

Book Reviews

City of Stones: Hidden History of Jerusalem

By Meron Benvenisti. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, 283 pp.

This book is a political and historical study of the holy city of Jerusalem and its periods from the biblical era to the present. Beginning with a discussion of the contrasting versions of Jerusalem's history presented by Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, the author goes on to examine the way the radically opposed goals and aspirations of both sides results in conflicts. The author concludes that the stalemate over Jerusalem's future is a "condition" that can be dealt with only by a "process oriented" and not "solution oriented" approach. The participants must deal with the problems caused by the existing conditions. This book represents a dissenting Israeli view of the problem.

Meron Benvenisti, a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem whose authority included the administration of the eastern side of Jerusalem and the Old City, is highly qualified to write an unfalsified history of the Holy City.

In his book *City of Stone*, the author tried his best to demonstrate multisided historical, demographic, cultural, religious, and political opinions, together with the citizen's feelings, without victors or vanquished.

As I read the eight chapters of this precious book, I found that some issues needed clarification, and some questions needed answers.

Chapter 1

The book, especially the first chapter, is full of attempts to express the diverse feelings and beliefs of the Palestinians and Jews. The author gives the impression that throughout Jerusalem's history, it was a clean Jewish city. It is like a museum tour out of which 2,000 years of the city's history has been left out. The following are some of the expressions the author uses:

- "No other people designated Jerusalem as its capital in such an absolute and binding manner" (p. 1);
- "A bond that has no parallel in the annals of the nations" (p. 2);
- "There is no Muslim nation, but there is, of course, a Jewish nation" (p. 5);
- "One may ignore the Arab identity of the city's inhabitants throughout all that time" (p. 5);
- "Those they will meet there are Muslims and Christians but not Palestinians" (p. 8);
- "There was no Palestinian nationality in Jerusalem in the past and there is none in the present" (p. 8);

- “How is it that David’s Tower is shaped like an Arab structure” (p. 9);
- “Land of Israel” (p. 10); and
- “Jews constituted a majority of the city’s population” (p. 23).

Not only the Jews, who are about 14 million, consider Jerusalem as a major part of their doctrine, but the Arab and Islamic nations (1.25 billion) also believe that Jerusalem is the core of peace in the Middle East. If peace doesn’t prevail in Jerusalem it will not prevail in the Middle East or, perhaps, in the world. It constitutes a part of Arab and Muslim ideology.

Once upon a time, the Israelis lived in Jerusalem and built a temple and synagogues (see table below). The Muslims too lived in Jerusalem and in many places in the world and built many shrines and mosques. The right of worship does not assume the right of ownership; if it did, the world map would be different than it is today. The Muslims have the right of worship in Makkah, but they do not have the right of ownership, which is retained by the Saudis.

The Israelis pretend there is freedom of worship at Al-Aqsa Mosque, but this is not the case. The people of Gaza and the West Bank and Arab visitors are allowed to enter Jerusalem only with a visa. The eastern part of the city where the mosque resides is besieged.

Historical Table

Jerusalem was under the Sovereignty of the Following Nations

	Nation's Name	From Year	To Year	Number Of Years
1	Arab Jebusites	3000 B.C..	11750 B.C.	1250
2	Hixodos	1750 B.C.	1600 B.C.	150
3	The Egyptian Faraos	1479 B.C.	1279 B.C.	200
4	The Israelis	1000 B.C.	587 B.C.	413
5	Ashourians	721 B.C.	713 B.C.	8
6	Babilyons	587 B.C.	538 B.C.	49
7	Persians (First Occupation)	538 B.C.	332 B.C.	206
8	Greeks	332 B.C.	166 B.C.	166
9	Makkabis	166 B.C.	63 B.C..	103
10	Romans	63 B.C.	335 A.D..	398
11	Persians (Second Occupation)	614 A.D.	628 A.D.	14
12	Byzantins	335 A.D.	635 A.D..	300
13	Muslim (Before Crusaders)	635 A.D.	1099 A.D.	464
14	Crusaders	1099 A.D.	1187 A.D.	88
15	Muslims (After Crusaders)	1187 A.D.	1918 A.D.	731
16	British Mandate	1918 A.D.	1948 A.D.	30
17	Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	1948 A.D.	1967 A.D.	19
18	Israeli Occupation	1967 A.D.	EXISTING	

If Israel is pursuing a just and real peace, it should agree that Jerusalem is the capital of two states, open to all worshippers and tourists. Without this peace is in jeopardy.

Also, there is no political meaning in a Palestinian state established on the "Land of Israel." Such an expression should be limited to designating the state of Israel only.

I agree with the author that the city of Jerusalem should not be divided and must be the city of all believers (p. 3). At the same time it is not logical to consider this holy city the capital of one small nation (14 million) while ignoring the rights of 1.25 billion Muslims and 2 billion Christians.

Chapter 2

In this chapter the author explains the dramatic steps that were implemented by the Jerusalem municipality to annex the Arab land, until the municipality grew to 15 times its original area. This procedure was illegal because the acknowledged boundaries of Jerusalem were announced at the time of the British mandate. The political aim behind this aggressive planning policy was to confiscate the maximum area of land from the West Bank.

Chapter 3

This chapter is dedicated to the Al-Aqsa Mosque campus (according to the Muslims) or the Temple Mount and the Western Wall (according to the Jews), having in mind that the Christian holy places are not disputed.

The author refers to the actions of fanatical groups as being responsible for changing the status quo on the Waqf sanctuaries and also for the demolishing of Arab dwellings in order to create a gigantic plaza opposite the Western Wall. He refers to the focal point of conflict during the British Mandate, which was the Western Wall and not what he calls the Temple Mount.

I would like to clarify one important issue with respect to the League of Nations' resolution, which was taken in 1930. The resolution permitted the Jews free access to the Western Wall, but did not allow them to bring chairs or benches, or to blow the shofar (ceremonial horn). The resolution did not permit undertaking any excavations or underground tunnels, or demolishing Arab dwellings to create a huge plaza—actions that were condemned internationally through the Security Council of the United Nations and UNESCO.

The author ignored important aggressive actions that were taken after 1967; the conflagration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on August 21, 1969, by Denis Rohan and his band that helped him from the outside by putting fire to the external west facade, and the armed attack on the Dome of the Rock in 1983 during which two Muslims were killed and forty injured. The author did not mention Al-Aqsa Mosque massacre by Israeli soldiers. Such aggressive actions were undertaken with prior planning between fanatic groups and the Israeli authorities.

At the end of this chapter, the author sounds the alarm by announcing that the Jerusalem bomb is waiting to go off unless somebody defuses it.

Chapter 4

In this chapter the activities of the Jerusalem municipality during the terms of the different Arab and Jewish lord mayors are illustrated. At the end, the author

tries to demonstrate four models envisaged for the efficient administration of Jerusalem's urban space and for its shared control.

The four models, whether with a centralized or decentralized city council, will not succeed while the Israeli authorities are energetically Judaizing the city in terms of land and citizens. The Arab land is being confiscated, new settlements are being built in and around Jerusalem, and the demographic situation is being altered. The majority of Jerusalem's citizens are now ethnically Jewish, and they see no reason to oppose the suggested shape of the municipality council as long as it is serving the Jewish community. Any visitor to Jerusalem can see the huge difference in services provided the different ethnic communities.

Chapter 5

In this chapter, Mr. Benvenisti illustrates the planning policy in Jerusalem, especially the policy to expropriate Arab land for building Jewish apartments or neighborhoods. He avoids the use of the word "settlements," which is used internationally.

The primary aim of this political planning is to alter Jerusalem's image and to change the esthetic status quo and the religious status of the Holy City according to the Jewish slogan that Jerusalem belongs to the Jewish people by inheritance. The author emphasizes frequently the political and military planning that the Israeli authorities adopted during the thirty years of occupation (1967–1997), intending to surround Jerusalem with Jewish settlements (pp. 142, 144, 145, 146, 149, 154, 156, 161). Indicating the volume of newly constructed Jewish apartments during the past thirty years, the author cites the following figures: 65,000 apartments were built for Jews, out of which 38,000 apartments were on the east side of the Holy City; 9,000 apartments only were built by the Arabs.

He estimates the total population in Jerusalem that was affected by this unfair policy as follows: 600,000 citizens in total, out of which 21,000 residences only are Arabs, which means a population not exceeding 150,000.

If we look at the Israeli roads plan, which was formulated during the occupation period, we see that its goal was to encourage expropriation of Arab land. The following table, which I have copied from an Israeli planning scheme, illustrates this fact:

Type of Road	Net width (m.)	Right of way on either side (m.)	Total Israeli road width (m.)	International total width (m.)
High way	120	150	420	140
Principal	100	120	340	100
Regional	60	100	260	60
Local	40	70	180	30

This policy encourages ethnic conflict in the Holy City.

Mr. Benvenisti closes this chapter with a beautiful remark. He says: "Jerusalem has enough space to accommodate the needs and aspirations of all its inhabitants." If this is the case, then why are the Israeli authorities implementing political policies that ignore the feelings of Muslims and Christians

around the world? They should know that force will never maintain rights, and the right to worship does not mean the right of ownership.

Chapter 6

In this chapter the author describes the Jerusalem population from 1905 to the present. He exaggerates the Jewish population in certain years to reach the false conclusion (p. 173) that the Jews are now and always have been the majority in Jerusalem, and therefore concludes that Jerusalem belongs to the Jews.

If the author goes back to the records of the British Mandate, he will discover that the total population of Jerusalem in 1918 was 40,000 out of which 10,000 were Jews; the rest were Arabs.

If the author would refer to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1972), under "Jerusalem," he would find that the Jews started to come back to Jerusalem after their expropriation from Spain in the sixteenth century and that they were permitted by the Muslim caliph to pray in front of the Western Wall.

In A.D. 135 Hadrian, emperor of the Romans, dispossessed the Jews of Jerusalem, and until the nineteenth century few Jewish families were living there.

The author projects that the Jerusalem population will reach 800,000 by the year 2010 and that the Arab population will grow minimally, not exceeding a quarter million. This vision is aggressively against the Arabs, who were, after all, the original inhabitants of Jerusalem. This target cannot be realized without applying an anti-Arab policy because of their higher birthrate (2.5 children per Jewish woman vs. 4.7 children per Arab woman).

Mr. Benvenisti considers the recognition of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem as rights of Jewish ownership. If he would refer to the municipality records of 1948 he will find that only 4% of its premises were owned by the Jews, and the rest were owned by the Arab family (Sharaf). It was called the Jewish Quarter with respect to its inhabitants, not its ownership.

Some statements describe the Arab population as cowards, poor, primitive, quite a few educated, violent, and hating Jews (pp. 200–201). Hostility and prejudice against Arabs, which the Jewish fanatic schools are teaching, does not serve the benefit and welfare of the Israelis if they seek peace in the region.

Chapter 7

This chapter deals with the approaches to secure a solution beneficial to both Israelis and Palestinians. It refers to suggestions to divide the city into geopolitical units, assuring the independence of sacred places. But none of the suggested schemes can overwhelm and superimpose itself.

There is a reference to the Oslo Accords and the peace process on several pages of this chapter (pp. 203, 220, 225, 228, 232) with a confession that Jerusalem was explicitly excluded from this process. This confirms the prevailing Israeli view that the Jerusalem issue is not amenable to negotiation.

It is apparent that Israeli approval of Palestinian self-rule was for demographic reasons and not the pursuit of peace. According to Israeli statistics, prior to the 1967 War, the Jews constituted 86.4 percent of the population of Israel and, according to 1990 statistics, decreased after the West Bank occupation to 60 percent.

This fact has always frightened Israeli officials, as there will come a time when the Arabs will surpass the Jewish population in Israel. It has made them doubt peace without military superiority. Because of this reality, the late prime minister Menahem Begin wished to see Gaza sink into the sea.

According to Israeli thinking, this situation required a demographic change that would separate areas of absolute Arab majority from Israel. The result was the "Gaza-Jericho First" Agreement followed by the withdrawal from the highly populated cities in the West Bank.

The world has seen the Israeli government's reluctance to comply with the Oslo agreement items, to fully withdraw from the city of Hebron and other parts of the West Bank, and to commence negotiations on Jerusalem before creating a different demographic, economic, and institutional situation. The ruling Likud government, unlike the former Labor government, is now reluctant to take any further steps toward the comprehensive peace that is desired by all people in the area and that will be in the interest of the Israelis and the Arabs.

I cannot forget the words of a well-known Jewish pressman who after meeting His Majesty King Hussein early in 1997 said, "How can peace be implemented while 4.5 million Jews are living among 250 million Arabs?" This shows the shallow thinking that opposes real peace.

Chapter 8

In this chapter there is a transfer from practical to spiritual life. Mr. Benvenisti emphasizes the importance of Jerusalem on the Day of Judgment. Due to this he gives adequate space to the subject of cemeteries. He says, "In this city the dead are mightier than the living. The city of the dead is a reflection of that of the living. The living do not allow the dead to rest in peace."

The author estimates that there are about two dozen cemeteries in Jerusalem public and private, large and small, belonging to the three religions, with signs of religious fanaticism. The Israeli government during 1980 established secular cemeteries situated far from Jerusalem to bury non-Jews married to Jews.

In Jerusalem a violent campaign is being waged between the dead and the living.

The author claims that Jews perceive cemeteries differently than from Muslims and Christians, who do not regard them as places of perpetual holiness. This is not true; Muslims regard all cemeteries as sacred, not to be desecrated.

The author says:

Many cemeteries have been desecrated or destroyed in the cause of the numerous wars over Jerusalem, but the most extensive acts of destruction and vandalism were perpetrated between 1948 and 1967 in the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. This cemetery is second in sanctity only to the Western Wall.

40,000 out of 50,000 tombstones had been desecrated by Arabs between 1948 and 1967, and three roads and a parking lot were built through them on the cemetery land.

The truth behind this information should have been clarified by the author, who knows that the destruction was due to his previous authorities in the Jerusalem municipality. The cemetery that he mentions is situated at Ras Al-

Amoud quarter on the principal road that connects Jerusalem with Jericho and Amman. The road existed since the British Mandate. It was very narrow and constituted a bottleneck at the cemetery site. The Jews were not supposed to bury within the shoulders of the road, to allow a right-of-way to the highway. But during the time of Jordanian sovereignty of the east side of Jerusalem, the municipality seriously needed to expand the width of the highway to get rid of the bottleneck.

This was a legal action and a *force majeure*. There was no alternative solution. After 1967, the Israeli municipality returned the situation to the way it was in 1948, with the dangerous bottleneck. Such a situation would not be allowed to occur in West Jerusalem.

On the other hand, the Israeli municipality changed and desecrated Mamillah Muslim Cemetery in West Jerusalem, ignoring the feelings and complaints of all Arab countries to the U.N. Security Council and UNESCO.

At the end of this chapter, the author describes the Jewish and Muslim belief in the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment which should take place in Jerusalem. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stones shall withdraw their shining, and the heavens and earth shall shake. But unfortunately he mentions an amusing story (p. 260) alleged to Muslim tradition that those buried outside the Holy Land will have to tunnel underground like rats. Nothing like this is mentioned in the Qur'an or in the Prophet's sayings.

As a closing remark I would like to answer Mr. Benvenisti's question: How can the enigma of Jerusalem be solved so that a just and lasting peace in the Holy City and in the whole of the Middle East can be reached?

I think that the Israelis should withdraw some of their extreme beliefs, i.e., that the Jews are God's chosen people and that Palestine is the land of Israel. They should be convinced that Palestine is the Holy Land for all believers in God.

Many Israelis, particularly fanatic groups, believe that they are God's chosen people, while others are no more than Goyim (derogatory Yiddish word for non-Jew) who must wait upon their service. Meanwhile, the Book of Esther reads: "And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them" (8: 17). This implies that several peoples became Jewish because of Jewish terrorism and explains the presence of American, Russian, European, Ethiopian, Yemeni, and Japanese Jews living in 112 countries.

God answers this Jewish predicament in the Holy Qur'an, saying:

If the last home with God be for you specially, and not for anyone else, then seek you for death, if you are sincere. (2:94)

The arrogant and superior attitudes of the Israelis hinder peaceful coexistence with the Arabs. Israel believes that all Palestinian land is the land of Israel and takes advantage of its position to achieve this goal on every occasion, regardless of the fact that peace negotiations were initiated on the basis of "land for peace."

Israel, accordingly, calls the armed forces withdrawal from the self-rule area a redeployment within the context of a political solution to segregate Arabs and

Jews. This situation will void the possibility of both peace and the establishment of the Palestinian state.

Raif Y. Nijem

Former Minister of Public Works and Awqaf in Jordan
Member of the Royal Committee of Al-Aqsa Mosque Reconstruction

Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice

By Rosnani Hashim, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996, 204 pp.

Since World War II, Malaysia has undergone numerous reviews and changes in its educational policy at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Reports by Barnes, Fenn-Wu, Razak, Rahman Talib, and the Malaysian cabinet as well as the formulation of a national educational philosophy have inspired Malaysians and non-Malaysians to conduct research and thus produce several theses. Some are concerned with educational reform and ethnic responses, others with national development; some are concerned with national identity and national integration, others with a national educational policy and teacher education; and still others are concerned with the New Economic Policy (NEP) and equality of educational opportunity.

The book under review is one of a series of studies in the form of a doctoral dissertation on education. It seeks to investigate the problems of educational dualism in Malaysia, particularly as it affects the Muslim. Its aim is to arrive at a viable solution through a genuine synthesis of the two systems so that Muslims overcome their educational dilemma without alienating the non-Muslims.

In the first chapter, it is stated that this study hopes to contribute to the resolution of long-standing educational and social problems in Malaysia. It also hopes to demonstrate the compatibility of faith and reason.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 trace the history of the educational systems in Malaysia, i.e., the traditional or Islamic educational system and the colonial education in the nineteenth century in the Straits Settlement followed by the establishment of vernacular education in the Malay states following the Pangkor Treaty of 1874. The period from the early twentieth century up to the World War II has witnessed the increase of English and Malay vernacular schools, both in Strait Settlements and Federated States.

The year 1956 marked a milestone in the evolution of a national system of education. That year an education committee was set up. It was led by Dato Abdul Razak bin Hussein, who recommended the introduction of common content syllabus and the compulsory study of national and English languages in all primary and secondary schools in order to orient pupils with a Malayan outlook, to inculcate national consciousness, and to foster mutual understanding among citizen of various races and religions.

Chapter 4 describes the creation of the Rahman Talib report and the impact of the NEP on the decline of enrollment in religious schools to the transformation

of the curriculum of the Madrasah and the shortage of teachers in them. This is followed by the creation of the NEP after the May 13 crisis which had a two-pronged objective, namely, the eradication of poverty and the restructuring of Malaysian society.

Chapter 5 describes the Islamic philosophy of education. Based on the conception formulated in the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah in 1977, it is taken mainly from a paper presented by Muhammad al-Naqib al-Attas on the aims and objectives of Muslim education. This is probably the core of the study. It is also the basis for all reforms of education after 1977, i.e., the Cabinet report, the New Curriculum of Primary School (KBSR), the Integrated Curriculum of Secondary School (KBSM), and the formulation of the National Education Philosophy in 1987. The rest of the book is a review and analysis of contemporary education in Malaysia with two systems running parallel to be amalgamated and integrated into a single educational system to bring all Malaysians irrespective of race and creed to study together and achieve the dream of a truly united, progressive, and prosperous Malaysia.

So much for the dream. Now let us look at the early statements and generalizations made by the author on the Islamic philosophy of education. She says:

For this purpose the Western philosophy of education will be used as a basis for comparison and as a guideline since *there is insufficient original thought and work on philosophy of education in the Islamic intellectual tradition although it is rich with work of pedagogy.* (p. 77) (emphasis added)

The quotation is taken from Khalil A. Totah's *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926). She could have qualified under which conditions and circumstances Totah's work was published because after Totah there were generations of philosophers pioneered by Mustafa Abdel Razeq, a professor of philosophy at Cairo University before the World War II and then Sheikh Abdul Halim Mahmud (Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar), Muhammad al-Bahiy, Abdullah Darraz, Mahmud Qasim, and many others. The most influential probably is Ali Sami El-Nashshar, who headed The Alexandrian School of Philosophy. The only disadvantage is that their works were not available in English as they were graduates of either French or German universities. The translations, however, are available in Arabic. The only work cited in this book, apart from Totah's, is Ahmad Shalabi's—since he graduated from Cambridge University it is available in English. The translation is also available in Arabic as well as in Malay. It is unfair to judge the original thought and work on the philosophy of education in the Islamic intellectual tradition based solely on Totah's work because a generation of contemporary philosophers have refuted Totah's claims.

There were typographical errors. The most salient one is the absence of Arabic transliteration for the Arabic names and subjects. One also notices that *'ulum 'aqliyah* is written *'ilm al-aqliyah* which should be written either *al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyah* or *'ulūm 'aqliyah*; that *'ilm aqliyah* should be *'ilm aqliy* (p. 83); and that *al-Ikhwan al-Safa* should be *Ikhwan al-Safa*.

If the book is reprinted a separate chapter comparing the colonial legacy and Islamic legacy should be added so that the excellent exposition of dualism in Malaysian education does not give the impression that it was an isolated phe-

