

Silenced historical sources and the Qur’anic narrative on the history of Palestine and Jerusalem



Dr. Badi' Al-'Abed

Professor of Architecture
Former Dean – Faculty of Engineering
Consultant Architect, Amman, Jordan

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the historical sources: ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman that deal with the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. These sources have been overlooked and silenced, since they contest, refute and invalidate the occurrence of the events of the Jewish narrative and expose the fallacy and fabrication inherent in it. This paper also demonstrates the technicality of putting these silenced sources into use. In order to achieve this objective, it reviews the narrative of the written Jewish sources and the silenced historical ones and demonstrates how the latter contradict the former and invalidate them, and how the silenced historical ones are totally devoid of any of the false claims related to the historical events as mentioned in the written Jewish narrative. This paper juxtaposes both the written Jewish and the Qur’anic narratives. The latter, for the most part, registers ultra-historic religious miracles, and not real human historical events. The paper exposes the exaggerations and fabrications in the written Jewish narrative that transforms the ‘religious miracle’ into a ‘lived human historical event’, in an effort to incorporate the Jews into the history of Palestine and the Arab region.

Keywords:

ancient historical narratives on Palestine and Jerusalem; Islamic narrative on the Exodus; Tanakhian distortion on the holy land

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Introduction

Except for some rare exceptions for researchers who dare to contradict the Tanakhian (Old Testament) narrative (Torah narrative and the written Jewish sources); it is the one imposed on researchers dealing with the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. As for other historical sources that include ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman and Qur’anic narratives, they are either relegated to silence or forgotten. They are deliberately silenced by Jewish and Western researchers because such sources contradict, and even negate, the narrative of written Jewish sources and the Jewish presence in

history. This in turn, may lead to the negation of the written Jewish narrative altogether. As for Arab researchers, both old and contemporary, the majority adopt the narrative of the written Jewish sources. This is manifested in their reliance on Jewish and Western sources when writing about the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. The reasons as to why Arab researchers refrain from making use of the historical sources that contradict the written Jewish narrative may be because they either do not know of their existence, or their inability to make use of them, or both.

Strangely enough, most Muslim historians and interpreters (*mufasireen*) of the Qur'an, have adopted the Jewish narrative to explain the verses (*ayat*) that speak about Jews.¹ Some have even claimed that al-Aqsa mosque was built by the prophets David and Solomon. Ibn Katheer, the Damascene, (d.775 H.) took notice of this fact, when he cited a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, which says, (Ibn Katheer 1985: 6-7):

"Relate my sayings, even if one verse, and speak about the children of Israel and there's nothing wrong with that. Narrate my sayings but do not lie. He, who deliberately lies about my sayings, let him take his seat in Hell.

Ibn Kateer described this hadith as: *"belonging to the Israelites that are silenced in our heritage. We have nothing to support them and nothing to confute them. Therefore, they might be narrated just as a warning. And this is what we do in this book [Al-Bidaya wa Nihaya - the Beginning and the End]. Whichever of them proved false by our religion, is rejected and should not be narrated except by way of denial and revocation. Since God, Glory be to Him, has made us dispense with all other religions by our prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and dispense with all holy books by our Qur'an; we should not, then, rush to their texts, with all their contents of random talk and confusion, lies and fabrication, distortion and alternation, and added to all that, repealing and changing."*

The above clearly demonstrates that Ibn Katheer knew well that the narrative of the written Jewish sources was not authentic. Therefore, he resorted to the Qur'anic narrative to evaluate it. Had Ibn Katheer had access to the contemporary historical and archaeological data that negate the written Jewish narrative, he would not have hesitated to negate it altogether. Hence, he recommended that its use be restricted to a warning. In my opinion, the Qur'anic material that conforms with the narrative of the written Jewish sources, limited as it was, in the most part, served to introduce miracles that functioned as examples and warnings, a motivation for contemplation and meditation, preaching and reproaching, and

was not to be understood as lived historical events. Since miracles are divine and metaphysical acts, they are, therefore, ultra-historic. They are un-lived, immediate and instantaneous events, even if they did occur at a specific moment in time. While, in contrast, historical events are lived human experiences.

Narrative of the written Jewish sources

The narrative of the written Jewish sources, related to the history of Palestine and Jerusalem, on the one hand, is founded on silencing Palestinian history altogether and on denying the Palestinian human presence. On the other, its focus is on inserting the Jews into the history of the Arab region by transforming the religious miracle into a lived human historical event. Thus, the said narrative became an undisputable lived reality in the Jewish and Western Christian collective conscience, and regrettably to a great extent, in the Arab-Islamic collective conscience. This is in spite of the fact that the written Jewish narrative acknowledges the Canaanite presence in Palestine², and that the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Persian historical sources do not contain any allusion to the Jewish narrative.

In the 1970s, the aforementioned facts encouraged the appearance of some exceptional cases that contradicted the written Jewish narrative, although they could not refute it completely. Nevertheless, the said narrative was undermined. But regrettably, Arabs did not make proper use of the aforesaid cases, and therefore, the presence of the narrative of written Jewish sources remained prominent in the Arab historical and religious sources, in spite of the irrational exaggerations in the narrative, and of its putting the religious miracle to use as a human historical event.

Among the exceptional cases, mention should be made of some contemporary Jewish and Western historical trends that contradicted the written Jewish sources and demonstrated their falsity and their prejudice against Palestinian history, in an effort to obliterate this history and to obscure its human presence. All this is to support the false claims of the Jews' right to Palestine. In his *The Invention of the Jewish People* (2010), the contemporary Jewish historian, Shlomo Sand, professor at Tel Aviv University, at the town of Sheikh Mu'anis, occupied Palestine, denies the false claims in the written Jewish narrative of the diaspora

and the exile of the Jewish “people” by the Romans.

We can also cite Western historians, such as the American Thomas Thompson, author of *The Mythic Past, The Bible in History* (2000), who also raised doubts about the written Jewish narrative and concluded that it is a mere fable and not suitable for constructing historical events.

Furthermore, the British historian Keith Whitelam, in his book, *Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (2000) raises doubts about the Biblical narrative altogether. In his displaying the history of the Israelites, he considers it a device for suppressing the Palestinian history for the benefit of the Jews. Whitelam condemns scholars who exploit the written Jewish narrative for suppressing Palestinian history to uphold Zionist claims.

Arabs and Muslims researchers should honor such tendencies and make proper use of them. They should also refute, and even negate, the written Jewish narrative altogether. In addition to the aforementioned tendencies, use should be made of the Qur’anic narrative that demonstrates that the religious miracle is but an instantaneous, immediate and ultra-historic act of God, and not a lived human historical event, as claimed by the exaggerations and detail of the written Jewish narrative. The latter is demonstrated below.

Silenced historical sources

Ancient Egyptian sources

These sources have been completely silenced. In the ancient Egyptian sources (the papyri) there is no mention of the story of the exodus. In the Qur’an, the story of the exodus - clear as it is - does not specify that its location was in Egypt (Misr) as we know it today, as stated in the Jewish narrative. The following verse (*aya*):

“And (remember) when you said, O Musa (Moses)! We cannot endure one kind of food. So invoke your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth grows, its herbs, its cucumbers, its Fum [wheat or garlic], its lentils and its onions. He said, Would you exchange that which is better for that which is lower? Go you down to [Misran] any town and you shall find what you want! ...”³

Describes a situation that existed after and not before the exodus. According to linguists and experts of the Qur’anic text, the inflection (*at-tanween* - “*tanween*” - “*an*”) in the word (Misran - مصرًا), does not imply a specification, but rather a generalization. The word ‘Misr’ in Arabic means a city, and not the Egypt of today. (Ar-Razi 1985, vol.3: 105-110) The content of the verse does not support the narrative of the written Jewish sources, neither in time, since it refers to a situation existing after the Jewish exodus, nor in place, since according to the rules of Arabic grammar the inflection (*at-tanween*) in the word ‘Misran’ negates a specified place.

As for the description and recording of the actual life of the Jews prior to the exodus, the location of their residence is not specified anywhere in the Qur’anic chapters of “Al-Baqarah”, “Al-A`raf”, “Al-Ma`idha”, “Yunus”, “Ta-Ha”, “Ash-Shu`ara” and “Al-Qasas”, as well as in other chapters. Most probably, they may have been living in Egypt. They may also have been living in another place, as stated in the above-mentioned verse. The destination of their exodus is not named or specified in the Qur’an either; that is, there is no explicit mention of Palestine. The Qur’an says:

“O my people! Enter the holy land which Allah assigned to you and turn not back [in flight]; for then you will be returned as losers.”⁴

This contradicts what is stated in the *Book of Exodus* (Torah) - the first five books in the Tanakh (Old Testament) and one of the written Jewish sources - which says positively that the Jews were in Egypt; they then headed for the land of the Canaanites i.e. Palestine.⁵

But we do not find a confirmation of this fact in the ancient Egyptian sources (*papyri*). According to Immanuel Velikovsky, (1995:23-64) in his book, *Ages in Chaos*, the papyri have, so far, not been found to contain any allusion to the Jewish exodus from Egypt. This fact, however, does not contradict the description of the Jews actual life in accordance with the Qur’anic verses, as the Qur’anic method of recording the historical events does not specify the time and the geographical locus of the events. This provides an opportunity for all kinds of opinions. The aim of mentioning and recording the historical events in the Qur’an is to give examples and warnings, and to provide

a motive for contemplation and meditation on the fate of bygone peoples and civilizations, in an effort to preach and warn against disobedience of God or against polytheism.

This might be considered a kind of consolidation of the historical philosophy in Islam that rests on: *at-tawasul at-tharikhiy* (**historical continuity**), *at-tafaker wa-at-t'amol* (**thinking and speculation**), *ad-duroose waal-'iber* (**lessons and eruditions**), and *at-tanaw` dakhil al-wihda* (**variety within unity**). This is in contrast to the Torah and the written Jewish sources fallacy that specifies the date and the geographical locus of the historical events, thus facilitating the process of refuting and negating the relevant event. Therefore, the Qur'anic style of narrating and recording the event of the exodus, and the absence of the said event from the Egyptian papyri, refute the Jewish narrative of the exodus and negate the details of the event related in the book of *Exodus* in the Torah.

This, in turn, leads to two probabilities. The first is that Jews were not, in fact, in Egypt, and hence, the exodus did not start there. Thus, we can explain the absence of the event in the old Egyptian sources, irrespective of the exaggerations of the written Jewish narrative. And the Qur'anic narrative of the exodus can, thereby, be confirmed as well, which assures that the said event did indeed take place and started from some place where an insignificant number of Jews had existed. In this regard, the Qur'an states:

*"And We revealed to Musa (Moses), saying: "Depart by night with my slaves verily, you will be pursued." The Fir'aun (pharaoh) sent callers to [all] cities. [Saying]: "Verily, these indeed are but a small band.""*⁶

The second probability is that the Jews did exist in Egypt, somewhere on the peripheries. But due to the insignificance of their number, their exodus was not an important historical event; hence, the absence of the event in the ancient Egyptian sources. The Qur'anic narrative, however, made use of it in the frame of the miracle of Moses for providing examples and for preaching, reproaching and as a motive to draw conclusions. Since miracles are by definition metaphysical events, they do not leave any trace to indicate their occurrence.

It would be appropriate to add at this point that even if it is more likely that the Jews did exist in Egypt or on its periphery, the fact that their exodus is not referred to the ancient Egyptian sources indicates that this was an insignificant event in the ancient history of Egypt. This is likely to be for the reason that this occurrence did not happen in the amplified way it is described in the Torah, either in manner or in number. The Torah, in the *Book of Exodus* mentions that the number of men who accompanied Moses was 600,000⁷. Hence, and according to the estimations in the interpretations of the Bible (Arabic Life Application Bible - LAB) (٢٠٠٢), the total number of Israelites, men, women and children who accompanied Moses in the exodus, is 2 million. This contradicts logic and confirms the Qur'anic narrative that they were but a few persons. In his 'Introduction' Ibn Khaldun (No history of Publication: 10-11) asserts and proves their number as small.

What is implied here is that the small number of Jews may be the reason why the story or the event of the exodus is overlooked in the old Egyptian sources. This in turn refutes the exaggerations of the written Jewish narrative but does not contradict the Qur'anic one, because the latter is concerned with giving examples, with warnings, as providing a motive for contemplation and meditation and for preaching and reproaching. All this is realized through narrating the punishment that had befallen the Jews and the ancient Egyptians because they were polytheists and had disobeyed God. The Qur'anic narrative is not concerned with chronicling the event of the exodus perse.

Generally, the only available ancient Egyptian source relating to the history of Jerusalem is one of the Tell el-Amarna letters that go back to 15th century BCE. The letter is a grievance submitted by Abdi-Hepat, King of Orsalem (Jerusalem), to the Pharaoh, wherein he complains about the Bedouin raids on the city. But this does not confirm the narrative of the written Jewish sources; neither does the Egyptian invasion of Palestine confirm it. Therefore, exploiting this absolute absence of the Jews from the old Egyptian sources by Arab and Muslim scholars engaged in studying the history of Palestine and Jerusalem – places that are geographically adjacent to Egypt and historically attached to it with regards to history and security - might help to refute, and

even invalidate, the exaggerations of the Jewish narrative concerning the exodus altogether.

As for Velikovsky's attempt (1995: 23-125) to insert the Jews into the history of ancient Egypt by using the contents of the Epoque papyrus (later known as the Leiden papyrus) and the Hermitage papyrus to make predictions about future events and catastrophes, even he himself admits that the contents of the papyrus are mere prophecies. They do not describe a historical event that took place in the past, or an event that took place during the time of the predictor or the writer of the papyrus. In other words, they are not a record of a lived event. He also admits that there is no document or inscription dating back to the history of ancient Egypt that directly points to the episode of the exodus.

The same might be said about Velikovsky's (1995:129-172) attempt to compress the history of ancient Egypt into 600 years, so as to synchronize the journey of the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut (1508-1458 BCE) to Punt (Ethiopia or Somalia) with the Queen of Sheba's (Balqis) visit to the Prophet Solomon (957-917 BCE). He was at pains to substantiate that Punt is Palestine and that Hatshepsut is the queen who visited the Prophet Solomon. In his effort, Velikovsky sometimes adopted a methodology of proximity (nearness) and comparison; at other times he resorted to twisting and altering the facts, or to guesswork and probability. It was far less convincing and ineffectual than his previous above mentioned attempt. All the gifts brought by Hatshepsut in her journey, back to Egypt from Punt which included ivory, ebony, incense, myrrh, sandal wood and animals (lions, elephants) do not exist in Palestine.

The design of the Deir el-Bahri temple of (Hatshepsut), which Velikovsky claimed had been inspired by the design of the alleged Temple of Solomon, is completely different with regard to the structure and the building materials used for the alleged Temple of Solomon. Added to that, the Deir el-Bahri Temple is 600 years older than the alleged Temple of Solomon. The latter is not a Jewish structure, but a Phoenician one constructed by the engineer Hiram al-Suri (of Tyre), as claimed by the written Jewish narrative. As for Deir el-Bahri, it is a genuine Egyptian structure that embodies all techniques, elements, ornaments, features and characteristics of ancient Egyptian architecture.

From the viewpoint of archaeology, the episode of Balqis and Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon), as related in the written Jewish narrative, is but a myth. There is not a single piece of physical evidence to substantiate the authenticity of the written Jewish narrative.

The Qur'anic narrative concerning the meeting of the Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) with the woman who ruled Saba' (Sheba), with all the concurrent details and considerations, runs as follows:

*"He inspected the birds, and said: What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe? Or he is among the absentees? I will surely punish him with a severe torment, or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason. But the hoopoe? Stayed not long: he (came up and) said: I have grasped (the knowledge of a thing) which you have not grasped and I have come to you from Saba' with the true news."*⁸

*"... A 'Ifrit (strong one) from jinn said: I will bring it to you before you rise from your place (council). And verily, I am indeed strong, and trustworthy for such work. One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye! Then when Sulaiman (Solomon) saw it placed before him he said: This is by the Grace of my Lord – to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of) his ownself; and whoever is ungrateful (he is ungrateful only for the loss of his ownself). Certainly, my Lord is Rich [Free of all needs], Bountiful."*⁹

The woman mentioned in the above-cited Qur'anic verses was called Balqis by Muslim historians and interpreters of the Qur'an. As the act was effectuated by the Jinn, whom God had subjugated to assist Prophet Solomon, and not by human beings, it might be classified as a miracle that aims to give examples and to warn, to preach and to reproach, (Ar-Razi 1985, vol.24:188-201). Miracles record a phenomenon or an instantaneous, immediate and transient event, even if they took place in a certain moment of time. That means miracles do not leave indicative signs, because they are

not historical man-made events, but an ultra-historical event effectuated by God. In most cases, a miracle records an unfamiliar event, an incomprehensible one, because it infringes the laws of nature. Such an event aims at demonstrating the Creator's ability to daze and to impress the contemporaries who witness the miraculous act; thereby preaching and reproach reach their full impact and the miracle brings about its desired objective, as in the following verses:

*"Thamud and 'Ad people denied the Qari'ah (the striking Hour of Judgement)! As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the awful cry! And as for 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious violent wind! Which Allah imposed on them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so that you could see men lying overthrown (destroyed) as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms! Do you see any remnants of them! And Fir'aun [pharaoh] and those before him, and the cities overthrown [the towns of the people of (Lot)] committed sin. And they disobeyed their Lord's Messenger, so He seized them with a strong punishment."*¹⁰

Hence, the 'miracle' should not be recorded, or understood as an ordinary historical event, because it is instantaneous and immediate, even if it takes place at a certain moment in time. This might explain why ancient historical Egyptian and Yemeni sources did not record such events as lived historical realities. It could also explain why the aforesaid events are not recorded and documented archeologically. There is no archaeological evidence of their occurrence because they infringe the laws of nature, and are, therefore, beyond human history.

The Qur'anic narrative records an instantaneous, immediate and transient event, in the form of a miracle that infringes the laws of nature, in an effort to realize its religious objectives of preaching, reproaching, giving lessons and examples and prompting contemplation and meditation. It does not record a historical man-made event that involves actual facts. No doubt this contradicts the written Jewish narrative that transformed into lived historical events the meeting between Prophet Solomon with the woman who ruled Saba' (Sheba); as well as other

transient events in Judaism and in the Jews' relations with God. This also contradicts the reason behind the occurrence of those events. All this constitutes an effort made by Jews to insert themselves into history, as equals to ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and other peoples. The histories of these people do not mention Jews since they represented, for the latter-mentioned peoples, a community that lived on the edge of their history. They - the Jews - therefore tried to insert themselves into history by transforming the transient events in their religious life into lived historical events. But while doing so, they forgot, or they pretended to forget, that geography (place) is the most important element in historical events, and that geography is the very element that they lacked in the past and still lack in the present. The 'no-place' complex is inseparable from the incidents of their life. Their Torah was revealed in the wilderness, that is, in no-place. Their endless wandering and diaspora reinforced their 'no-place complex'. Geography is their primary enemy; it has ousted them from history in the past, and is still doing so in the present.

As for the existence of some Jews in Palestine, it is a transitory existence, regardless of how long it may last, because it is nothing more than extortion and occupation. Extortion never provides a geographical welcoming environment for the extorting party. Because the resulting events, no matter how important, are listed as criminal deeds that do not make history; they are only recorded in the margin of history. Therefore, Jews were, are still and will always occupy a marginal place in history, since they lack the principal element for making history, i.e. geography.

As I have already demonstrated, all the past attempts by Jews aimed at transforming the religious event into a historical one in order to provide themselves with the element of geography, which they presently lack, and which would enable them to make an entrance into history and to participate in making historical events, are simply desperate and futile.

Assyrian, Babylonian (Mesopotamian civilizations) sources

The written Jewish narrative is the only source that spoke about the two incidents of enslavement, (the minor and major) and about

the destruction of the alleged temple. The first enslavement, according to the written Jewish narrative, was done by the Assyrian emperor,¹¹ Sargon II, in 721 BCE; the second was done by the Babylonian emperor, Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 BCE.¹²

These two incidents are not mentioned in the Assyrian and Babylonian sources. Assyrian and Babylonian archaeology never contributed convincingly in recording the presence of the written Jewish narrative in the aforesaid sources. The books dealing with ancient Levantine history, founded on archaeology, also never recorded a convincing presence of the Jewish narrative. This fact negates the occurrence of the two aforesaid incidents.

Strangely enough, the Western historical sources remain silent about the absence of the Jewish narrative from the Assyrian and Babylonian sources. This silence has bestowed a kind of historical credibility upon the said narrative. And this, in turn, has prompted the Arab scholars engaged in the ancient history of the Levant - Palestine and Jerusalem in particular - to adopt the Jewish narrative, instead of refuting it as based on the fact that it is absent from Assyrian and Babylonian sources. The reason for this is that by refuting the occurrence of the two enslavement incidences - the major enslavement attributed to Nebuchadnezzar in particular - leads in turn to invalidating the claims related to the existence of the alleged temple and of its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Our intention here is not negation *per se*, notwithstanding its scientific credibility and historical importance, but that negation should be put to use to refute the Jews' claims about their alleged temple.

Negation does not contradict the Qur'anic narrative related in the chapter *surah al-Isra'* ("The Night Journey"), where God's punishment of Jews is said to have taken place during two main periods and other subsequent periods, dependent on their behaviour. This is stated in the following verses from *surah al-Isra'*:

Glorified [and Exalted] is He (Allah) [above all that evil they associate with Him] Who took His slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from Al-Masjid-al-Haram (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid-al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem), the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him (Muhammad) of Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, lessons,

signs, etc.). Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. And We gave Musa (Moses) the Scripture and made it a guidance for the Children of Israel (saying): Take none other than Me as (your) Wakil (protector, Lord or Disposer of your affairs). O offspring of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Nuh (Noah)! Verily, he was a grateful slave. And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture: indeed you would do mischief in the land twice and you will become tyrants and extremely arrogant! So, when the promise came for the first of the two, We sent against you slaves of Ours given to terrible warfare. They entered the very innermost parts of your homes. And it was a promise (completely) fulfilled. Then We gave you a return of victory over them. And We helped you with wealth and children and made you more numerous in manpower. (And we said): If you do good, you do good for yourselves, and if you do evil (you do it) against yourselves. Then, when the second promise came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disgrace your faces and to enter the mosque (of Jerusalem) as they had entered it before, and to destroy with utter destruction all that fell in their hands. [And We said in the Taurat-(Torah)]: It may be that your Lord may show mercy to you, but if you return (to sins), We shall return (to Our Punishment). And We have made Hell a prison for disbelievers."¹³

Before displaying the said periods, an attempt will be made to highlight the true details relating to the building of al-Aqsa mosque.

Al-Aqsa mosque

Firstly, it should be mentioned that at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, al-Aqsa mosque had not yet been built. It was built during the reign of the Caliph Abdul Malek ibn Marwan (65-85H/685-705 CE) and his son, Caliph al-Waleed (85-96 H/705-715 CE). The content of the Qur'anic verses refers to what would be a mosque later on. That is, the Prophet Muhammad was carried in the night journey to the location of the where the future mosque would be located. This was God's way

of specifying the two sites of worship in Makkah and Jerusalem, due to their religious value as the two successive Qiblas [the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer]. The Construction of al-Ka`bah was passed through three distinct stages:

1- The inhabitation of Makkah by the settling of Ibrahim (Abraham), his wife Hajar and his son Ism`ail in the vicinity of the sacred House, and specifying the religious function of the city, as in the verses:

*"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by your Sacred House (the Ka`bah at Makkah) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salah). So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks."*¹⁴

God had already specified the site of al-Ka`bah. Therefore, Ibrahim was instructed to accommodate his offspring in the vicinity of the location specified by God for constructing al-Ka`bah and the sacred Mosque. And God demonstrated to Ibrahim the purpose of inhabitation is worship as expressed by prayers.

2- Specifying the location of al-Ka`bah that had been known only to God, as in the verses:

*"And (remember) when We showed Ibrahim (Abraham) the site of the (sacred) House (the Ka`bah at Makkah) (saying): Associate not anything (in worship) with Me, [La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) – Islamic Monotheism], and sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and those who bow (submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allah), and make prostration (in prayer)."*¹⁵

That is, God had specified to Ibrahim the site allocated for constructing the sacred mosque and indicated the conditions for its use; i.e. worship as expressed by believing in God and

avoiding polytheism, as well as by keeping it clean and pure.

3- Constructing al-Ka`bah after specifying its location, as in the verse:

*"And remember when Ibrahim (Abraham) and (his son) Isma`il (Ishmael) were raising the foundations of the House (the Ka`bah at Makkah), (saying), Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."*¹⁶

Here the process of locating the site ended in constructing the building, thus settling the question of the holiness of the site and its dedication to worship. The same stages apply to al-Aqsa mosque, that is:

a) The destination of the 'night journey' was the site already chosen and designated by God to be the location of a mosque - al-Aqsa. It is not the mosque claimed to be constructed by prophets David and Solomon in some Islamic sources that had resorted to the allegations of the Jewish narrative. Neither is it the alleged temple promoted by the Tanakh and the written Jewish sources. If the location of al-Aqsa mosque was the same location of the alleged temple, then why would God abstain from referring to this fact? He did that with al-Ka`bah constructed by Ibrahim, where the rites of the tolerant Hanifism (the religion of Ibrahim) had been performed. After that, polytheists started to perform their worshipping rites inside al-Ka`bah and erected their idols in its vicinity, known as the sacred mosque. Ultimately, God dedicated al-Ka`bah for Islam, after the Prophet Muhammad removed the idols from it. All this proves that the site of al-Aqsa mosque was a location specified for constructing a mosque for Muslims which God had designated for al-Aqsa mosque.

b) The Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (13-24 H/634-645 CE) came upon the site of al-Aqsa mosque in 15H/636 CE, after liberating Jerusalem, by concluding a peaceful agreement with Patriarch Sophronius, and after cleaning the site he, Umar, dedicating it for praying.

c) The Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malek ibn Marwan (66-86H/685-705CE), constructed the mosque of the Dome of the Rock in 72 H/692 CE, in side al-Masjid al-Aqsa (al-Haram). He then began to construct al-Qibliy mosque (also known as al-Aqsa mosque), because it is located in the Qibla (sought) side of al-Masjid al-Aqsa (al-Haram). His son, Calliph al-Waleed (86-97/86-97CE), completed the construction of al-Qibliy mosque in 96 H/715 CE. [the al-Aqsa mosque refer to al- Qibliy mosque, and to the whole area (144,000 m²) that contain: the mosque of the Dome of the Rock, al-Qibliy mosque (or al-Aqsa mosque), and more than 40 schools in the western and northern sides of it, the women's mosque and the museum in the south, al-Masjid al-Marwaniy together with the old al-Aqsa mosque in the basement, and all the other buildings inside the area of al-Aqsa mosque, known also as al-Haram al-Qudssiy or al-Haram ash-Sharief].

Remarkably enough, the site of al-Aqsa mosque was completely vacant during the time of the 'night journey'. Also remarkable is the fact that specifying the two sites of worship by God was confined to Islam. There is no such specification of worship buildings either in Judaism or in Christianity. The Tabernacle, mentioned in the *Book of Exodus*, in the Torah, was founded in the wilderness; that is in no-place. It was not located in a specific place but was folded and carried from one place to another during the 40 years of the *at-Teeh* (wanderings of the Jews), and even later. In addition, the site of the alleged temple was never specified. We have only claims about its existence and its location in more than one place. There is no written or physical archaeological evidence of its existence. Jews suffer a 'place' complex. And that is why they claim that the site of al-Aqsa mosque is the site of the alleged temple.

So much for al-Aqsa mosque and its site. As for the absence of any allusion to the two enslavement incidents in the Assyrian, Babylonian sources, the following section will examine and analyze the Qur'anic verses that revealed to the Israelites their future and their fate, as a result of their corruption and disobedience. These verses spoke about the transgressions committed by the Jews, and threatened them if they did not refrain from

their corruption. I will analyze the stages of their punishment in the Qur'anic narrative.

Stages of the Jews' punishment in the Qur'anic narrative

The written Jewish narrative specifies dates and geographical sites; it also defines adversaries. In order to magnify a certain event, it resorts to excessive detail and exaggeration. All this facilitates attempts to refute, even invalidate, the narrative, since such a level of detail and bias are solely mentioned in the Jewish narrative and are not supported in the historical sources of the civilizations that were directly concerned with the event described. Just as the exodus episode is neglected in the old Egyptian sources because it was a transient event, the episode of the two enslavement incidents is also absent from the historical Assyrian and Babylonian sources. Such sources are supposed to be concerned with the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem, with the burning down of the alleged temple and with the enslavement of the Jews, as the written Jewish narrative claims. The aforesaid events are historical, and had they been committed by the two civilisations, the Assyrian and Babylonian sources would not have neglected recording and documenting them, regardless of their magnitude. This means that the written Jewish narrative is incorrect because the sources concerned with the events of this narrative have not recorded them; or it might also mean that the events in the Jewish narrative are exaggerated, as in the case of the exodus.

Now we turn to the Qur'anic narrative that seems to conform superficially to the written Jewish narration, as related in the verse, "*And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture: indeed you would do mischief in the land twice [...]*", and thematically to the silence of the historical Assyrian and Babylonian sources. The latter verse matches the written Jewish narrative that speaks of two events - the minor and major enslavements. As for the theme, the details and exaggeration in the written Jewish narrative, the Qur'anic narrative conforms with the silence of the Assyrian and Babylonian sources, since it does not specify who will fight the Jews, nor does it specify the country, the geographical site, the place where the Jews live or where war takes place. The verse says: "... *They entered the very innermost parts of your homes (lands)*...". The Qur'anic

narrative does not specify the land or mention what befell the Jews after the war, such as the “destruction of the alleged temple, looting its vessels and enslaving the Jews”, as the written Jewish narrative claims.¹⁷ Note that the written Jewish narrative settled for making mention of the minor enslavement (Assyrian), while it focused on the major enslavement (Babylonian), aggrandized it and tended to exaggerate its details and its link with Persian history.

Remarkably, many Moslem jurists and interpreters of the Qur’an worked hard to explain the aforesaid verses. Some upheld the written Jewish narrative as related in the Tanakh, such as At-Tabari (1980, vol.15:17-35) in his Tafsir, but with a difference with regard to names. The Tanakh says that the minor enslavement was carried out by Assyrian Sargon II, while At-Tabari says it was Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) also an Assyrian king. Other jurists and interpreters never transcended the Qur’anic narrative but without contradicting the written Jewish narrative, such as ar-Razi in his Tafsir (ar-Razi 1985, vol.20:156-159). He claimed that Nebuchadnezzar carried out the minor enslavement, Goliath carried out the major enslavement, and that Talut (David) represented the phase of “*then we granted you victory over them ...*”. Here we find support for the written Jewish narrative, with some differences in interpretation. Goliath remains outside the written Jewish narrative that attributes its events only to Sargon II and the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. This means that, according to the Jewish narrative, Sargon II carried out the minor enslavement, and not the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who carried out the major enslavement. In addition, the minor enslavement took place three centuries after the reign of the Prophet David, and the major enslavement took place five centuries later, as claimed by the Tanakh. Therefore the interpretation of ar-Razi is invalid.

Other Islamic jurists and interpreters mentioned the written Jewish narrative as a citation from at-Tabari, but disagreed with and approved of it, such as the Damascene jurist, historian and Qur’anic interpreter, Ibn Katheer (1991, vol. 3:29-30) in his interpretation. He says, “If we had found something correct, or not far from being correct [in the Jewish narrative], it would have been admissible to write it and to narrate it. God knows better than us”.

The Qur’anic narrative, therefore, did not confirm the written Jewish narrative of the enslavement in its viewpoints and detail, but it confirmed it as regards the number of times the Qur’anic narrative specifies as twice. It left open the issue of the Jews' accountability and punishment for their corruption and disobedience, and for a third and may be fourth, fifth, sixth revenge and more. In other words, an open revenge, dependent on their behaviour, as in the holy verse, “*If you shall return (to sins), We shall return (to our punishment)...*”¹⁸ This was what happened to them in their wars as recorded in the *Tanakh*. The last of which was the war waged by the military commander Titus (later emperor 79–81 CE), who led a military campaign during the reign of his father, Vespasian (69 -79 CE), and invaded Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Could the two incidents mentioned in the written Jewish narrative have happened during the period between their entering Palestine and their defeat by Titus in 70 CE? Or could they be the episodes of their punishment, after the year 70 CE, up to this date, such as happened at the beginning of Islam, when Prophet Muhammad expelled them from al-Medina and its surroundings? Could the event related in the Qur’anic narrative be a third revenge? And how can we explain the persecution and expulsion that befell them much later in France, from where they were expelled four times during 1182–1322 CE? How can we explain what befell them in Britain in 1290 CE, in Austria, in 1421CE, and in Spain in 1492 CE? And how can we understand the way they were treated in Germany before and during the Second World War (1933–1945 CE)? During all the previously-mentioned events in Europe, the Jews did not belong to a specific land. They have not been in Palestine; they did not build the alleged temple. Could we consider this as a revenge and punishment for the fourth, fifth, sixth, and more times?

How then can we explain the revenge and punishment awaiting them in Palestine that they can expect at every minute and which they spare no effort to evade? It might even be said that the achievements of the Islamic Lebanese Resistance (Hezbollah) in 2006 CE, and those of Palestinian Resistance in the Gaza Strip in 2014 CE, were part of the awaited revenge. The latter could immobilize the civil aviation sector in occupied Palestine. The two resisting movements were able to force approximately 2

million Jews to live in bomb-shelters during the period of the two wars. They were also able to cripple the economy of the Zionist-Jewish entity during the same period.

At this point, we cannot be positive about the conformity of the Qur'anic narrative with the written Jewish narrative. The first is open to all probabilities, while the latter is confined to two historical events that are not supported by the Assyrian and Babylonian historical sources concerned with the two events. Hence, the term "twice", in the Qur'anic narrative does not necessarily refer to the minor and major enslavements. Nor can we be positive that the Jews have twice become transgressors in the past in order to align the Qur'anic and the written Jewish narratives. Given that the Jews, at present, are in a state of transgression that is unprecedented in their history, supposing they actually did have a history. How can the present transgression be described?, Is it the first or the second or a third? That justifies the phrase: *"If you shall return (to (sins), we shall return (to our punishment)..."*.

Conformity between the two narratives is difficult to acknowledge. The Qur'anic narrative is absolute in time and unlimited in place. It is open for all past, present and future events. It is not concerned with history as events and facts. It is concerned with the philosophy of history, serving as lessons and example, for contemplating and considering the affairs of non-Muslims, so that Muslims can draw conclusions. Therefore, the Qur'anic narrative does not comprise dates, human temporal experience and specific place names. It leaves the historical events open for all interpretations.

As for the written Jewish narrative, it is limited in time and place and is linked to the Jews as a human community. It records alleged facts and events, human temporal experience, and specific place names that cannot be found in any other source. They lack historical support and geographical presence. I have demonstrated this as applied to the silenced ancient Egyptian and Assyrian, Babylonian sources that do not support the written Jewish narrative. In addition, archaeological physical evidence has not bestowed any credibility to the written Jewish narrative. Therefore, it cannot be drawn upon as a historical narrative. This, in turn, invalidates all the events the narrative relates: The destruction of Jerusalem, the destruction of the alleged temple and the

enslavement and dispersion of Jews. Based on some of sources indicated at the beginning of this paper, Arabs and Muslims, in carrying out their research, need to discard this narrative from their collective conscience, their history books and the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses that speak about Jews, so as to avoid and even invalidate the religious, historical and political repercussions of the aforesaid narrative. The non-conformity between the narratives will now be clarified in the review of the Persian and classical Greek and Latin source.

Persian sources

The written Jewish narrative of the Babylonian enslavement involves the Persian civilisation that destroyed the Babylon state. The narrative claims that the Persian King Cyrus (560-529 BCE), who defeated Babylon in 539 BCE, gave permission to Jews to return to Jerusalem in 535 BCE. It also claims that Cyrus permitted them to build their alleged temple (The Temple of Zerubbabel, or the Second temple).¹⁹ The narrative claims as well that disputes arose among the Jews and they sent a letter of complaint to the Persian King Artaxerex, which is the Jewish name given to King Cambyses, son of Cyrus (529-522 BCE), who responded to the complaint and issued a written decree to stop the construction of the alleged temple,²⁰ as claimed in the written Jewish narrative. So, although Cambyses was busy fighting Egypt all throughout his reign, he invaded that country and installed himself as pharaoh there.

During the reign of Darius (522-486 BCE), the Jews - both those opposing the building of the temple and those supporting it - kept sending complaints to the king. Eventually, Darius issued orders to resume the building of the alleged temple.²¹ The written Jewish narrative claimed that it was completed by Zerubbabel in 516 BCE.

Strangely enough, the alleged letters exchanged between Jews (those opposing the building of the temple and those supporting it) and the Persians, through the reigns of the above-mentioned kings, have never been mentioned in the Persian sources. They have only been mentioned in the written Jewish narrative; the Western and Jewish sources have never cited a Persian source to support this narrative. The Persian sources do not relate anything whatsoever that supports such allegations. Hence, this invalidates the said

allegations altogether, and therefore, also invalidates the question of building the so-called temple of Zerubbabel or the second temple. Furthermore, it completely negates the episode of the Babylonian enslavement.

The silence in the Western historical sources that adopt the allegations of the written Jewish narratives (with some exceptions that have already been mentioned) about the absence of the said narrative from the Persian sources, should not deter Arab scholars engaged in studying the history of Jerusalem from taking advantage of this absence. Exploiting their complete absence from the Persian sources should be an objective and the methodological approach used by all Arab scholars engaged in the history of Jerusalem. Such absence confirms the unconformity with the Qur'anic narrative and, hence, negates the building of the alleged second temple. Having juxtaposed the written Jewish narrative with the Qur'anic narrative, the idea of the construction of the alleged first temple is invalidated in the section of the Assyrian, and Babylonian sources. The same notion becomes null on the basis of evidence presented on the logic of engineering, and religion in my book, *The Architectural Identity of Jerusalem* (2010). The silence of the Persian sources on the Jewish narration of the Babylonian is equally confirmed in the classical Greek sources which will be displayed in the following discussions.

Classical Greek and Latin sources

The classical Greek and Latin sources are perhaps the only sources in the history of the ancient world that are written and documented in books. Harvard University has had all these books translated into English. I reviewed all the books and did not find a single allusion to the written Jewish narrative. The most important book among them- Herodotus, (5th BCE) *The History of Herodotus* (2001) does not even mention the Jews. Remarkably, Herodotus chronicled the Persian Empire and the wars of Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius, who reigned during the period (560-465 BCE). A period is very close to that chronicled by Herodotus, (450-420 BCE). The time span is 66 years between the date when Darius gave the Jews permission to build their alleged temple in 516 BCE, as the Jewish narrative claims, and the date when Herodotus began his history (516-450 BCE). If the written Jewish narrative about the Babylonian enslavement were true, it would have been mentioned by Herodotus who

spoke about the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BCE. Moreover, Herodotus described Babylon and the traditions of its inhabitants in great detail. Had the Jews been living in Babylon during that or the previous period, he would undoubtedly have mentioned them. Hence, it may be concluded that the written Jewish narrative is incorrect, and that the Qur'anic narrative does not conform to it, as has been demonstrated above in the Assyrian and Babylonian sources. Therefore, the claims of the Jew concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, their enslavement and the existence of an alleged temple that was destroyed and then rebuilt, are all false. These claims have been shown to be mere fallacy by all the above-mentioned sources, as well as by the Qur'anic narrative. A complete review of the Qur'anic narrative will be sought after displaying the Roman sources.

Roman sources

The relationship between the Jews and the Romans has been documented in two main sources. The first is the history of Josephus Flavius, a Jew who accompanied the commander Titus after the latter had invaded Jerusalem and defeated the Jews in 70 CE. This was during the reign of Titus' father Vespasian (69-79 CE). Josephus wrote two books of interest here: *Wars of the Jews* (75CE) and *Traces of Jews* (94CE). In these, he claims that Titus had destroyed Jerusalem, torn down the alleged temple and looted the vessels inside it. Juxtaposing his narrative about the alleged temple with other narratives demonstrates how they contradict each other. I have negated the existence of the alleged temple in my book, *The Architectural Identity of Jerusalem* (2010).

The second source is the Arch of Triumph (Arch of Titus), erected by Emperor Domitian (Titus' brother) in Rome 82CE, whereupon Titus' military feats in the Judean wars were recorded. There is no mention of any temple; only depictions of vessels used for offerings, as cited by some Western sources. It is well known that it was Emperor Hadrian (117-138 CE) who planned the city of Jerusalem and named it Aelia Capitolina. He built a temple to Jupiter on the current site of al-Aqsa mosque and forbade Jews from entering the city.

During the reign of Constantine, (306-337CE), the Romans of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantines) embraced Christianity. The Byzantine period continued until the Muslims liberated Palestine and Jerusalem in

(15 H/636 CE). The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, surrendered the city peacefully to Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab by virtue of *The Treaty of Umar/Custody of Umar* that put an end to the existence of the Jews in the city and prevented them from entering it, at the request of Patriarch Sophronius as stated in the said Treaty.

Strikingly, the history of Josephus conforms to the written Jewish narrative that pivots around the alleged temple, but which is negated by the Roman sources.

According to the above-mentioned, it is clear that only the written Jewish narrative records historical, social and religious incidents and events that do not appear in the historical sources concerned with them; these include the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman sources. The said incidents and events are contradicted, some are even negated by the Qur'anic narrative, as I have already demonstrated and shall further demonstrate in the following discussions.

The Qur'anic narrative

In the following review and analysis, I will demonstrate how the Qur'anic narrative of the Jewish history confirms the distortion of the Torah and worship, and nullifies the racial superiority of the Jews, as claimed by the written Jewish sources.

The Qur'anic narrative is distinguished not only for its credibility, but also because it was known to the Jewish scholars, as in the holy verses:

*"And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists). Which trustworthy Ruh [Jibril] (Gabriel) has brought down, upon your heart (O Muhammad) that you may be (one) of the warners, in the plain Arabic language. And verily, it (the Qur'an, and its revelation to prophet Muhammad is (announced) in the Scriptures [i.e. the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] of former people. Is it not a sign to them that the learned scholars of the children of Israel knew it (as true)?"*²²

Therefore, whatever appears to be inconsistent with the Qur'anic narrative which is known to the Jewish scholars is considered mere distortion. This, in turn, leads to the distortion of the Torah.

Distorting the Torah

The Qur'an speaks directly and indisputably about the distortion of the Torah. As in the verse:

*"Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, this is from Allah, to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn (thereby)."*²³

As well as in the verse:

*"Veril This Qur'an narrates to the children of Israel most of that in which they differ"*²⁴

Also in the verse:

*"O People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you our Messenger Muhammad explaining to you of that which you used to hide from Scripture and pass over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad) and a plain Book (this Qur'an)."*²⁵

Hence, the distortion of the Torah is not a recent Western discovery by some Jewish theology specialists, but an Islamic Qur'anic one that goes back more than 14 centuries. (ar-Razi 1958, vol. 1:193-194/vol. 3:148-151) This fact should oblige and even compel Arabs and Muslims engaged in research on all Jewish affairs, and not only on the history of Palestine and Jerusalem, to put the Qur'anic narrative to use, and to distance themselves from the written Jewish narrative. Regrettably, the majority of Arab and Muslim scholars are not aware of this fact, and despite its usefulness, have not exploited it.

If the Torah is distorted, then so are all its allegations about the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. The unmistakable significance of the Qur'anic narrative in refuting the allegations of the written Jewish narrative should be given prominence by Arab and Muslim scholars who need to put the Qur'anic narrative to use in their research, since it is the most efficient factor in refuting the allegations of the written Jewish narrative.

At the beginning of this paper I examined the viewpoint of Ibn Katheer, who asked that the Qur'anic narrative be exploited for research and that the written Jewish narrative should be ignored. He considers the latter as being associated with the Israelites silence surrounding Islamic heritage, and that the

Jewish narrative is merely a bunch of random and confused lies and fabrications, distortion and the twisting of fact. This point of view will be upheld in the following discussions.

Distortion concerning rites of worship

The Qur'anic narrative reveals that in Judaism the worshipping rites practised by the Jews are their own invention; they were not divine revelations. Here again, the Qur'anic narrative does not mention a temple. In the Qur'anic narrative, Jewish worship rites indicate praying and the paying of zakat (alms-tax), and not donating offerings and collecting poll tax, amounting to half a shekel for every Jew from 20 years old and above,²⁶ as practised by the priests in the tabernacle and in the alleged temple later on. In addition, the said rites do not have to be practised inside a temple. This clearly appears in the verses where God addresses the Jews:

*"And perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat, and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along with Ar-Raki'un."*²⁷

This means that worship in Judaism did not include donating offerings as was practised by Jewish priests since the time of Moses up to 70 CE, when Titus invaded Jerusalem. (where rabbis plotted with him against the priests and changed the worship practices in Judaism from donating offerings to reciting Psalms, and from complying with the tampered version of the Torah (the false revelation)- to comply with the Talmud as written by the rabbis); Rather worship, in the Islamic sense, involves praying and paying zakat (alms-tax), kneeling, prostrating, supplication. It does not involve dealings with ill-gotten money and collecting taxes as worship in Judaism. In the following verses, God addresses Jews stressing that worship is prayer:

*"And seek help in patience and as-Salat (the prayers) and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for Al-Khashi'un [i.e. the true believers in Allah - and those who obey Allah with full submission, fear much from His punishment, and believe in His Promise (Paradise) and his Warnings (Hell)]."*²⁸

God also says:

"And (remember) when we took covenant from the children of Israel,

*(saying): Worship none but Allah (Alon) and be dutiful and good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans and to Al-Masakin (the needy), and speak good to people (i.e. enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, and say the truth about Muhammad), and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and give Zakat. Then you slid back, except a few of you, while you are backsliders."*²⁹

The evidence that the worship rite of donating offerings in Judaism was not a divine revelation, but one invented by the Jews is clear in the following verses:

*"Then why did those whom they had taken for alah (gods) besides Allah, as a way of approach (to Allah) not help them? Nay, but they vanished completely from them (when there came the torment). And that was their lie, and their inventions which they had been inventing (before their destruction)."*³⁰

There is further evidence of this as stated clearly in the following verses:

*"Those Jews who said: Verily Allah has taken our promise not to believe in any Messenger unless he brings us an offering which the fire (from heaven) shall devour. Say: verily, there came to you Messenger before me, with clear signs and even with that you speak of; why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?"*³¹

God re-asserts, in the following verses, that worship in Judaism involves praying and paying zakat (alms-tax):

*"Indeed, Allah took the covenant from the children of Israel (Jews), and we appointed twelve leaders among them. And Allah said: I am with you if you perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and give Zakat and believe in My Messengers; honour and assist them, and lend a good loan to Allah, verily, I will expiate your sins and admit you to Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise). But if any of you after this, disbelieved, he has indeed gone astray from the Straight Path."*³²

Again, this means that worship in Judaism does not require a temple for donating offerings. Hence, this rite of worship is distorted.

The alleged precedence

As for the alleged precedence, promoted by the written Jewish narrative as an absolute racial precedence, it is a mere temporal. It means that Jews were chosen to be charged with a specific task, that is, the mission of Judaism. It is not racial, but selective, temporally restricted by the mission. The holy verse says:

*"O Children of Israel, remember My Favour which I bestowed upon you and that I preferred you to `Alamine (Mankind)."*³³

Interpretation of the verse demonstrates clearly that the precedence in this context is restricted. (ar-Razi 1985, vol.3:55-57) It is not absolute, as claimed by Jews, that God had given them precedence. They were selected only for undertaking the mission of Judaism. But they monopolized the faith and considered the precedence to be absolute, racial and innate, and not selective and temporal, and restricted only to the specific mission of Judaism. This is clear in the following verse of the Qur'an:

*"And indeed we gave knowledge to Dawud (David) and Sulaiman (Solomon), and they both said: All praise and thanks are Allah's who has preferred us to many of His believing slaves!"*³⁴

Precedence here is based on knowledge, that is, Jews were selected from among God's believers to undertake the mission of Judaism. This asserts that precedence is not racial bounds as they claimed. This idea is clear, in the following verse of the Qur'an:

*"... And they were covered with humiliation and misery, and they drew on themselves the Wrath of Allah. That was because they used to disbelieve the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelation, etc.) of Allah and killed the Prophets wrongfully. That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress the bounds (in their disobedience to Allah, i.e. commit crimes and sins)."*³⁵

This begs the question why those servile people who had gone astray and incurred the wrath of God became God's chosen people, enjoying innate and racial precedence over

other nations? The Qur'anic narrative invalides the racial precedence in the written Jewish narrative altogether, and restricts it to the Jews being charged with the mission of Judaism alone.

The yellow (red) cow

*"And (remember) when Musa (Moses) said to his people: Verily Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow. They said, Do you make fun of us? He said, I take Allah's refuge from being Among Al-Jahlilun (the ignorant or the foolish). They said, Call upon your Lord for us that He make plain to us what it is! He said, He says Verily, it is a cow neither too old nor too young, but (it is) between the two conditions', so do what you are commanded. They said, call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its colour. He said, He says, It is a yellow cow, bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders. They said, Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us what it is. Verily to us all cows are alike. And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided. He [Musa (Moses)] said, He says, it is a cow neither trained to till the soil nor water the fields, sound, having no other colour except bright yellow. They said, Now you have brought the truth. So they slaughtered it though they were near to not doing it. And [remember] when you killed a man and fell into dispute among yourselves as to the crime. But Allah brought forth that which you were hiding. So we said: Strike him (the dead man) with a piece of it (the cow). Thus Allah brings the dead to live and shows you His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) so that you may understand."*³⁶

As stated in the verse of the Qur'an cited above, the aim of slaughtering the yellow cow was to reveal the murderer by hitting the body of the murdered victim with it, so as to revive him from death. It was not meant to be an offering, i.e., a worshipping rite, as in the rite of the red cow, which the Jews offer on Yom Kippur (the day of repentance). The latter was a religious rite adopted from the ancient Egyptian religion. Here, the Qur'an asserts that worship was not about donating offerings, as the Jews practised it, in imitating ancient

Egyptian and Canaanite religions. The Qur'an also asserts with regard to the Jews distortion of religious obligations that God says:

*"And indeed Musa (Moses) came to you with clear proofs, yet you worshipped the calf after he left, and you were Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers). And (remember) when we took your covenant and we raised above you the mount (saying), Hold firmly to what we have given you and hear (our word). They said, we have heard and disobeyed. And their hearts absorbed (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief. Say: Worst indeed is that which your faith enjoins on you if you are believers."*³⁷

The Jews' disobedience, then, was not out of ignorance. They knew the truth perfectly well about their religion, which required worshipping God, and had nothing to do with worshipping the calf. It required praying and paying alms-tax; and not donating offerings, as already demonstrated. Thus, the Qur'anic narrative reveals the truth about Judaism as a divine religion founded upon worshipping God through prayer and paying alms-tax. The Qur'anic narrative also reveals the Jewish distortion of their own religion. It demonstrates that they did not need the alleged temple and refutes their historical claims that they were God's chosen people.

The Qur'anic narrative not only contradicts the written Jewish narrative, but also invalidates most of its detail and exaggeration. Moreover, all the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman historical sources disregarded the written Jewish narrative. This invalidates the Jewish presence in geography, and, hence, in history. That being so, they therefore, tried to distort archaeological findings in an attempt to support their fabricated narrative.

Archaeology

Archaeology has never provided any physical or written documented evidence that supports the allegations of the written Jewish narrative. That is in spite of all the attempts made by Western and Jewish historians - with the few exceptions already mentioned - to twist the archaeological findings when attempting to make them conform to the said narrative. Velikovsky is one such historian whose desperate efforts in his book, (1950), *Ages in Chaos*, to come up with a match between

archaeology and the written Jewish narrative, failed completely to provide any evidence of such a match. Moreover, the excavations carried out by Western and Jewish archaeologists in Jerusalem failed to provide a single piece of physical evidence to support the written Jewish narrative. So much so, that this prompted the Jewish archaeologist, Meir Ben Dov- to declare the excavations terminated in the surroundings of the al-Aqsa mosque and to admit that the alleged temple could not be found in Jerusalem. Armed with these facts, the scholars engaged in the history of Jerusalem should also put archaeology to use for refuting the written Jewish narrative, in order to invalidate its claims that the alleged temple really ever existed; and that the Jews have an alleged historical right in Palestine and in Jerusalem.

Ottoman archives

The Ottoman archives are among the richest modern sources on the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. They are well documented and preserved in Istanbul and they cover the period 1517-1917CE, i.e., four centuries. But, except for a few, very limited, and superficial examples, few attempts have been made, so far, to put these archives to use by Arab and Muslim scholars engaged in the general history and political history of Palestine. In contrast, Western and Jewish researchers have exploited the said archives and examined them thoroughly. By adding their own distorted interpretation of some of the documents, Western and Jewish researchers have managed to insert the Jewish presence into Palestine, and specifically into Jerusalem. Hence, their research has become a reference for all Arab scholars and researchers engaged in the history of that region. That being the case, the Arab League and Arab universities should facilitate access to the Ottoman archives, and oblige researchers to benefit from them directly and not by citation from Western and Jewish researches. Arab researchers need to be directed and encouraged to liberate themselves from the authority of the said research in the process of shaping their own awareness, and from any attempts by those researchers to dictate their perspective. In this context, the powerful presence of the Western and Jewish researchers is the main impediment hindering the shaping of an independent Arab historical and political consciousness. To be freed from such an impediment can only occur through

sheer willpower and by the direct and thorough study of and referral to the authentic sources, and the Ottoman archives, and independently of the Western and Jewish perspectives that regrettably continue to shape the consciousness of Arab scholars and researchers engaged in the history of Palestine and Jerusalem. This cannot be done superficially and is an issue now addressed.

The superficial dealing of historical documents

The superficiality of the papers and researches submitted at seminars, meetings and publications that address the issue of Jerusalem is clearly visible to any participant at such events. The limited historical and cultural background of most participants is evident. This was clearly manifested in the 2009 CE conferences held, in Amman, Jordan on the occasion of choosing Jerusalem as the capital of Arab culture. The papers suffered from lack of academic sincerity, epistemological depth and methodological seriousness, and a failure to put historical facts to use to the advantage of the Arab cause of Jerusalem; hence, an inability to come up with a purely Arab viewpoint on Jerusalem.

Regrettably, some organizations, forums and bodies concerned with Jerusalem, behave like sheikhdoms and less as organizations whose main concern is serving the Arab cause of Jerusalem. They keep qualified persons away and instead bring their own cronies in as participants. They still insist on inviting foreign - and not Arab - researchers to participate in the conferences dedicated to Jerusalem. This indicates the extent of the cultural and historical hollowness of those in charge of the organizations; it also indicates their lack of self-esteem and inferiority complex with regard to foreigners.

Historical errors and fallacies are numerous. One history professor who participated in the conference on Jerusalem – the capital of Arab culture- even denied that the Treaty of Umar was drawn up by Umar ibn al-Khattab and claimed that it was written after him. Had that professor had any historical sense, he would not have made such a claim and would have adhered to the commonly-agreed narrative that the treaty was concluded during Umar's reign. By adhering to that particular historical source, he failed to uphold the fact that the treaty had been concluded by a Muslim and in an Islamic spirit, whether it be Umar ibn el-Khattab or

another, and that it characterized Islam's respect for the freedom of worship and safety of the lives and property of non-Muslims.

Another participant iterated the Jewish narrative that claims that Sultan Salim I (1512-1520) gave permission to the Jews to gather and pray at al-Buraq Wall (Wailing Wall). Such a claim has no basis. The Ottoman archives do not contain anything to support it. I have refuted this claim in my *The Traditional Center of the City of Jerusalem Between Continuity and Demolition* (2008).

Among other frequent examples of faulty reasoning is the use of Jewish terms and designations for certain places instead of Arab ones, such as using the 'Wailing Wall' instead of al-Buraq Wall; 'The Jewish quarter' instead of 'The Islamic southern quarter or al-Magharbah quarter', and the 'Arc of Wilson' instead of 'The Umayyad bridge' on the Western wall of al-Aqsa mosque that connects the Umayyad palaces with the mosque. These are but a few examples. This serves to enhance the presence of the Jewish allegations in the Arab and Islamic collective consciousness, and must be avoided.

We also feel the superficiality of some Arab participants at the conferences shared with Jews. In "The Future of Jerusalem", conference, held in Jerusalem in 1993CE, the Jews sent their best experts in international law, while the Palestinian participants did not have a single expert on international law expert among their delegation. The Jews were well-prepared for the conference, while the Palestinians participated without preparation in a spirit of instantaneous mobilization. The Palestinians even left it up to the Jews to edit the conference proceedings. Typically, the Jews who edited the proceedings falsely ascribed to the Palestinian participants that the Jerusalem the Palestinian delegation was negotiating was located east of Wadi Jahannam (Valley of Hell), or Abu Dees (east of the eastern wall of the old city), and not east Jerusalem (the Old City inside the Wall and its suburbs) which was occupied in 1967CE. (Gershon p.1-5).

The same occurred at the conference, held in two rounds, dedicated to the planning of Jerusalem. The first round was held in Jerusalem in 1997CE, the second in Bellagio, Italy in 1999 CE. A book - *The Next Jerusalem* edited by Sorkin, (2002) - was compiled after the conference and held that some Palestinian participants had adopted the Jewish planning projects. Remarkably, here again the Jewish

editor of the book resorted to further distortion. He falsely ascribed to the Arab participants that they had spoken of Jerusalem as located east of Wadi Jahannam (Valley of Hell), or Abu Dees (east of the eastern wall of the old city), and not east Jerusalem (the Old City inside the Wall and its suburbs) that was occupied in 1967CE. I have reviewed this book in my book (al-'Abed, 2010: 113-131) and pointed out the danger that such projects represent for Jerusalem.

Some publications about Jerusalem abound in historical fallacies. One such publication, entitled *Jerusalem in the Conscience* (2012) contains a map entitled "Jerusalem is the Centre of the World" drawn by the German Heinrich Bunting in 1581CE. It is illustrated as being the Madaba Mosaic map that goes back to the sixth century! Strikingly, the Madaba Mosaic map is still existed in the city of Madaba, south of Amman, Jordan!

The truth is that the superficiality with which the history of Palestine and Jerusalem, in particular, is treated is too formidable to be revealed in its entirety here. Regrettably, it is an apparent characteristic in the research that deals with Palestine and Jerusalem. We hope it will be soon be overcome.

In conclusion, Arab and Muslim historians, scholars, politicians, intellectuals, and free thinkers all over the world must dissociate themselves from the distorted Jewish written narrative and adopt a mere scientific and comprehensive - particularly the Qur'anic narrative - approach in rewriting the history of Palestine and Jerusalem, in order to free it from the lies and distortion of the Jewish written narrative.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

- 1 For the translation of the verses of The Noble QUR'AN in the English Language I used the translation approved by The Islamic University at al-Madinah al-Munawwarah. Al-Hilali, M. T., & Khan, M. M. 2006. *Translation of the Meanings of THE NOBLE QUR'AN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. Madinah:*, King Fahed Complex For The Printing Of The Holy Qur'an.
- 2 *Tanakh*, Exodus, 3:17 and 13:5-6
- 3 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya* (verse): 61.
- 4 Al-Qur'an, surah, *al-Ma'idah*, *aya*: 21.
- 5 *Tanakh*, Exodus, 3:8-13, 17:5-6, 33:1-3 and 34:11-12
- 6 Al-Qur'an, surah *ash-Shu'ara'*, *ayat* (verses): 52-54.
- 7 *Tanakh*, Exodus, 12:37-39.
- 8 Al-Qur'an, surah *an-Naml*, *ayat*: 20-22.
- 9 Al-Qur'an, surah *an-Naml*, *ayat*: 39-40.
- 10 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Haqqah*, *ayat*: 4-10.
- 11 *Tanakh*, Ezra, 4:1-4.
- 12 *Tanakh*, Chronicles 2, 36:5-8.
- 13 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Isra'*, *ayat*: 1-8.
- 14 Al-Qur'an, surah *Ibrahim*, *aya*: 37.
- 15 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Hajj'*, *aya*: 26.
- 16 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 12
- 17 *Tanakh*, Chronicles 2:22, 36:5-8; and Ezra, chs 4 and 10.
- 18 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Isra'*, *aya*: 8.
- 19 *Tanakh*, Ezra, chs 1-3.
- 20 *Tanakh*, Ezra, 4:6-24.
- 21 *Tanakh*, Ezra, ch. 5 and 6:1-17.
- 22 Al-Qur'an, surah *ash-Shu'ara'*, *ayat*: 192-197.
- 23 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 79.
- 24 Al-Qur'an, surah *an-Naml*, *aya*: 76.
- 25 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Ma'idah*, *aya*: 15.
- 26 *Tanakh*, Exodus, 3:13-17.
- 27 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 43.
- 28 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 45.
- 29 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 83.
- 30 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Ahqaf*, *aya*: 28.
- 31 Al-Qur'an, surah *'al-'Imran*, *aya*: 183
- 32 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Ma'idah*, *aya*: 12.
- 33 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 47.
- 34 Al-Qur'an, surah *an-Naml*, *aya*: 15.
- 35 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *aya*: 61.
- 36 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *ayat*: 67-73
- 37 Al-Qur'an, surah *al-Baqarah*, *ayat*: 92-93.

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المصادر التاريخية والرواية القرآنية المغيبة في تاريخ فلسطين والقدس

الأستاذ الدكتور بديع العابد

عميد سابق لكلية الهندسة - جامعة الإسراء - الأردن

ملخص

هناك مصدر يفرض حضوره على الباحثين في تاريخ فلسطين والقدس وهو الرواية التناخية (التوراتية-المصادر الكتابية اليهودية) مع بعض الاستثناءات المحدودة التي تعارضها. أما المصادر التاريخية الأخرى فهي مغيبة ومنسية، وهي: المصرية القديمة، والسامية، واليونانية، والفارسية، والرومانية، والرواية القرآنية. التي يُتعمد تغييبها من قبل الباحثين اليهود والغربيين لمعارضتها، بل لنفيها، لرواية المصادر الكتابية اليهودية، وللحضور اليهودي في التاريخ. الأمر الذي يترتب عليه نفي الرواية الكتابية اليهودية شكلاً وموضوعاً. أما الباحثون العرب، قديمهم وحديثهم، فالغالبية الساحقة منهم، تتبنى رواية المصادر الكتابية اليهودية، من خلال اعتمادها على المراجع اليهودية والغربية في كتابة تاريخ فلسطين والقدس. وربما يعود السبب في عدم توظيف الباحثين العرب للمصادر التاريخية التي تعارض الرواية الكتابية اليهودية، إما لعدم معرفتهم بها، أو لعدم قدرتهم على توظيفها، أو للسببين معاً. واللافت أن معظم المؤرخين والمفسرين المسلمين تبنا الرواية اليهودية في تفسير آيات القرآن الكريم الخاصة باليهود. كما زعم بعضهم أن المسجد الأقصى من بناء النبيين داود وسليمان. يهدف هذا البحث للتعريف بالمصادر التاريخية المغيبة (المصرية القديمة، السامية، اليونانية، الفارسية، الرومانية) في تاريخ فلسطين والقدس، وبيّن آلية توظيفها. ولتحقيق ذلك سيعرض البحث لرواية المصادر الكتابية اليهودية، ثم للمصادر التاريخية المغيبة، وبيّن معارضة ونفي الثانية الأولى، وخلو الثانية بالمطلق من مزاعم الأحداث التاريخية التي سجلتها الرواية الكتابية اليهودية، الأمر الذي ينفي حدوثها ويكشف زيفها وكذبها. ثم يقابل البحث الرواية الكتابية اليهودية بالرواية القرآنية التي تسجل، في الأعم الأغلب، معجزات دينية، فوق تاريخية، وليس أحداث تاريخية بشرية معاشة. ثم يبين البحث مبالغات وزيف الرواية الكتابية اليهودية، التي عمدت إلى تحويل المعجزة الدينية إلى حدث تاريخي بشري معاش في محاولة لإقحام اليهود في تاريخ فلسطين والمنطقة العربية.