right to come here and to pray here. No occupation authority should take this right from us” [OIC Journal 2015. No.28]. While Madanī did not explain his position on the visit to Jerusalem at some length and might have not been a devout “advocator,” his visits also received much criticism from al-Azhar, the Coptic Church,¹⁹ and Islamists such as the MB. One critic wrote in *Middle East Monitor* that the underlying fear for him was that this would pave the way for normalization and recognition of the Israeli occupation, in the guise of religious tourism [Abdullah 2015].

Madanī’s controversial visit was followed by a fatwa to permit Muslims to visit Jerusalem, which was issued in 2015 by the International Islamic Fiqh Academy affiliated with the OIC. Reportedly, Jordan requested the session to end the controversy on this issue. Hāyil Dāwūd (1959–), the Awqaf Minister of Jordan at that time said he would like to discuss this issue from the viewpoint of whether the visit had any major benefits for Muslims or not, rather than from the viewpoint of halal or haram [UNA 2015. Mar. 9]. He emphasized the expected fruits and benefits of Muslim visits, rather than rigorous historical or religious reasons.

The fatwa is worded as follows: “A legal verdict on the visit [to Jerusalem] is recommended and desirable, but the debate revolved around the assessment of interests and disadvantages. And the academy believes that the evaluation of these interests is, first of all, up to the specialists and politicians of Muslim countries” [Majma‘ al-Fiqh al-Islāmī al-Duwalī 2015]. The academy also reminded Muslims worldwide that the issue of Jerusalem was one that affected all Muslims, not just the people of Palestine, and emphasized the obligation to help the city and support its people. While the words of this fatwa did not apparently encourage Muslims to undertake full-scale visits of occupied Jerusalem, this statement implies that it was to be left to the free judgment of each person. Later, some affiliate organs of the OIC initiated

19 Both of al-Azhar and the Coptic Church in Egypt rejected an invitation to send senior delegates to join the OIC’s visit [Abdullah 2015]. The Coptic Church, which represents the Egyptian Christians, has long forbidden its follower to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation. Shenouda III, who served as the Pope of Coptic Church from 1971 to 2012, like Shaykh Mahmūd, refused to visit Jerusalem along with Anwar Sadat in 1977 and issued a papal ban on pilgrimages to the occupied Jerusalem in 1979.

projects, based on this fatwa, to promote Islamic tourism to Jerusalem. For instance, Iyād Madanī stated in the 9th Session of the Islamic Conference on Tourism Ministers in December 2015, “[t]he ruling [of Fiqh Academy] allows a visit to Jerusalem from the point of view of Islamic jurisprudence” and urged visits to take place through Jordanian entry points to avoid normalization [OIC 2015].

The OIC held several promotional events to encourage visits to Jerusalem in a framework of Islamic tourism. First, on November 24–25 in 2015, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), a subsidiary organ of the OIC, organized a workshop entitled “Exploring Tourism Potential of al-Quds al-Sherif City [Jerusalem]” in Istanbul [SESRIC 2015]. The participants include the Palestinian and Jordanian ministries of tourism and Awqaf, tourist and hotel associations in each country, in addition to the Turkish official bodies. According to the report of the workshop, the chief aims were to explore the potential for tourism in Jerusalem, to examine the challenges, and to find implementable ways and means for collaboration among governmental and private bodies [SESRIC 2015]. The final recommendations, based on the fatwa of Fiqh Academy, says it is encouraged that the heads of the OIC’s member states to go to Jerusalem to show solidarity with the Palestinians, and the Muslim population worldwide, especially those who faced no visa restrictions in entering Palestine such as European residents wishing to visit Jerusalem [SESRIC 2015]. This recommendation resembled the fatwa of the “Road to Jerusalem” conference, referred to in the previous section. In addition, it was recommended to visit Jerusalem, preferably through Jordan, as part of the Hajj and Umrah package, and to visit in a way furthered the economy and welfare of the Palestinians. Furthermore, practical recommendations were issued to facilitate the tourists’ mobility, develop human resources, and waive taxes at the airports to enhance the accessibility of Jerusalem, and so on [SESRIC 2015].

Additionally, on September 26, 2016, a symposium entitled “Advancing religious tourism to Palestine, particularly Jerusalem” was organized by the Representative Office of the OIC in Palestine in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs. The speakers were the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine, the Minister of Jerusalem Affairs, and the representative of the OIC in Palestine in addition to Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Maḥmūd al-Habbāsh. At the symposium, Ḥusayn tried to justify Muslim visits once again by noting the absence of the banning fatwa during the Crusaders’ era [Wafā 2016. Sep. 26]. Further, Maḥmūd al-Habbāsh boldly asserted that “the fatwa of the Fiqh Academy came to decide the matter, which permitted Muslims’ visits to Jerusalem.” He added, “The prohibition fatwas have become removed from the debate of the vast majority of Muslims” [Wafā 2016. Sep. 26]. The final statement of the symposium recommended activating cooperation between the official

Palestinian agencies on the one hand and the OIC affiliate organs on the other, to pave the way for Islamic tourism. As one element of plans to encourage the visits to Jerusalem in general, the participants of the symposium also recommended disseminating the legal opinions of OIC in 2015 and the “Road to Jerusalem” conference [*OIC Journal* 2016 No.34].

It is clear from the process of consensus-building and endorsement by the OIC that Jordan has played a pivotal role and tried to take an initiative in the projects for Muslim visits. In the first place, Jordan has long claimed to be the legitimate guardian of Jerusalem. The Jordanian government, as the responsible authority for religious administration in Jerusalem,²⁰ organized the visits by ‘Alī al-Jifrī and ‘Alī Jum‘a, hosted the “Road to Jerusalem” conference, and sought permission for Muslim visits from the OIC, in addition to publishing the book “Why Should Muslims Visit al-Aqsa Mosque” [Kailani 2012].

Furthermore, Jordan’s Awqaf Minister, Hāyil Dāwūd, immediately after the “Road to Jerusalem” conference, demonstrated the Jordanian government’s strong interest in religious tourism. He revealed to the press that the government already had plans to attract Muslims to Jerusalem by starting the journey from Jordan and stated “We have coordinated with other Arabs [countries] to bring tourists to Jordan and [have them] stay some days and then visit Jerusalem only...” [*CNN Arabic* 2014. Apr. 30]. Additionally, along with this remark, in the OIC’s workshop on promoting tourism to Jerusalem in 2015, the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan, said that the government wanted to attract “Hajj and Umrah pilgrims to visit Jerusalem, passing through tens of Islamic historical sites that reflect the Islamic Arab civilization in Jordan, before and after they conclude their pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia,” and, for emphasis, he repeated the same passage later in the speech [SESRIC n.d.]. Jordan also held talks and signed an agreement with the PA in August 2015 to promote cooperation in the field of Islamic tourism between the two countries [*al-Dustūr* 2015. Aug. 11]. Here it can be observed that through promoting a religious journey that combined visits to Jerusalem, Makka, and Madina, the Jordanian government tried to enhance its role as a gatekeeper of Jerusalem by leading the tourism campaign and having a hand in tour operations, while also promoting tourism in Jordan itself.

To sum up the above discussion, 2015 was a watershed in the debate over whether visiting Jerusalem was permissible or not. Despite persistent opposition, as will be discussed in the next chapter, it is no longer taboo to call for visits to occupied Jerusalem, as long as they are based on religious virtue and aimed at supporting the Palestinians.

At the end of this chapter, a few words should be added concerning the Israeli stance toward Muslim tourism. In short, the Israeli government and the Jerusalem Municipality did not make some specific comments on the Arab-Islamic debate on Muslim visits described

²⁰ This status was confirmed in Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1994 and joint declaration of Jordan and Palestine in 2013.

above. Still, the Israeli government may welcome the moves by the “advocators,” insofar as they appear to remain merely tourists, not the political activists. In many cases, the Israeli government has depicted itself as a religiously tolerant country and stated such as in the World Economic Forum of 2018 “that the only time that all three faiths could practice their faith freely [in Jerusalem] has been under Israel’s sovereignty over Jerusalem” [PMO 2018. Jan. 25]. The mayor of Jerusalem once expressed his wish to have the city become a destination for religious tourism by members of the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, of course under the Israeli sovereignty [ACRPS 2012: 13–14]. By such official stance of Israel, some of the “opponents” warned that Israel could exploit visits to Jerusalem under the Israeli occupation for image purposes as indicating implicit recognition of the authority of Israel [Ḥammāmī 2012: 27–28].

Part of the reason why the Israeli government did not adopt a clear stance on this issue is because there were not many Muslim tourists among overall visitors to Israel in the first place [Hasson 2015]. Indeed, it has been often said that since the 2010s the number of Muslim visitors to Israel has grown significantly. Most of the reports in common pointed out that the largest number of Muslims, numbering in the tens of thousands, came from Indonesia and Malaysia. Furthermore, the fact that the number of Arab tourists remains small implies that the idea of visiting Jerusalem has never taken root with the Arab public, even after the rapid ascent of “advocators” in the debate.

5. Persistent Stance and Partial Compromise of “Opponents”

As examined in the previous chapters, the “advocators” have enjoyed significant momentum since the 2010s, so their theory has no longer been seen as weird or heretical. In the face of such a strong headwind, some of the “opponents” have presented the counter argument, while others have indicated a partial compromise to the “advocators.”

(1) Against the Headwind: Rebuttals of IUMS and Legacies of al-Qaraḍāwī

It was IUMS that has prepared a rigorous argument opposing Muslim visits to Jerusalem and carried authoritative weight among the “opponents.” IUMS was founded in 2004 as an association of the Islamic scholars, which has been widely considered as the affiliate to the MB. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī had led IUMS until 2018, and Aḥmad al-Raysūnī (1953–) succeeded him by election.

On April 29, 2014, immediately after the “Road to Jerusalem” conference, al-Qaraḍāwī, as a Secretary-General of IUMS, issued a fatwa against the “advocators.” He offered rebuttals to the criticisms directed toward the “opponents” while parts of the fatwa were based on the previous fatwa by al-Qaraḍāwī [IUMS 2014].²¹

21 Prior to the fatwa of IUMS, Ḥusām al-Dīn ‘Affāna, a Palestinian locally famous Islamic scholar, issued

Al-Qara Dāghī started the statement by presenting the premises, which account for one-third of the fatwa and confirms the basic stance through the following seven points. First, the fatwa is directed only at non-Palestinians. Second, the Hadīth by Abū Hurayra says visiting Jerusalem is recommended, but not a duty, so its rules should be treated as conditional and as balancing benefits and disadvantages. Third, all the Muslims sincerely wish to have the honor of visiting Jerusalem. Fourth, a fatwa in general must be purely for Allah and consistent with the objectives of Shariah, rather than a reflection of some governments and groups. Fifth, while some Muslims have enthusiastically encouraged the visit to Jerusalem and made it sound as if it was necessary, Muslim visits do not stop the Israeli policies sufficiently, and Muslims who do not visit Jerusalem are not disobeying the command of the Prophet. Sixth, because the problem of Jerusalem should be one of the highest concerns of Ummah, rules for the visit must represent the majority opinion of Islamic scholars, not in an individual approach. Seventh, al-Qaraḍāwī is not the only scholar to have opposed the visit to occupied Jerusalem; the great majority of al-Azharites and even Coptic church members have also opposed it [IUMS 2014].

Subsequently, al-Qara Dāghī discussed the “duty for Muslims toward Jerusalem, or genuine road to Jerusalem” according to three viewpoints. First, he clarified legal evidence supporting a prohibition on the visit to occupied Jerusalem. Similar to al-Qaraḍāwī’s fatwa, it started with the rules for usurped land, and warned that the visit meant the recognition of Israeli authority and would pave the way for normalization with the enemy. Second, al-Qara Dāghī reviewed and criticized the justifications and evidence of the “advocators.” According to him, although some Muslim leaders had claimed that visiting Jerusalem would contribute to assisting the steadfastness of the local Palestinians, as long as it controlled the borders, Israel would easily prevent any Muslim visits aimed at supporting the Palestinians in Jerusalem, such as the banning of the visits by American and European activists. Thus, he claimed that “the benefit... is a delusional one, not an expected and assured one... And there is a legal maxim saying that avoiding the disadvantage comes first, before acquiring the genuine benefit, let alone delusional benefit” [IUMS 2014]. Further, al-Qara Dāghī warned that Muslim visits would be used to reinforce Israel’s self-representation as a tolerant country. Although it seems somewhat odd in this context, continued on the above points, al-Qara Dāghī also argued that the fact that the Prophet Muhammad had sought permission from the Quraysh tribe to perform the pilgrimage could not justify present-day Muslim visits to Jerusalem, simply because the Quraysh tribe was not an occupier and had legitimate ownership over the land.²²

Third, al-Qara Dāghī refuted the historical evidence, especially the evidence from the Crusaders’ era, which was used by the “advocators.” Al-Qara Dāghī complained that, in the

a fatwa which had much in common with the one of IUMS [‘Affāna 2012]. In addition to the points raised by al-Qara Dāghī, ‘Affāna showed his fear for the emergence of the legal opinion which made by non-specialists [‘Affāna 2012: 18].

22 al-Qara Dāghī and ‘Affāna alike criticized this as “qiyas with a discrepancy” (qiyās ma‘ al-fāriq).

first place, the deeds of the past Islamic scholars, even great scholars, could not be used as a legal basis. Further he stated that the visits of Islamic scholars, such as al-Ghazali's, were took place under an armistice, so the evidence of "advocators" itself was based on false information. Ultimately, al-Qara Dāghī offered the following conclusion: "[v]isiting Jerusalem, under the brutal occupation... and under its [Israel's] desperate attempts at a comprehensive political, economic, cultural and social normalization, entails grave evil, great harm and fatal consequences. It is not permissible for a Muslim to participate in this crime. Rather, he must set up for a travel to liberate al-Aqsa [Mosque] by all means available..." [IUMS 2014].

Therefore, it seems that the rebuttals made by the "opponents," at least as a legal reasoning, were more source-based and thorough arguments consistent with the intellectual tradition, than the claims presented by "advocators."

(2) Blown by Strong Wind: Decline of Categorical Opposition

While some "opponents" maintained their persistent stance, the others started to show some positive understanding for the "advocators." One remarkable example of them is Aḥmad al-Raysūnī, despite he is the head of IUMS and one of its founders. Al-Raysūnī is a Moroccan Islamic scholar and had led the Movement for Unity and Reform (MUR) in Morocco.

In 2019, al-Raysūnī suddenly called on Muslims worldwide to visit Jerusalem and support the Jerusalemites and the defenders (al-murābiṭūn) financially and morally, stressing that "not everyone who visited Jerusalem is a normalizer or a propagandist for normalization... the objective and purpose of the visit is to be a guarantor to know the legal and political stance for it" [*al-'Umq al-Maghribī* 2019. Aug. 10]. He pointed out that the important thing was visitors' intentions and what their visits were expected to achieve. He also added that while the visit to Jerusalem itself was recommended, all Muslims had a duty to assist the Palestinians, Jerusalem, and al-Aqsa Mosque [*al-'Umq al-Maghribī* 2019. Aug. 11].²³ So, he saw the visit itself was not equal to normalization and it should be judged by the intention, which way of thinking was very similar to that of the "advocators." Of course, widespread criticisms and unrest emerged among the MB [*Qanāt al-'Arabīya* 2019. Aug. 25],²⁴ however al-Habbāsh welcomed his statement [Wafā 2019. Aug. 19].

Behind the new fatwa of al-Raysūnī, some noted there was conflicting perspectives toward al-Qaraḍāwī among the members of IUMS [*Qanāt al-'Arabīya* 2019. Aug. 21], and others noted that the government of Qatar, where IUMS had been based, had tried to push the Islamists under its influence toward rapprochement and normalization with Israel [*Qanāt*

23 These remarks were made amid growing tensions between Jews and Muslims in Jerusalem when Tisha B'Av, the Jewish Remembrance Day of destroyed Temple, coincides with Eid al-Adha, the Islamic holiday derived from the tradition of Abraham.

24 al-Raysūnī accounted later that his statement was not represented the position of IUMS [*Qanāt al-'Arabīya* 2019. Aug. 25].

al-‘Arabīya 2019. Aug. 25]. However, it was also claimed that among the scholars of IUMS, the momentum to revise al-Qaraḍāwī’s fatwa had already been emerged in 2016 [*‘Arabī 21* 2016. Jun. 2]. Some scholars reportedly felt it was necessary to allow Muslims in general to visit Jerusalem and to limit the ban just to public figures, in order to provide the Palestinians with economic support and make their lives sustainable. They sought to issue realistic new directions because some Muslims no longer paid attention to the banning fatwa and started to visit Jerusalem, although this did not result in benefits to the Palestinians. While al-Qaraḍāwī denied any move to change al-Qaraḍāwī’s fatwa and stuck with the longstanding legal position [*‘Arabī 21* 2016. Jun. 2], any such move would have been a sign that the “advocators” were gaining support to some extent.

Furthermore, before the fatwa of al-Raysūnī, one leader of the MB in Jordan, called for a serious reconsideration of the past position on the visit to Jerusalem. His main concern was prompted by new facts on the ground, which meant the deepening Israeli control over Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque [*‘Arabī 21* 2019. Mar. 27]. He revealed in an interview with *‘Arabī 21* that “[p]reviously, I was among those who adopted the remark that visiting al-Aqsa Mosque was prohibited.” After referring to the changing circumstances, he continued as follows: “Visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque is not necessarily to recognize the legitimacy of the occupation, but all that matters is to deal with the situation without the slightest recognition of the legitimacy of the occupation. In particular, the motivation for it [the visit] is support for the steadfastness of Jerusalemites, and assistance and cooperation for them to confront the occupation measures for Judaization” [*‘Arabī 21* 2019. Mar. 27]. It should be noted that al-Raysūnī’s fatwa did not appear out of nowhere as illustrated by a momentum among the MB to reexamine their long-standing opposition.

Although he did not state his position as explicitly as al-Raysūnī, in a conference entitled “al-Azhar World Conference to Support Jerusalem” held in January 2018, ‘Abbās Shūmān, the Deputy to the Shaykh of al-Azhar at that time, showed some indication of changes in the al-Azhar’s position while maintaining opposition to Jerusalem visits under the Israeli occupation. As examined in the following sentences, he implied that the opinions of “advocators” had a certain validity and hinted at the urgent necessity of reviewing the traditional stance of the “opponents.” Although some media characterized the position that he expressed in the conference simply as that of an “opponent” [*Bawwāba al-Shurūq* 2018. Jan. 18; Jan. 19],²⁵ when his statement is scrutinized, it can be recognized that there is implicit self-criticism.

In his speech, Shūmān stated, after referring to the undoubted attachment of Muslims and Christians to Jerusalem, “[t]he issue of visiting Jerusalem will remain a subject of discussion

25 Among the personalities present, Mahmud Abbas and Zaqzūq participated in this conference and stated they believe to date that visiting Jerusalem will be an important measure to confront the Israeli occupation policies [*Bawwāba al-Shurūq* 2018. Jan. 18; Jan. 19].

and a topic of disagreement on the Islamic and Christian levels alike” and raised three points in order for the issue to be properly understood [Shūmān 2018: 970]. First, he stated as a premise that there was no disagreement on the impermissibility of the normalization with “the Zionist entity” [Shūmān 2018: 970], although any specific definition to the word of normalization was not offered there. Second, as agreed-upon Islamic teachings, he asserted that the visit to Jerusalem and the prayer at al-Aqsa Mosque were recommended practice and confirmed the importance of the mosque as the first qibla and the third-holiest site of Islam [Shūmān 2018: 970].

His third and main point was that scholarly differences of opinions were limited to the topic of visiting Jerusalem under the occupation, which was because of differences in how they assessed the benefits and disadvantages of the visit [Shūmān 2018: 971]. Then he explained each position of the debate and carefully reviewed the decisions of Fiqh Academy and the “Road to Jerusalem” conference. He rightly argued that the former’s fatwa neither called for visiting to the occupied Jerusalem nor prohibited it. Concerning the latter, he noted that the conference at least did not demand that the Arabs (other than the Palestinians) visit Jerusalem. Finally, he reaffirmed the position of al-Azhar after referring to the existence of different views by each scholar: “the official stance of al-Azhar is to refuse the visit to Jerusalem under the occupation. There is no benefit in that” [Shūmān 2018: 971].

Then Shūmān summed up by stating that the legal opinions to date around the visits to Jerusalem depended on specialists’ evaluation of whether the benefits or the disadvantages prevailed [Shūmān 2018: 972]. He continued to name two actors who would be best qualified to estimate the interest from the visit: the Jerusalemites and the leaders of Arab Islamic countries. He said, first, that those who lived in Jerusalem should evaluate the positive or negative influence from the visit from a local perspective. He expected that the leaders of Arab Islamic countries would be able to determine the widespread political impact and potential danger caused by the Muslim visit. In the end, he emphasized the necessity of further argument: “It is no secret to you that the benefit in this concept has not yet been assessed and it has still been in dispute to this day. Therefore, we must deliberate and study this issue from all its aspects, and research thoroughly so that the benefit becomes clear” [Shūmān 2018: 972]. He continued, “[p]erhaps it is better for Muslims today, if they really want to support their brethren in Jerusalem, to move urgently to achieve the interests of the Jerusalemites and the Palestinians... and to set up for a travel (*shadd al-riḥāl*) to Jerusalem, not to visit it under the occupation, rather to liberate it by all means available” [Shūmān 2018: 972]. Therefore, Shūmān substantially admitted that the stance of “opponents” including al-Azhar could be changed at some point and did not see it as an unquestionable or fixed one, while he did not clearly permit Muslim visits such as al-Raysūnī did. This may have been a slight but remarkable change in the position of al-Azhar that had been firmly opposed Muslim visits to

the occupied Jerusalem.

As revealed in this chapter, although any notable “opponents” have yet to make the full transition to becoming “advocators,” some opponents have realized the necessity of presenting a fresh view without simply adhering to an opposition stance. It can be observed that while changes on the ground are still limited in terms of the numbers of the visitors to Jerusalem, the growth of “advocators” has had a considerable impact on religious and political discourses in the Arab Islamic world.

6. Conclusion

Visiting Jerusalem under Israeli occupation, which was once taboo, became an option in the course of only a few short years during the 2010s. In the circle of “advocators,” the necessity of supporting the local Palestinians and the religious importance of visiting Jerusalem have been emphasized and reevaluated.

At first, some religious and political personalities such as Zaqqūq, Abbas and al-Habbāsh, started to call for visiting Jerusalem around 2012. The turning point was reached when the famous Islamic preachers and scholars, namely al-Jifrī and Jum‘a, visited Jerusalem, as if to answer the appeals by the above-referenced people. Then through the “Road to Jerusalem” conference in Jordan, individual efforts were transformed into collective consensus-building in 2014. Subsequently, the OIC’s Secretary-General and affiliated organs endorsed the idea of visiting Jerusalem even under the occupation and promoted it in the framework of religious tourism. For their part, on the one hand, “opponents” presented a counter argument, and some of them persisted in their opposition. On the other hand, some of them tended to accept the view of the “advocators” and indicated partial compromise. Certainly, the idea of visiting Jerusalem has never been popular in the streets of Arab countries, however, it has taken its own place in the Arab Islamic discourse.

As clarified in the argument above, the longstanding consensus around the Arab boycott on visits to the occupied Jerusalem has certainly waned in the 2010s. This phenomenon can be seen as one symptom of the Arab-Israeli rapprochement in a broader sense, that is to say the crustal change of their relationship. Public encouragement to visit Jerusalem is a new development that would never have been expected decades ago. Indeed, even if the tendency to advocate Muslim visits were to be accelerated in the future, it would be quite unlikely for such a move to directly yield a strong Arab-Israeli relationship. Nevertheless, the weakening of the boycott on visits to Jerusalem under the occupation would appear to provide a background for a significant political transformation.

Here, it should be noted that this debate has not developed solely in relation to the Arab-Israeli (Palestinian) conflict. For instance, anti-MB or anti-al-Qaraḍāwī sentiment was a widespread climate among the “advocators.” This was immediately connected with the

domestic political conflicts in Palestine between Fatah (head by Abbas) and Hamas (branch of the MB), and in Egypt between Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's regime and the MB. Further, the active Jordanian commitment to Muslim visits to Jerusalem may have been prompted by a sense of wariness over the growing influence of Turkey among the Palestinians in Jerusalem. Jordan and Turkey have recently competed over the title of the guardian of Islamic Jerusalem [Abu Amer 2016].²⁶ In a way, the debate over the visits to Jerusalem has been used as a tool and instrumentalized in the political conflicts in the Middle East.

With Israel and the UAE starting to build close relations, a conflict has already emerged among Muslims over whether visits from the UAE and Bahrain to Jerusalem are permitted or not. The Israeli government expected to receive a huge influx of Gulf tourists with potentially high purchasing power [Kahana 2020a]. At the same time, when an unofficial delegation from the UAE visited al-Aqsa Mosque with the Israeli authorities in October 2020, they were criticized harshly by Palestinian and Jordanian officials as “normalizers” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2020. Oct. 23].²⁷ The Palestinian and Jordanian “advocators” now begin to separate the Muslim visitors into “unwelcome guests” who openly move to deepen their relationship with Israel and “supporters of the Palestinians” whom the “advocators” have longed for.²⁸ How to treat these Muslim visitors is a subject of heated debates right at this moment [Kahana 2020b]. With the emerging expansion of human exchanges between Arab countries and Israel, understanding such a debate will also be essential to obtain a clear view of their nuanced relations in the future.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP19J00599

26 Turkey under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been strongly interested in the affairs of Palestine, especially Jerusalem from the view of so-called “Neo Ottomanism.” And the government initiated a state-led Umrah tour via Jerusalem since 2015, which was quite an easy process because of its decades-long official relationship with Israel. Growing Turkish popularity on the ground among the Palestinians has stirred an unease of the Jordanian government, which caused their competition over religious tourism too [Abu Amer 2016].

27 Prior to it, the Mufti of Jerusalem issued a controversial fatwa, “We affirm that the prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque is open to those who come from the legitimate Palestinian gate, or through the Jordanian government, which is the guardian of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem” [*Qanāt al-Jazīra* 2020. Aug. 18].

28 A famous Israeli reporter and historian, Nadav Shragai tells “On one hand, [Mahmud] Abbas rejects the normalization deal, but on the other, he supports the idea of Muslims ‘occupying’ Jerusalem and Islamic holy sites... Abbas might be able to accept visitors from the Emirates, if they take on a different character and the Emiratis start investing in east Jerusalem ‘to strengthen the Palestinian position in Al-Quds’ or if Emirati tourism keeps the Palestinian economy going. But only if the Gulf visits hire Muslim tour guides and stay in Palestinian hotels” [Shragai 2020].

Reference

OIC Journal

al-Sharq al-Awsat

<English>

- Abdullah, Daud. 2015. "The OIC visit to Jerusalem was an Act by an Organisation in Disarray," *Middle East Monitor* January 7 <<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20150107-the-oic-visit-to-jerusalem-was-an-act-by-an-organisation-in-disarray/>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- Abu Amer, Adnan. 2016. "Jordan, Turkey compete to woo Jerusalem," *al-Monitor* May 19 <<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/originals/2016/05/turkey-jordan-palestine-jerusalem-competition-influence.amp.html?skipWem=1>> (Accessed: May 20, 2016)
- ACRPS (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies). 2012. *Visit to Jerusalem under Occupation: Support for Steadfastness or Normalization?* Doha: ACRPS.
- Amasha, Muhammad. 2020. "The UAE-sponsored 'Islams': Mapping the Terrain," *Maydan* September 15 <<https://thelaydan.com/2020/09/the-uae-sponsored-islams-mapping-the-terrain/>> (Accessed: September 19, 2020)
- al-Anani, Khalil. 2020. "All the Dictator's Sheikhs," *Foreign Policy* July 20 <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/20/all-the-dictators-sheikhs/>> (Accessed: July 21, 2020)
- Bartal, Shaul and Nesya Rubinstein-Shemer. 2019. *Hamas and Ideology: Sheikh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī on the Jews, Zionism and Israel*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hasson, Nir. 2015. "Jerusalem Tourism gets Lifeline from Unlikely Source: Muslim Visitors," *Haaretz* April 7 <<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.650845>> (Accessed: November 2, 2017)
- Husain, Ed. 2013. "End the Arab Boycott of Israel," *The New York Times* March 6 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/opinion/global/end-the-arab-boycott-of-israel.html>> (Accessed: November 19, 2020)
- Kahana, Ariel. 2020a. "UAE Delegation to visit Jerusalem," *Israel Hayom* October 19 <<https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/10/19/uae-delegation-to-visit-jerusalem/>> (Accessed: October 20, 2020)
- . 2020b. "Waqf to allow Gulf Tourists to visit Temple Mount," *Israel Hayom* November 24 <<https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/11/24/waqf-to-allow-gulf-tourists-to-visit-temple-mount/>> (Accessed: November 25, 2020)
- al-Jazeera*. 2020 (Sep. 22). "Explainer: Where do Arab States stand on Normalising Israel Ties?" <<https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2020/9/22/explainer-where-do-arab-states-stand-on-normalising-israel-ties>> (Accessed: November 11, 2020)

- al-Jifri, al-Habib Ali. 2012. "Advice to Western Muslims on Visiting Jerusalem," *Seekers Guidance* May 30 <<https://seekersguidance.org/articles/general-artices/advice-to-western-muslims-on-visiting-jerusalem-al-habib-ali-al-jifri/>> (Accessed: November 19, 2020)
- Jones, Clive and Yoel Guzansky. 2019. *Fraternal Enemies: Israel and the Gulf Monarchies*. London: Hurst.
- Kailani, Wasif. 2012. *Why Should Muslims Visit al-Majid al-Aqsa?* MABDA English Monograph Series No.17. Amman: The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought.
- Melhem, Ahmad. 2015. "Arabs Divided on Visiting Jerusalem." *al-Monitor* June 12 <<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/arab-muslim-visit-jerusalem-palestine-normalization-israel.html>> (Accessed: January 19, 2019)
- Miller, Aaron David. 2020. "Arab-Israeli Progress Seemed Impossible: That's Because of Old Assumptions," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* September 23 <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/23/arab-israeli-progress-seemed-impossible.-that-s-because-of-old-assumptions-pub-82798>> (Accessed: November 11, 2020)
- OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation). 2014 (Dec.1). "At the General Assembly of COMCEC in Istanbul, Madani Announces the Choice of al-Quds and Konya as Islamic Tourism Capitals for 2015 and 2016," <https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=9557&t_ref=3806&lan=en> (Accessed: February 9, 2021)
- . 2015. "Speech of H.E. Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, at the Opening Ceremony of the Ninth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers," <<https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=2968&refID=1098>> (Accessed: October 16, 2019)
- PMO (Prime Minister's Office). 2018 (Jan. 25). "PM Netanyahu at the World Economic Forum," <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speech_forum250118.aspx> (Accessed: October 31, 2019)
- Rahman, Omar H. 2019. "What's behind the Relationship between Israel and Arab Gulf States?" *Brookings* January 28 <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/28/whats-behind-the-relationship-between-israel-and-arab-gulf-states/>> (Accessed: November 11, 2020)
- SESRIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries). 2015. *Report of the Workshop on "Exploring Tourism Potential of al Quds al Sherif City"*. <<https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=2961&refID=1098>> (Accessed: October 14, 2019)
- . n.d. *Opening Statement of H.E. Mr. Nayef al-Fayez*. <<https://www.sesric.org/imgs/news/file/1278-Opening-Statement-of-H.E.-Mr.Nayef-Al-Fayez.pdf>> (Accessed: October 14, 2019)

- Shragai, Nadav. 2020. "Will Abbas be forced to About-face on the Temple Mount?" *Israel Hayom* September 1 <<https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/09/01/will-abbas-be-forced-to-about-face-on-the-temple-mount/>> (Accessed: September 2, 2020)
- Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates. 2018. "Palestinians Sidelined in Saudi-Emirati Rapprochement with Israel," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47(4), pp. 79–89.
- UNA (Union of OIC News Agencies). 2015 (Mar. 9). "OIC Fiqh Academy Likely to Issue Fatwa on Visiting Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque: IINA Report," <<http://www.iinanews.com/page/public/report.aspx?id=10481>> (Accessed: November 20, 2020)

<Arabic>

- ‘Affāna, Ḥusām al-Dīn. 2012. *Yas'alūna-ka (al-Juz' al-Sābi' 'Asha)*. Jerusalem: al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya and Dār al-Ṭayyib li-l-Ṭibā'a wa al-Nashr.
- al-‘Arabī al-Jadīd. 2014 (Apr. 30). "“al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Quds” Yujīzu Ziyāra ‘al-Aqṣā’," <<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/%22٢٢٪-يجيز-زيارة-١٢٪-الأقصى>> (Accessed: November 20, 2020)
- ‘Arabī 21. 2016 (Jun. 2). "Hal Ya‘tajimu “Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn’ al-Tarāju‘ ‘an Taḥrīm Ziyāra al-Quds?" <<https://arabi21.com/story/912627/-تحریم-زيارة-عن-التراجع-المسلمين-العلماء-هل-يعتزم>> (Accessed: November 2, 2020)
- . 2019 (Mar. 27). "Hal Mā Zālat Ziyāra al-Masjid al-Aqṣā Muḥarrama wa Tu‘addu Taṭbī‘an?" <<https://arabi21.com/story/1169854/-محرمة-وتعد-المسجد-الأقصى-هل-ما-زالت-زيارة-المسجد-الأقصى-محرمة-وتعد>> (Accessed: November 2, 2020)
- Bawwāba al-Shurūq. 2017 (Jul. 23). "“Alī Jum‘a Yad‘ū al-Muslimīn ilā al-Dhahāb li-l-Quds: Hall Qaḍīya ‘al-Aqṣā’ fī Ziyārati-hi bi-l-Malāyīn,” <<https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=23072017&id=0ecc9dfd-ff06-4e6f-8ef6-6b580c0a0c72>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- . 2018 (Jan. 18). "Wazīr al-Awqāf al-Asbaq Yad‘ū li-Ziyāra al-Quds," <<https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=18012018&id=3493bdfd-f093-41f7-9d95-1af9c0665a9b>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- . 2018 (Jan. 19). "al-Mawqif min Ziyāra al-Quds Yuthīru Jadalan Jadīdan ba‘da ‘Mu’tamar al-Azhar’," <<https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=19012018&id=573ce1e2-3f62-4aaf-bb15-c96bc0d37099>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- CNN Arabic. 2014 (Apr. 30). "al-Urdunn: Tabāyun al-Ārā’ ḥawla Iṣḍār Fatwā Tujīzu Ziyāra al-Quds li-Ghayr al-Filasṭīniyyīn," <<https://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2014/04/30/jordan-fatwa-pal-visit>> (Accessed: October 31, 2019)
- Darazī, Barā’a. 2017. *‘al-Taṭbī‘ al-‘Arabī ma’a Isrā’īl’: al-Ṭarīq ilā Taṣfiya al-Qaḍīya al-Filasṭīniya wa Tashrī‘ al-Iḥtilāl*. s.l.: Mu’assasa al-Quds al-Duwalīya.

- . 2018. *al-Taḥbī‘ bi-Rūḥ Riyāḍīya: Kayfa Ya‘malu al-Iḥtilāl ‘alā al-Imsāk bi-Zimām al-Mawqif al-Siyāsī wa Tadjīn al-Wa‘y al-‘Arabī*. s.l.: Mu‘assasa al-Quds al- Duwalīya.
- al-Dustūr*. 2014 (May. 1). “‘al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Quds’ Yarfa‘u bi-Shurūṭ al-Ḥazr ‘an Ziyāra ‘al-Aqṣā,’” <<https://www.addustour.com/articles/183748>> «الطريق إلى القدس» - يرفع بشرط الحظر عن - «زيارة الأقصى» (Accessed: October 28, 2019)
- . 2015 (Aug. 11). “Intilāq Fa‘ālīyāt al-Multaqā al-Awwal li-l-Siyāḥa al-Dīnīya al-Islāmīya al-Urdunnī al-Filasṭīnī,” <<https://www.addustour.com/articles/98509>> «انطلاق فعاليات الملتقى - الاول للسباحة الدينية الإسلامية - الاردني - الفلسطيني» (Accessed: November 21, 2020)
- Futūḥ, Muḥammad. 2018. “Darāwīsh bin Zāyid’: Hākadhā Tas‘ā al-Imārāt li-Ta’sīs Marj’īya Dīnīya Tashra‘na al-Istibdād,” *Qanāt al-Jazīra* June 12 <<https://www.aljazeera.net/midan/intellect/sociology/2018/12/6/الإمارات-كيف-تسعى-أبو-ظبي-كيفية-تسعى-الإمارات>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- al-Habbāsh, Maḥmūd. 2012. *Ziyāra al-Quds: “Faḍīla Dīnīya wa Ḍarūra Siyāsīya”*. Amman: Dār al-Usāma.
- Ḥammāmī, Ibrāhīm. 2012. *Ziyāra al-Quds wa al-Aqṣā taḥta al-Iḥtilāl*. London: Markaz al-Shu‘ūn al-Filasṭīnīya.
- IUMS (International Union of Muslim Scholars) (al-Ittiḥād al-‘Ālamī li-l-‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn). 2014. “al-Qara Dāghī: Lā Tajūzu Ziyāra al-Quds li-Ghayr al-Filasṭīnīyīn,” <<http://www.iumsonline.org/en/ContentDetails.aspx?ID=440>> (Accessed: November 23, 2020)
- Jād al-Ḥaqq, Jād al-Ḥaqq ‘Alī. n.d. “Mawāqif Siyāsīya,” <<http://www.gad-elhak.com/about1.php?id=9>> (Accessed: October 24, 2019)
- al-Jifrī, al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī. 2012a. “Bayān ḥawla Ziyāra al-Ḥabīb ‘Alī al-Jifrī li-l-Quds,” April 4 <<https://www.alhabibali.com/quds/البيان-حول-زيارة-الحبيب-علي-الجفري-للقدس>> (Accessed: November 4, 2020)
- . 2012b. “Tawḍīḥ ḥawla Ziyāra al-Aqṣā al-Sharīf 1,” *Facebook* April 6 <<https://www.facebook.com/alhabibali/posts/374731109233542>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- . 2012c. “Tawḍīḥ ḥawla Ziyāra al-Aqṣā al-Sharīf 2,” *Facebook* April 6 <<https://www.facebook.com/alhabibali/posts/374762579230395>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- . 2012d. “Fatwā al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Bāz ḥawla Ziyāra al-Aqṣā al-Sharīf,” *Facebook* April 30 <<https://www.facebook.com/alhabibali/posts/420855194593539/>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- Jum‘a, ‘Alī. 2014. “al-Da‘wa ilā al-Hijra li-l-Quds al-Sharīf,” February 16 <<https://draligomaa.com/index.php/الإمام/الداعوة-إلى-الهجرة-للقدس-الشريف/item/444>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- . 2017. “U. D. ‘Alī Jum‘a Yakshifu li-Awwal Marra ‘an Kawālīs Ziyārati-hi li-l-Quds al-Sharīf,” *YouTube* July 22 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udWvTc_P0qQ&t=82s> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)

- al-Madīna al-Ikhhārīya*. 2014 (May. 5). “al-Bayān al-Khitāmī li-Mu’tamar al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Quds,” <<https://www.almadenahnews.com/article/292500-البيان-الختامي-لمؤتمر-الطريق-إلى-القدس>> (Accessed: October 23, 2019)
- Majma‘ al-Fiqh al-Islāmī al-Duwalī. 2015. “Qarār bi-Sha’n Ziyāra al-Quds: al-Ahdāf wa al-Aḥkām al-Shar‘īya,” <<http://www.iifa-aifi.org/4004.html>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- al-Miṣrī al-Yawm*. 2015 (May. 30). “al-Duktūr ‘Alī Jum‘a Muftī al-Jumhūrīya al-Sābiq li-‘al-Miṣrī al-Yawm’: Tadakhkhul al-Gharb fī al-Qaḍā’ Sakhāfa... wa ‘al-Ikhwān’ Lā Turīdu al-Ḥiwār,” <<https://today.almasryalyoum.com/article2.aspx?ArticleID=466031&IssueID=3611>> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- Muntadā al-‘Ulamā’. 2015. *Taqrīr Shar‘ī ḥawla Ziyāra al-Masjid al-Aqṣā fī Ḍill al-Iḥtilāl*. <<https://www.msf-online.com/البيان-الختامي-لمؤتمر-الطريق-إلى-القدس>> (Accessed: October 14, 2019)
- Qanāt al-‘Arabīya*. 2009 (Apr. 26). “Shaykh al-Azhar wa ‘Ulamā’u-hu Yarfuḍūna Ziyāra al-Quds bi-Ta’shīrāt Safar Isrā’īlīya,” <<https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/04/26/71484.html>> (Accessed: November 4, 2020)
- . 2019 (Aug. 21). “Tamāhiyan ma’a Da’wa Amīr Qaṭar al-Sābiq: Ra’īs Ittīḥād ‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn Yujīzu Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/gulf/2019/08/20/البيان-الختامي-لمؤتمر-الطريق-إلى-القدس>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- . 2019 (Aug. 25). “al-Raysūnī Yarfuḍu al-Tarāju‘ ‘an Fatwā ‘al-Taṭbī’ wa Yuhājim Munazzama al-Ta’āwun al-Islāmī,” <<https://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/gulf/2019/08/25/البيان-الختامي-لمؤتمر-الطريق-إلى-القدس>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- Qanāt al-Jazīra*. 2004 (Mar. 6). “al-Quds Arḍ Filasṭīn,” (al-Sharī‘a wa al-Ḥayāt) <<https://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2004/6/4/القدس-أرض-فلسطين>> (Accessed: October 24, 2019)
- . 2007 (Sep. 30). “Intiqādāt li-Da’wa Wazīr Miṣrī al-Muslimīn ilā Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2007/10/1/انتقادات-لدعوة-وزير-مصري-إلى-المسلمين-إلى>> (Accessed: November 3, 2020)
- . 2010 (Apr. 7). “al-‘Arīfī Yatarāji’u ‘an Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2010/4/7/العرفي-يتراجع-عن-زيارة-القدس>> (Accessed: November 21, 2020)
- . 2010 (Jul.13). “al-Qaraḍāwī Yuḥarrimu Mujaddidan Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2010/7/13/القرضاوي-يحرم-مجددا-زيارة-القدس>> (Accessed: October 13, 2019)
- . 2010 (Jul. 17). “al-Taḍārub fī al-Fatāwā ḥawla Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/programs/behindthenews/2010/7/17/التضارب-في-الفتاوى-حول-زيارة-القدس>> (Accessed: October 18, 2019)

- . 2010 (Jul. 18). “Rafḍ Wāsi’ li-Da‘wāt Ziyāra al-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2010/7/18/رفض-واسع-لدعوات-زيارة-القدس>> (Accessed: November 16, 2020)
- . 2012 (Apr. 20). “al-Qaraḍāwī Yarfūḍu Ziyāra Muftī Miṣr li-l-Quds,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2012/4/20/القرضاوي-يرفض-زيارة-مفتي-مصر-للقدس>> (Accessed: November 16, 2020)
- . 2014. (Apr. 30). “Mu’tamar bi-l-Urdunn Yusharri’na ‘an Ziyāra al-Quds taḥta al-Iḥtilāl,” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2014/4/30/مؤتمر-بالأردن-يشرعن-زيارة-القدس-تحت>> (Accessed: October 11, 2019)
- . 2020 (Aug. 18). “Muftī al-Quds wa al-Diyār al-Filasṭīnīya Yuḥarrim al-Ziyārāt al-Taṭbī’īya li-l-Quds wa Muqaddasāti-hā,” <<https://mubasher.aljazeera.net/news/politics/2020/08/18/مفتي-القدس-والديار-الفلستينية-يحرم>> (Accessed: August 19, 2020)
- . 2020 (Oct. 23). “Kayfa Intaqama al-Iḥtilāl miman I’taraḍa ‘alā al-Wujūd al-Imārātī fī al-Aqṣā?” <<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/alquds/2020/10/23/كيفية-انتقام-هكذا-من-مصادرة-وإبعاد-واعتقال-الوجود-الإماراتي-في-الأقصى>> (Accessed: October 24, 2020)
- al-Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf. 2003. *Fatāwā al-Mu’āṣira (al-Juz’ al-Thālith)*. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī.
- Shūmān, ‘Abbās. 2018. “Kalima Faḍīla al-Ustādh al-Duktūr ‘Abbās Shūmān fī Mu’tamar al-Azhar al-‘Ālamī li-Nuṣra al-Quds,” *Majalla al-Azhar* (Jumādā al-Ākhira/Fibrāyir), pp.966–972.
- Skāy. 2012 (Apr. 25). “al-Jifrī: Yanbaghī I’āda al-Nazar fī Ta’shīr al-Quds,” <<https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/16953-الجفري-ينبغي-إعادة-النظر-تأشيرة-القدس>>?fbclid=IwAR0Wh0uT7DjiL4Y-qGVFh46fQrm0JTKFWbGzWBTCer5ddE6OISxRO6aFA1Y> (Accessed: November 12, 2020)
- al-‘Umq al-Maghribī. 2019 (Aug. 10). “al-Raysūnī: Laysa Kull Man Zāra al-Quds Muṭabbi’an: Wa li-Hādhā A’tadhiru min al-Filasṭīnīyīn,” <<https://al3omk.com/446030.html>> (Accessed: October 22, 2019)
- . 2019 (Aug. 11). “al-Raysūnī: Laysa Kull Man Zāra al-Quds Muṭabbi’an: Wa li-Hādhā A’tadhiru min al-Filasṭīnīyīn,” *YouTube* <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxyCrxnhUVA>> (Accessed: October 22, 2019)
- Wafā. 2016 (Sep. 26). “Nadwa bi-Rām Allāh Tad’ū ilā Fath Ṭarīq Siyāḥī Islamī li-l-Quds,” <https://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=OBqyhia712228177749aOBqyhi> (Accessed: October 15, 2019)
- . 2019 (Aug. 19). “al-Habbāsh Yuraḥhibu bi-Taṣrīḥāt Ra’īs al-Majlis al-‘Ālamī li-‘Ulamā’ al-Muslimīn ḥawla Ziyāra al-Quds,” <https://wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=ePjbCHa859732761195aePjbCH> (Accessed: November 24, 2020)

———. n.d. “Khiṭābāt al-Ra’īs Maḥmūd ‘Abbās ‘Abū Māzin’ 2012,” <https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=7369> (Accessed: November 11, 2020)

Zaqqūq, Maḥmūd Ḥamdī. 2018. “Taqdīm,” in Hay’a Taḥrīr Majalla al-Azhar (ed.), *al-Quds: Bayna al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī wa al-Mazā’im al-Ṣahyūniya*, Cairo: Majalla al-Azhar, pp. 3–8.