

THE LIBERATION OF AL-QUDS BETWEEN DIVINE DECREE OR HUMAN EFFORT: A HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS OF Q.S. AL-MĀ'IDAH [5]: 20–26

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Article History: Received: 15 August 2025

Revised: 30 September 2025

Accepted: 3 October 2025



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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20871/tjsq.v8i1.470>

Abstract: *This study is motivated by the urgency of defending al-Quds as a holy city that has a special position theologically, historically, and geopolitically, while also responding to the exclusive claim of Jewish Zionists that it is “The Promised Land,” which is considered to deviate from the moral requirements and justice of revelation. The purpose of this study is to examine the position of al-Quds from an Islamic perspective, trace its history of inclusive management, critique Zionist religious political claims, and offer a relevant strategic framework for liberation in the contemporary era. The research design includes normative qualitative-descriptive research, applying Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which is relevant to the research topic. It serves to combine the freshness of meaning in the current context from all existing horizons, be it theological-historical narratives, hadith literature, classical-contemporary interpretations, or modern socio-political reasoning. The results of the study show that the sanctity of al-Quds stems from the principle of tawhid and universal Islamic values that prohibit oppression, discrimination, and monopoly of worship spaces, and that the history of the city’s management under Islamic rule is clear evidence of a fair and open governance model for all religious adherents. This study also found that protecting al-Quds relies on human efforts, not divine decree, which requires strategic efforts through diplomacy, civil resistance, international public support, and interfaith solidarity. The study concludes that the liberation of al-Quds must be positioned as a global humanitarian issue, not merely a religious conflict, and requires synergy between internal reform of the Muslim community and external support from the international community to restore its function as a city of peace and a symbol of universal justice.*

Keywords: *Hermeneutics of the Qur’an, Liberation of al-Quds, Promised Land, Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 20–26.*

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh urgensi mempertahankan *al-Quds* sebagai kota suci yang memiliki kedudukan istimewa secara teologis, historis, dan geopolitik, sekaligus menanggapi klaim eksklusif Zionis Yahudi yaitu “*The Promised Land*” yang dinilai menyimpang dari syarat moral dan keadilan wahyu. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji kedudukan *al-Quds* dalam perspektif Islam, menelusuri sejarah pengelolaannya yang inklusif, mengkritisi klaim politik keagamaan Zionis, serta menawarkan kerangka strategis pembebasan yang relevan di era kontemporer. Desain penelitian termasuk penelitian normatif berjenis kualitatif-deskriptif, pendekatan yang diterapkan adalah hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Berfungsi untuk memadukan kesegaran makna dalam konteks kekinian dari seluruh horizon yang ada, baik itu narasi teologis-historis, literatur hadis, tafsir klasik-kontemporer, hingga nalar sosial-politik modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesucian *al-Quds* bersumber dari prinsip tauhid dan nilai-nilai universal Islam yang melarang penindasan, diskriminasi, dan monopoli ruang ibadah, serta bahwa sejarah pengelolaan kota ini di bawah pemerintahan Islam menjadi bukti nyata model tata kelola yang adil dan terbuka bagi semua pemeluk agama. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa menjaga *al-Quds* disandarkan pada usaha manusia, bukan ketetapan mutlak ilahi, yang menuntut upaya strategis melalui diplomasi, perlawanan sipil, dukungan publik internasional, dan solidaritas lintas iman. Kesimpulan penelitian menegaskan bahwa pembebasan *al-Quds* harus ditempatkan sebagai isu kemanusiaan global, bukan konflik agama semata, serta memerlukan sinergi antara reformasi internal umat dan dukungan eksternal dunia internasional untuk mengembalikan fungsinya sebagai kota damai dan simbol keadilan universal.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an, Pembebasan al-Quds, Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 20–26, Tanah yang Dijanjikan.*

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often referred to as one of the most complex and protracted disputes on the modern international stage, with roots embedded in layers of geopolitics, theological narratives, historical memory, and intertwined symbolic struggles. This dispute extends beyond a mere struggle for physical territory, entering the realm of legitimacy, identity, and the interpretation of meaning, with Jerusalem (*al-Quds*) standing at the center of the vortex due to its sacred status for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

This region is a place of divine encounter as well as an emotional symbol that embodies competing religious and political visions. However, as long as power over *al-Quds* remains in Israeli hands, the city's security will never be truly guaranteed. History records repeated Israeli violations against civilians and holy sites, reinforcing the perception that this struggle is not merely about sovereignty, but also about who has the right to frame and articulate its spiritual and historical narrative.¹

The roots of the conflict can be traced back to the end of the Ottoman period, but it escalated during the British Mandate (1917–1948) with the Balfour Declaration and increased Jewish immigration. These events triggered

1 Tuğçe Ersoy-Ceylan, “Social Identities in Conflict: Israeli Palestinians and Israeli Jews,” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (2023): 206–22, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12300>; Fadhila Inas Pratiwi, M Rasil Syarafi, and Demas Nauvarian, “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Beyond Resolution: A Critical Assessment,” *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 26, no. 2 (2022): 168–82, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.66935>.

demographic changes and political tensions that culminated in the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, or Nakba, which resulted in the mass displacement of Palestinians and the establishment of the State of Israel. This tragedy shaped conflicting narratives about land rights, legitimacy, and historical justice, which continue to be passed down across generations.²

The Six-Day War (1967) was a strategic turning point when Israel captured East Jerusalem and other territories, then annexed them unilaterally. This action, rejected by most of the international community, placed Jerusalem’s holy sites under Israeli control, sparking waves of protests and igniting a cycle of violence, including the Intifada. International intervention, shifting alliances, and debates over legality, occupation, and human rights further complicated peace efforts.³

The situation is further complicated by the presence of sacred sites, such as the al-Aqṣā Mosque and the Temple Mount (Ḥaram al-Sharīf), which carry significant symbolic weight as markers of national identity and theological legitimacy. For Muslims, al-Aqṣā is the third-holiest site, closely linked to prophetic tradition and early Islamic history, while for Jews, the Temple Mount occupies a sacred position, closely linked to the history of the First and Second Temples and the covenant with God. This belief is rooted in the narrative of “The Promised Land,” which is often used as a theological justification by Zionist groups for the total occupation of *al-Quds*. In other words, this claim is used as a pretext to justify acts of colonization, expulsion, and murder.⁴ Restrictions on access and intervention by armed forces create constant tension. These events often attract global attention, sparking solidarity across countries and strengthening the link between religious dimensions and demands for sovereignty.⁵

One illustration of the dispute between the two sides is the recent large-scale humanitarian tragedy that has shocked the international public, documented under the slogan *#AllEyesOnRafah*.⁶ The convergence of sacred geography,

2 Susan Pedersen, “Writing the Balfour Declaration into the Mandate for Palestine,” *The International History Review* 45, no. 2 (March 4, 2023): 279–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2022.2123377>.

3 Craig Daigle, “Guy Laron. The Six-Day War: The Breaking of the Middle East.,” *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 3 (June 1, 2018): 1058–59, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/123.3.1058>.

4 Mohammed Abu Oun, “Al-Quds as Mentioned in UN Resolutions,” *Journal of Islamicjerusalem Studies* 23, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 19–28, <https://doi.org/10.31456/beytulmakdis.1164940>; Ranen Omer-Sherman, “Desert in the Promised Land by Yael Zerubavel,” *AJS Review: The Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies* 44, no. 1 (April 2020): 216–18, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ajs.2020.0022>.

5 Pratiwi, Syarafi, and Nauvarian, “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Beyond Resolution: A Critical Assessment”; Ersoy-Ceylan, “Social Identities in Conflict: Israeli Palestinians and Israeli Jews,” 206–22; J Pressman, “History in Conflict: Israeli–Palestinian Speeches at the United Nations, 1998–2016,” 476–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2019.1589936>; Amelia Arsenault and Costanza Musu, “Canada, the United Nations, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27 (2021): 98–116, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2020.1867596>.

6 Romaito Azhar et al., “War in *#alleyesonrafah* Meme: Unraveling the Implications of the

historical wounds, and the struggle for sovereignty ensures that *al-Quds* remains the main arena for ideological, religious, and political battles—a dispute whose resolution requires reconciliation between *tangible* territorial claims and *intangible* symbolic narratives.⁷

The religious claim of “The Promised Land” by Jewish-Israeli Zionists presents an exclusive narrative, as if they are the most legitimate inhabitants because they are directly affirmed by God. In contrast, Islam, through the perspective of the Qur’an, particularly in Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 20–26, offers a different logic and significant theological implications. Al-Zuhaylī’s view shows that this verse has a strategic position when examining the reality of Palestine-Israel. This is because these verses briefly describe how the Children of Israel rebelled against the Prophet Moses, who commanded them to enter and settle in *al-ard al-muqaddasah* (*al-Quds*). As a result, they were forbidden from setting foot in *al-Quds* and were punished by God by being made to wander.

Several studies have been conducted that examine *al-Quds* or Bayt al-Maqdis, each with a different focus. The first study by Mujadidi (2024) focuses on comparing interpretations of the verses of *al-Quds*, limited to the exegetical literature of the three madhhabs of *kalām*, without specifically examining Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 20–26 or relating it to the current situation in *al-Quds*.⁸ The second study by Syahputra (2021) reviews al-Sha’rāwī’s concept of Bayt al-Maqdis, focusing too much on one interpretation and failing to examine the relevance of his interpretation to the current socio-political dynamics of *al-Quds*.⁹ Meanwhile, the third study by Zainol (2024) focuses on the theological-moral dimensions of the Qur’anic narrative regarding the Holy Land, but does not explicitly integrate classical interpretations to reinterpret the normative message of the verses in the context of Israeli colonialism and the claim of “The Promised Land.”¹⁰

Thus, this study will fill the above gap by offering the topic “*The Liberation of al-Quds Between Divine Decree or Human Effort: A Hermeneutical Analysis of Q.S. Al-Mā’idah [5]: 20–26.*” Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics is chosen as a relevant lens of analysis, so that the verses of the Qur’an are treated as dialogical

Palestine-Israel Conflict on Young-Children,” *IAS Journal of Localities* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 19–32, <https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v2i1.45>.

7 Moran Yarchi and Lillian Boxman-Shabtai, “The Image War Moves to TikTok Evidence from the May 2021 Round of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” *Digital Journalism* 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2025): 115–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2291650>; Ersoy-Ceylan, “Social Identities in Conflict: Israeli Palestinians and Israeli Jews,” 206–22.

8 Haidar Ahmad Mujadidi, “Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir Kalami (Studi Komparasi Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Bait Al-Maqdis)” (Thesis, Program Pascasarjana Institut Ilmu Al-Qur’an (IIQ) Jakarta, 2024), <https://repository.iiq.ac.id/handle/123456789/3784>.

9 Satria Tenun Syahputra, “Israel’s Expansion Over Jerusalem in the Qur’an: A Review of the Interpretation of Q 5: 20-26 in Tafsir Al-Sha’Rāwī,” *Contemporary Quran* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 11, <https://doi.org/10.14421/cq.2021.0101-02>.

10 Nur Farhana Mohamad Zainol and Rahmah Ahmad H. Osman, “Palestinian Literature as a Means of Recapturing the Freedom of Al-Quds,” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 19, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 355–67, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol19no1.24>.

messages—bridging normative discourse and empirical reality.

Academically, this study is at the intersection of tafsir studies, hermeneutics, and Middle Eastern socio-political studies. It offers a model of reading sacred texts that is dialogical, contextual, and critical. This approach can enrich the discourse of Palestinian liberation theology with Islam as a moral force to defend the oppressed (*al-mustad'afūn*). Ultimately, this research not only has academic contributions but is also expected to influence the international solidarity movement against Israeli discrimination, while offering inclusive solutions to both sides.

The research design is qualitative and based on a literature review, utilizing primary sources, namely the Qur'an and various interpretive literature, secondary sources, including scientific articles, books, websites, and other valid and relevant references. The analysis applied is Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, conducted through a series of frameworks, namely analyzing the author's horizon—historical background, linguistic analysis, hadith review, classical-contemporary exegetical narratives, and the reader's horizon; modern principles, contemporary socio-political realities, then combining the two horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) to fulfill the principle of the application. Thus, this approach produces interpretations that are not only textually and historically accurate but also dialogical, critical, and adaptive to the dynamics of modern Muslims, especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹¹

The Significance of the Children of Israel and Jewish Zionists

Etymologically, the term Banī Isrā'īl means “the Children of Israel,” referring to the descendants of Prophet Ya'qūb ('Israel') bin Ishāq bin Ibrāhīm in the Abrahamic tradition.¹² In the perspective of the Qur'an, the Children of Israel are not merely an ethnic group, but a religious community that received revelation, experienced liberation from slavery in Egypt through the leadership of the Prophet Moses, and received a moral mandate to uphold God's law (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 40–47). In Jewish history, the Children of Israel are the ancestors of the modern Jewish people, although in early times this term referred to the twelve tribes descended from Jacob, who had a distinctive socio-political and religious structure. Theologically, the status of “chosen people” attributed to the Children of Israel has always been conditional on obedience, and the sacred texts contain stern warnings

11 David Liakos, “Horizons of Passion: Hermeneutics as Fusion or as Fracture,” *History of the Human Sciences* 37, no. 3–4 (2023): 200–222, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09526951231194192>; Muhammad Fauzi Noor and Eko Saputra, “Hermeneutics in the Interpretation of Qur'an,” *International Journal of Education, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 1 (2024): 30–39, <https://doi.org/10.58578/ijecs.v2i1.2685>; Mohammad Ridwan et al., “Methods of Applying Hermeneutics in Interpreting The Qur'an and Sharh Hadith,” *Hamalatul Qur'an: Journal of Qur'anic Sciences* 5, no. 2 (2024): 447–55, <https://doi.org/10.37985/hq.v5i2.254>; A'azliansyah Farizil Anam et al., “Re-interpreting Coercive Begging in Islam through the Tafsir of Wahbah Al-Zuhaili,” *TAFSE: Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 49–69, <https://doi.org/10.22373/tafse.v10i1.31428>.

12 Al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī. *Al-Mufradāt fī Ḥarīb al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Ibn Jawzī, 2012), 6.

regarding moral and spiritual transgressions.¹³

The change in identity from the Children of Israel to the Jews has complex historical dimensions. After the period of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon, the split into the Kingdom of Israel (north) and the Kingdom of Judah (south) in the 10th century BC triggered political and theological differentiation. The term “Jew” (*Yehudim*) comes from the tribe of Judah, one of the largest tribes in Jerusalem. After the Babylonian exile (586–538 BC), the term Jew became increasingly dominant, reflecting a religious identity focused on Torah law, worship at the Temple, and life in the diaspora community. Meanwhile, the concept of the Children of Israel persisted in religious literature as a historical and spiritual reference.¹⁴

Throughout history, the term “Jew” has had two dimensions: as a religious identity adhering to Judaism and as an ethno-cultural identity preserving the heritage of the Children of Israel. The Jewish diaspora after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE expanded the spread of Jewish communities to Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Jewish identity in the diaspora era was shaped not only by religious traditions but also by the experience of being a minority that often faced discrimination and expulsion, which ultimately gave rise to a movement to return to the ancestral homeland, believed to be *Eretz Yisrael*.¹⁵

Modern Zionism emerged in the late 19th century as a Jewish nationalist movement aimed at establishing a sovereign state in Palestine. Spearheaded by figures such as Theodor Herzl through his work *Der Judenstaat* (1896), Zionism was rooted in two main factors: rising anti-Semitism in Europe and the desire to revive Jewish political identity in the land traditionally associated with the Children of Israel. Although the term “Zion” historically referred to a hill in Jerusalem that was symbolic of the Temple, in Zionist discourse it evolved into a symbol of modern, secular Jewish nationalism. The movement received a significant boost through the Balfour Declaration (1917), which promised British support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine.¹⁶

Zionism sparked debate, both within the Jewish community and among non-Jews. Some Orthodox Jews rejected secular Zionism because it was considered to be forcing the establishment of a Jewish state before the coming of the Messiah, who, in their tradition, is the only divine authority to restore the Promised Land.

13 Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Touchstone Rockefeller Center, 2001), 49–52.

14 Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017), 263–68.

15 Tom Segev, *A State at Any Cost: The Life of David Ben-Gurion*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), 45.

16 Yitzhak Conforti, “Zionism and the Hebrew Bible: From Religious Holiness to National Sanctity,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 60, no. 3 (May 3, 2024): 483–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2023.2204516>.

On the other hand, many supporters of Zionism use the theological narrative of the Children of Israel to legitimize their political claims to Palestine. This has drawn criticism from Muslims and the international community, who argue that these claims ignore the rights of the indigenous Palestinian population and blur the distinction between spiritual mandate and political agenda.¹⁷

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was the culmination of the Zionist agenda, but also the beginning of open conflict with the Arab world. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War, referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba (“catastrophe”), resulted in the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and reinforced the ideological antagonism between Zionism and Palestinian resistance. For Zionists, the State of Israel is the fulfillment of the historical and theological promise of the Children of Israel; for Palestinians and most of the Muslim world, the establishment of Israel is the result of modern colonialism that manipulates religious narratives for political gain.¹⁸

Today, the term *Banī Isrāʾīl* is more commonly used in religious discourse, particularly in Islamic literature, to refer to a community that received a divine mandate but also faced harsh criticism for its frequent moral transgressions. Meanwhile, Jewry remains a diverse religious and ethno-cultural identity, encompassing various denominations from Orthodox to secular. Zionism is now a specific political term, referring to the ideology and movement that supports Jewish occupation of Palestine, but it is often criticized for practices that are considered contrary to the principles of justice and human rights. The relationship between these three terms shows how religious identity can turn into political ideology, and how the history of the Children of Israel is used—or misused—to shape contemporary geopolitical realities.¹⁹

Hadith Literature Support for *al-Quds*

In the study of the history and virtues of Islamic holy sites, hadith literature provides an authentic foundation, explaining the sequence of the construction of Islamic holy sites, the privileges of visiting the three chosen mosques, and the change in the direction of the qibla in the early days of Islam. These *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations not only contain valuable historical information but also contain theological and spiritual dimensions that shape the understanding of the ummah regarding the relationship between places of worship, prophetic history, and religious practices. The selection of sahih hadiths from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in this study aims to provide

17 B Hamamra, Sanaa Abusamra, and I Pappé, “Awakening Resistance: The Politics of Sleep in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” *Journal for Cultural Research* 28, no. 2 (2024): 32–33, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2024.2353634>.

18 Robert I. Rotberg et al., *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict History's Double Helix* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 88; Ilan Pappé, *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge* (London: Verso, 2014), 34.

19 Gloria M. Moran, “Religious Identities in Neo-Nationalisms. Judaism and Zionism: From a Religious to a Political Identity,” *Stato, Chiese e Pluralismo ConfeSSIONALE* 24 Febbraio (2025): 43–73, <https://doi.org/10.54103/1971-8543/28326>.

scientific legitimacy and enrich the analysis of *al-Quds*. The Prophet Muhammad said:

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ، حَدَّثَنَا الْأَعْمَشُ، حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ التَّيْمِيُّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَيُّ مَسْجِدٍ وُضِعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوَّلُ؟ قَالَ: «المسجد الحرام» قَالَ: قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيُّ؟ قَالَ الْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى قُلْتُ: كَمْ كَانَ بَيْنَهُمَا؟ قَالَ: أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً، ثُمَّ أَيْنَمَا أَدْرَكَتْكَ الصَّلَاةُ بَعْدَ فَصْلَةٍ، فَإِنَّ الْفَضْلَ فِيهِ

*“Musā bin Ismā’il narrated to us, ‘Abd al-Wāhid narrated to us, ‘al-A’mash narrated to us, Ibrāhīm al-Taymī narrated to us from his father, who said, “I heard Abā Dharr say: I asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him: Which Mosque was the first to be built on earth? He replied: Masjid al-Ḥarām. I asked again: Then what? He replied: Masjid al-Aqṣā. I asked again: How long was the interval between the two? He replied: Forty years. Then wherever you are and when the time for prayer comes, pray, for there is virtue in it.”*²⁰

The phrase “*aynamā adrakatka al-ṣalāt ba‘du faṣallih fainna al-faṣla fih*” (wherever you are and when the time for prayer has come, pray, for there is virtue therein) can be interpreted as a form of divine mercy and flexibility in Islam: that the entire earth is a mosque, as long as it is considered sacred and suitable for prayer. This hadith is also an important source in the study of religious archaeology and the sacred history of places of worship, linking the spiritual connection between Mecca and Jerusalem since the early days of human history.

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى

*“Alī told us, Sufyān told us, from al-Zubri, from Sa‘id, from Abi Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who said, ‘There is no emphasis on making a special journey except to visit three mosques: the Sacred Mosque, the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and the al-Aqṣā Mosque.”*²¹

The phrase “*lā tushaddu al-riḥāl*” (there is no emphasis on making a special journey) here means, in the context of seeking the virtue of prayer that exceeds other mosques, not prohibiting travel for other purposes of worship or family visits. The virtue of these three mosques is associated with a significant multiplication of the reward for prayer: one prayer in the Masjid al-Ḥarām and the Prophet’s Mosque is worth a thousand times, while in the Masjid al-Aqṣā it is worth five hundred times more than in other mosques.

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ سُفْيَانَ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ:

20 Muḥammad bin Ismā’il al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl Allāh Ṣallā Allāh ‘Alayhi wa Sallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyāmihī: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭūq al-Najāh, 2020), 2:466.

21 Muḥammad bin Ismā’il al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl Allāh Ṣallā Allāh ‘Alayhi wa Sallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyāmihī: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭūq al-Najāh, 2020), 1:367.

صَلَّيْنَا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَحْوَ بَيْتِ الْمُقَدَّسِ سِتَّةَ عَشَرَ، أَوْ سَبْعَةَ عَشَرَ شَهْرًا، ثُمَّ صَرَفَهُ نَحْوَ الْقِبْلَةِ

“Muhammad bin al-Muthannā narrated to us, Yahyā narrated to us from Sufyān, Abū Ishāq narrated to me, he said: I heard al-Barrā’ r.a., say: We prayed with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, facing Bayt al-Maqdis for sixteen or seventeen months. Then he changed it to face the qiblah.”²²

The above hadith is closely related to an iconic moment in Islam, namely the change of the qibla, which the Prophet Muhammad always longed for in his prayers. At the same time, social relations between Muslims and Jews became increasingly tense due to the actions of Jewish provocateurs who always incited the Prophet Muhammad not to change the direction of the qibla. This shows that there was a tense response between Muslims and Jews at that time. The purpose of changing the direction of the qibla was not without reason, but to emphasize a clear identity that was different from previous communities.²³ Even so, *al-Quds*, especially the al-Aqṣā Mosque, had once been the center of worship for Muslims, emphasizing its special status among previous prophets.

The Intersection of *Barakah* Circle and The Promised Land

In Islamic tradition, the three main holy sites—the Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca, the Masjid al-Nabawī in Medina, and the Masjid al-Aqṣā in Bait al-Maqdis (*al-Quds*)—occupy the top positions in the sacred hierarchy. The Qur’an affirms the primacy of these three through verses that connect them to the prophets, commands for worship, and monumental events, such as *isrā’ mi’rāj* (Q.S. Al-Isrā’ [17]: 1), which connects Mecca and *al-Quds*. Authentic hadith also mention that only three mosques are recommended as destinations for worship—the Masjid al-Ḥarām, the Masjid al-Nabawī, and the Masjid al-Aqṣā. Politically, Arab countries view these three as symbols of unity among Muslims, with *al-Quds* in particular being the main focus in building international solidarity.²⁴

Bayt al-Maqdis (*al-Quds*) itself has strong theological ties with Muslims through four main dimensions, as explained by Sabri: ties of faith, worship, civilization, and history. From the perspective of faith, the events of *isrā’ mi’rāj* connect every Muslim to this region. In terms of worship, Masjid al-Aqṣā was the first qibla for Muslims, and the reward for praying there is multiplied. Historically, it is the place where many prophets have resided since Prophet Ibrāhīm a.s., while in terms

22 Muḥammad bin Ismā’īl al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi’ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl Allāh Ṣallā Allāh ‘Alayhi wa Sallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyāmihī: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭūq al-Najāh, 2020), 3:195.

23 M. Ma’rufin Sudibyo, *Sang Nabi Pun Berputar* (Solo: Tinta Medina, 2011), 63–64.

24 Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor and Muhammad Khalis Ibrahim, “Malaysia’s Stance Towards Trump’s Decision Regarding Bayt al-Maqdis,” in *Al-Quds: History, Religion and Politics*, ed. Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi and Muhittin Ataman (Ankara, Turkey: SETA Publications, 2019), 193–211, <https://eprints.um.edu.my/22632/>; R Cohen, “Reframing Al-Quds Day as a Unifying Islamic Symbol: The Battle over Jerusalem between Iran and the Arab World,” *Contemporary Islam* 16, no. 2–3 (2022): 335–52, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-022-00501-w>.

of civilization, this city has been the center of Islamic scholarship, culture, and worship rituals for centuries. These four dimensions confirm that *al-Quds* is not just a piece of historical evidence, but also a spiritual and civilizational symbol of the ummah.²⁵

An important question arises regarding the extent of the sanctity of Bait al-Maqdis: is it limited to the area of Masjid al-Aqṣā, or does it cover the whole of Palestine? El-Awaisi distinguishes between *al-arḍ al-muqaddasah* (the Holy Land) and *al-arḍ al-mubārakah* (the Blessed Land). Masjid al-Aqṣā is the center of sanctity, but its blessings extend to the surrounding areas. Based on the concept of *the Barakah Circle*, the radius of sanctity can reach approximately 400 km, covering most of Sham, Sinai, and Palestine. However, not all scholars equate it with the *ḥarām* status of Mecca and Medina; the boundaries of sanctity are more spiritual and historical than administrative.²⁶

The Qur'an places this land in a broader context as a blessed area for all of humanity (Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 71), with its sanctity preceding the arrival of the Children of Israel. In Islamic history, the management of this region by 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb and later Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī is evidence that the sanctity of *al-Quds* is accompanied by values of tolerance and protection for all religious communities. Thus, the sacred status of *al-Quds* is not tied to a particular ethnic group or belief, but is a spiritual heritage recognized across time.²⁷

In contrast to the Islamic view, the concept of the Promised Land in Jewish tradition is rooted in God's promise to Abraham and his descendants, as written in the Book of Genesis, which forms the theological foundation and collective identity of the Jews. This region, often identified as Canaan and its surroundings, is seen as an integral part of the covenant between God and the Israelites, as well as the center of Jewish longing, spirituality, and nationalism, including in Zionist narratives that emphasize historical and theological rights to the region.²⁸ This view is used by the Zionist movement as an ideological basis for claiming the territory of Palestine, even though historically the region has often been under non-Jewish rule.²⁹

25 Ikrima Sa'eed Sabri, "The Status and Significance of Bayt Al-Maqdis in Islam," *Insight Turkey* 22 (2020): 11–19, <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2020221.01>.

26 Khalid El-awaisi, "Mapping the Borders of Holiness: Islamic Jerusalem and Its Holy Land," *Milel ve Nihal* 14, no. 2 (2017): 125–59, <https://doi.org/10.17131/milel.377636>.

27 Amir Sahidin, "The Liberation of Baitul Maqdis by Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi 570-583: A Historical Analysis Study," *Agastya: Journal of History and Its Study* 12, no. 2 (2022): 117, <https://doi.org/10.25273/ajsp.v12i2.9599>.

28 J. David Stark, "To Your Seed I Will Give ... : The Land(s) Promised to Abraham in Genesis and Second Temple Judaism," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 30, no. 1 (2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.5325/bullbiblrese.30.1.0001>; Eugene Korn, "Review of Enabling Dialogue about the Land: A Resource Book for Jews and Christians Ed. by Phillip A. Cunningham, Ruth Langer, and Jesper Svartvik," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 57, no. 4 (2022): 611–14, <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ecu.2022.0040>.

29 Canan Seyfeli and Hüseyin Akdemir, "The Idea of Lands Provided in Hasidic Judaism: Anti-Israel," *Türkiye Journal of Theological Studies* 4, no. 2 (2020): 240–62, <https://doi.org/>

The concept of *The Promised Land* in Jewish tradition has a common ground with the Islamic view in recognizing the existence of prophets in that land, but differs fundamentally in terms of openness and tolerance. In Islam, the sanctity of *al-Quds* is inclusive, not eradicating certain beliefs, especially by force and brutality, while, in contrast, in Zionist ideology, the theological claim of the Promised Land is often used as a political shield that actually forcibly takes away the rights of non-Jewish residents. This difference in paradigm is a source of theological, social, and political tension to this day.³⁰

Classical and Contemporary Dimensions of Interpretation

Of the many important fragments, one of the most relevant in highlighting the issue of Jewish Zionist claims, especially The Promised Land, is the story of Prophet Moses and the Children of Israel when they were commanded to enter *al-ard al-muqaddasah* (the Holy Land). It reveals the dynamics between divine leadership, tests of obedience, moral courage, and the consequences of rejecting Allah's commands. This story is clearly immortalized in Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 20-26, which has always been the focus of study by scholars of various schools of thought—Sunni and Shia, classical and contemporary—with varying emphases. Allah Swt. says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَآتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُوْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ يُقَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنْدْخُلُهَا حَتَّى يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دِخْلُونَهَا قَالِ رَجُلَانِ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ^١ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِنَّا لَنَنْدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ قَالِ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيَهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ^٢

“Moses said to his people, ‘My people, remember God’s blessing on you: how He raised prophets among you and appointed kings for you and gave you what he had not given to any other people’. My people, go into the holy land which God has ordained for you—do not turn back or you will be the losers. They said, ‘Moses, there is a fearsome people in this land. We will not go there until they

<https://doi.org/10.32711/tiad.823191>.

30 Michael Wolffsohn, “Why Is the Land Holy? BT - Whose Holy Land? The Roots of the Conflict Between Jews and Arabs,” ed. Michael Wolffsohn (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 37–45, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74286-7_7; Mubasshir Khan, “Foundational Myths of Zionism: An Inquiry into the Light of Sacred Text,” *Academic Journals* 6, no. 2 (2015): 10–15, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5897/PPR2014.0115>.

leave. If they leave, then we will enter.' Yet two men whom God had blessed among those who were afraid said, 'Go in to them through the gate, and when you go in, you will overcome them. If you are true believers, put your trust in God. They said, 'Moses, we will never enter while they are still there, so you and your Lord go in and fight, and we will stay here. He said, 'Lord, I have authority over no one except myself and my brother: judge between the two of us and these disobedient people'. God said, 'The land is forbidden to them for forty years: they will wander the earth aimlessly. Do not grieve over those who disobey.'"³¹

Verse (20) serves as a reminder from Prophet Moses to the Children of Israel about the various blessings that have been bestowed upon them, starting from the appointment of prophets from among them, the granting of power and victory, as well as abundant sustenance. Ṭabāṭabā'ī emphasizes that this reminder is not without reason, but rather a moral message that every divine blessing carries with it spiritual and social responsibilities; honor and power should not stop at worldly achievements alone, but must be instruments for upholding justice and truth.³² This foundation of faith and gratitude became their capital in receiving the great command that would be conveyed afterwards.

After this reminder, Prophet Moses conveyed Allah's command to enter *al-ard' al-muqaddasah* (the Holy Land) that had been designated for them (verse 21). Classical interpretations, such as Al-Ṭabarī, present differing opinions regarding the boundaries of this region—some identify it with the regions of Sham, Jordan, Palestine, and even Egypt—but ultimately, he leans toward the majority opinion, which is that it is a specific region bounded by Egypt, Arish, and Furat.³³

The meaning of the Holy Land in this context expands when linked to the events of *isrā' mi'rāj*, in which Masjid al-Aqṣā, which is immortalized in Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 104, becomes an affirmation that part of Palestine is included in its sanctity. This view is confirmed by Zuḥaylī and al-Sha'rāwī, who see it as a theological legitimization of the region's position in the eyes of Muslims.³⁴ Al-Rāzī adds a deeper dimension of meaning: this region is a land that has been purified of shirk, becoming a place of residence for prophets and believers.³⁵ Thus, *al-ard' al-muqaddasah* has a solid theological position as well as being a symbol of the noble prophetic mission.

Still in the same verse, Ibn Kathīr interprets this command as a direct assurance from Allah that the Children of Israel will be able to defeat the local inhabitants of *al-Quds* if they obey.³⁶ However, the reality on the ground shows the wavering of

31 M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *Oxford World's Classics: The Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 70.

32 Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mīzān: An Exegesis of The Holy Qur'an*, trans. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 2001), 10:107–10.

33 Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī Jāmi' al-Bayān 'An Tā'wīl al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Hajr li al-Ṭabā'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī' wa al-I'lān, 2001), 8:284–89.

34 Wabḥah al-Zuḥaylī, *Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa al-Sharī'ah wa al-Manhaj* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 2009), 3:496; Mutawallī al-Sha'rāwī, *Tafsīr al-Sha'rāwī: Khawāṭir al-Sha'rāwī ḥawla al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Usrah, 1992), 5:3049–50.

35 Fakhr al-Dīn al al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 11:202.

36 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Aẓīm* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah, 2005), 3:80.

that belief. When they heard that a strong and large tribe lived in the Holy Land, fear overwhelmed them (verse 22). This rejection was an indication of weak faith, where the perception of threat was greater than belief in divine promises.

Amidst this atmosphere of fear, two courageous figures emerged—Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn and Kālib ibn Yafūnā—who called on their fellow believers to immediately enter the land, assuring them that victory would be achieved if they truly put their trust in Allah (verse 23).³⁷ However, this moral appeal was fruitless. The majority of the Children of Israel became even more adamant in their refusal (verse 24). They even uttered words that reflected the height of their defiance: “Moses, we will never enter while they are still there, so you and your Lord go in and fight, and we will stay here.” Seeing their statement, al-Shīrāzī, as a Shia scholar, was furious, strongly condemning their attitude, considering this statement not merely a form of rejection, but a sign of defiance and a loss of respect for Prophet Moses a.s. as a messenger of Allah.³⁸

Faced with this attitude, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) tried to remain calm and prayed to Allah that he and the believers be separated from those who sinned. This separation was a form of moral defense so that the faithful followers would not be held responsible for their sinful deeds. Allah then imposed a strict punishment: the Children of Israel were forbidden from entering *al-Quds* for 40 years and would only spend their days wandering in the wilderness of Tih. Quraish Shihab, quoting Ibn Khaldūn, interprets this punishment as a divine strategy to eradicate a generation that failed to fulfill its mandate, so that a new, more obedient generation would be born to realize divine commands.³⁹

This entire sequence shows a clear pattern: beginning with the memory of the blessings that had been obtained, the promising divine command, the test of courage, the rejection born of fear, to the consequences of disobedience in the form of the cancellation of Allah’s promise. This story is not only a historical narrative, but also a mirror for every community of believers throughout the ages. Blessings demand gratitude, trials demand courage, and disobedience will invite serious consequences. The Holy Land, in this case, is not merely a geographical entity, but a symbol of divine promise that will only be given to those who are steadfast in faith, ready to fight, and loyal to Allah’s commands. Most importantly, the above verses can serve as an important measure of how *al-Quds* has serious theological consequences in Islam. It is useful to assess the current concept of *al-Quds* while remaining grounded in what is mentioned in the Qur’an, as well as its socio-historical context.

The Fusion of Horizons Regarding the Principle of the Promised Land

The discussion of the fusion of horizons within the framework of Gadamer’s

37 Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Azīm*, 82.

38 Nāṣir Makārim al-Shīrāzī, *Al-Amthal fī Tafsīr Kitāb Allāh al-Munzal Ma’a Tabdhīb Jadīd* (Beirut: Alaami Library, 2013), 3:406–7.

39 M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsīr Al-Mishbāh: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2006), 3:70.

hermeneutics attempts to bring together the historical-theological horizon of the sacred text with the horizon of the modern reader who is faced with contemporary political realities. The starting point is the recognition that the meaning of the text does not arise solely from the context of the author or the author of the revelation, but from a dynamic dialogue between the past and the present. This is the theoretical basis that makes the reading of Q.S. Al-Mā'idah [5]: 20–26 relevant to the claim of the “Promised Land” in the modern era.

On the one hand, the historical horizon of the text brings the narrative of Moses and the Children of Israel, who refused to enter the Holy Land because of their fear of its inhabitants. This narrative presents a clear moral message: courage, obedience, and *tawakkul* are the conditions for achieving Allah's promise. On the other hand, the horizon of today's readers is colored by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which exploits this narrative politically, especially by the Zionist ideology that positions the Holy Land as the exclusive right of the descendants of the Children of Israel. Tensions began to arise when Zionist theological claims clashed with Islamic interpretations that emphasized the inclusiveness of the sanctity of *al-Quds*. From the perspective of the Qur'an, the land does not belong to a single ethnicity or community, but is a blessed territory entrusted to those who believe and uphold justice. Historical data showing the peaceful transfer of *al-Quds* administration during the eras of 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī reinforces this inclusive perspective.⁴⁰

This is where Gadamer invites us to not only understand the text in a vacuum, but to enter into it with historical awareness. The horizons of the past and present should not be allowed to negate each other but must seek a productive meeting point. In this case, the meeting point can be found in the principle that divine promises are always conditional on obedience and justice, not on lineage alone. However, this meeting point does not eliminate tension. In fact, the fusion of horizons opens up space to critically view the misuse of theological narratives by oppressive parties. If, in the time of Moses, the rejection of the Children of Israel invited punishment, then today the use of that narrative to justify land grabbing is a form of moral defiance in a new dimension.

The horizons of the text and the reader also support each other in terms of universal morality. The story of the Children of Israel contains the lesson that fear and rejection of divine commands can hinder the achievement of common goals. In the context of Palestine, this resonates with the importance of the collective courage of the people to defend their rights, even when faced with forces that are far greater militarily and politically. The dialogue between these two horizons shows that interpretation is not merely the preservation of meaning, but also contextual reinterpretation.⁴¹ For example, the command “enter the land that has

40 Sahidin, “The Liberation of Baitul Maqdis by Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi 570-583: A Historical Analysis Study,” 117–38.

41 Shuang Lu, “Fusion of Horizons”—Analysis of Fortress Besieged From the Perspective of Gadamer's Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5836/2020.01.001>.

been designated” in the textual horizon, when read with the horizon of today’s readers, can be interpreted as a mandate to fight for Palestinian independence and sovereignty in a manner consistent with the values of justice and humanity.

Another tension arises at the boundaries of the definition of “Holy Land” itself. Classical interpretations tend to associate it with the wider region of Sham, while modern Zionist readings limit it to specific political territories that they want to fully control. Here, Gadamer’s hermeneutics facilitates a re-reading that rejects the reduction of sacred meaning to mere geopolitical claims. On the supportive side, the modern reader’s horizon also finds that the narrative of Moses and the Children of Israel contains the principle that holiness is never a license to commit injustice. Rather, the blessed land must be a space for upholding noble values, including the protection of the weak. This principle has the potential to become an ethical basis for international solidarity movements.⁴²

The process of fusion of horizons also reveals the fact that in both horizons—textual and contemporary reality—there are actors who attempt to monopolize meaning. In the past, this was evident in the elite of the Children of Israel who rejected the prophetic mandate. In the present, this is evident in the political elite who claim divine legitimacy for their colonial agenda. Historical data support this critical reading. The pluralistic management of *al-Quds* during the classical Islamic period contrasts sharply with the practices of exclusivism and access restrictions under the Zionist regime. This tension reinforces the argument that the inclusive horizon of the text is more in line with the principle of universal justice than the exclusive horizon born of a particular political ideology.

The reciprocal relationship between the two horizons is also evident in the aspect of divine punishment. In the text, the punishment for disobedience is exile in the wilderness of Tih for 40 years. In modern reality, disobedience to the principle of justice results in a cycle of conflict and prolonged suffering, as if it were a contemporary “wilderness of Tih” that imprisons all parties in a circle of violence. The unification of these horizons, if done honestly, can give birth to a paradigm of liberation. In this paradigm, the reading of the text does not stop at the history of the past but makes it a source of inspiration to oppose all forms of oppression in the present. Thus, the meaning of “entering the Holy Land” becomes an invitation to build a just socio-political order.

However, obstacles arise when the horizons of modern readers are divided by ideological bias. Some Muslim readers may be trapped in emotional rhetoric without delving into the substance of the text’s message, while some Jewish readers may view the text only through the lens of their tradition without opening themselves up to interfaith interpretations. These obstacles prevent a true fusion of horizons. However, in the academic sphere, the potential for open dialogue remains. Data from classical interpretations that mention the diversity of interpretations of the boundaries of the Holy Land can serve as a bridge for discussion with non-Muslim

42 Brianna Suslovic et al., “Speaking Against Silence: Examining Social Work’s Response to Genocide,” *Abolitionist Perspectives in Social Work* 2, no. 1 (July 20, 2024): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.52713/5sehsp64>.

readers. In this way, the horizons of the past can help dismantle the absolutism of single interpretations that are often used to justify conflict.

The application of the fusion of horizons also requires distinguishing between normative and historical meanings. Normatively, God's promises are always related to obedience and justice. Historically, those promises were once given, rejected, and suspended. This distinction is important to avoid the trap of anachronism, which is to transfer the mandates of the past wholesale to the present situation. Methodological tension arises when readers attempt to separate transcendent texts from temporal contexts. Some scholars see the two as inseparable, while some modern academics argue that texts must be freed from their historical baggage to function universally. Gadamer rejects this rigid dichotomy and encourages ongoing dialogue between the two.⁴³

In the Palestinian context, this dialogue has produced the perspective that the liberation of *al-Quds* is not merely an eschatological promise awaiting divine intervention, but an ethical duty that requires human effort. This view combines the theological horizon with the horizon of political activism, resulting in a more comprehensive approach. The power of the fusion of horizons lies in its ability to transform differences into sources of learning. For example, the courage of Yūsha' ibn Nūn and Kālib in the text becomes a model of moral leadership that can be adapted in modern struggle strategies. Meanwhile, the weakness of the Israelites' faith serves as a warning that the struggle should not be trapped in fear or compromise that ignores principles.

Data was found that mutually reinforced the text and reality in this journey. The historical fact that *al-Quds* was once a center of scholarship and interfaith tolerance is in line with the Qur'anic vision of a blessed land for all. This support legitimizes efforts to make *al-Quds* an open city for all religious adherents, without discrimination and monopoly of truth. A number of historical studies and reviews show that during the heyday of Islamic civilization, this city became a meeting place for ideas across faiths, where scholars, intellectuals, and religious leaders lived side by side, building a tradition of healthy dialogue.

The intellectual tradition of medieval Muslims, as exemplified by figures such as al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Rushd, shows that interfaith interaction and discussion have long been part of the Islamic scientific heritage. They emphasized that truth can be found in various religious sources and that true knowledge is inclusive. This encourages interfaith dialogue to go beyond passive tolerance and move toward an active search for common ground and the building of partnerships for the common good. This history reinforces the hermeneutic principle that the Qur'anic text's message about the blessed land must be read in a spirit of openness, respect for differences, and efforts to build a fair shared space for all parties.⁴⁴

43 Anam et al., "Reinterpreting Coercive Begging in Islam through the Tafsir of Wahbah Al-Zuhaili," 49–69.

44 Fadlil Yani Ainusyamsi et al., "Interreligious Engagement: Learning from the Medieval Muslim Intellectual Legacy," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 15, no. 1 (April 25,

However, the unification of horizons also reveals limitations that need to be watched out for. Not all textual messages can be directly translated into political policy without the risk of distorting meaning. The politicization of interpretation always lurks, especially when power interests override commitment to the universal values promoted by the text. This is where hermeneutic integrity becomes imperative: the reading must remain faithful to the spirit of the text, uphold the principle of justice, and avoid manipulating sacred verses to justify exclusive or discriminatory actions.

Ultimately, the fusion of horizons in this case teaches that conflict resolution requires a willingness to acknowledge the truths that exist on the other horizon. For Muslims, this means understanding Jewish historical sensitivities towards *al-Quds*. For Jews, this means acknowledging the historical and humanitarian rights of the Palestinian people. This ethical meeting point can become a more solid foundation for peace. Thus, the subchapter on the fusion of horizons is not only a hermeneutic analysis, but also an offer of a way out that demands intellectual courage and moral humility. It combines the power of sacred texts, historical awareness, and humanitarian demands in a mutually reinforcing framework.

Application to the Reality of *al-Quds*

Al-Quds in Islamic theology is not merely a historical region, but a symbol of pure monotheism, rejection of polytheism, injustice, and hostility, with its sanctity rooted in monumental prophetic events, particularly the al-Aqṣā Mosque, as confirmed in Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 1. This sanctity demands fair and oppression-free management of the city, including the protection of human rights, freedom of worship, and the preservation of the moral-spiritual ecosystem. The Zionist claim to *the Promised Land* is considered invalid because it ignores the moral conditions of the divine promise, thus contradicting the history of inclusive management of *al-Quds* under 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, who guaranteed religious freedom and protection for all beliefs at that time.

Al-Sha'rāwī's view positions the protection of *al-Quds* as *irādah tashri'iyyah*—the will of the sharia that demands human effort. Allah has set the goal, but humans must strategize and make sacrifices to achieve it.⁴⁵ Al-Zuhaylī agrees with this view.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, support from classical exegetes also enriches this discourse. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, interprets "*allatī kataba Allāh lakum*" or "*which God has ordained for you*" as a command to enter, emphasizing a theological rebuttal to the claim of the Promised Land.⁴⁷ The integration of these views confirms that faith cannot be passive. Diplomacy, education, humanitarian action, and physical defense, when necessary and possible, are forms of contemporary jihad for *al-Quds*.

This theological awareness extends to the global realm, transcending religious

2025): 367–84, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.151.21>.

45 Sha'rāwī, *Tafsīr al-Sha'rāwī: Khawāṭir al-Sha'rāwī ḥawla al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, 5:3049–50.

46 Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa al-Sharī'ah wa al-Manhaj*, 3:496.

47 Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī Jāmi' al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, 8:284–89.

and cultural boundaries. Protecting *al-Quds* means caring for a symbol of world civilization that represents the intersection of three heavenly religions. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the goal of protecting *al-Quds* includes protecting religion, life, reason, property, and offspring—not only for Muslims, but also for non-Muslims who have historical and spiritual ties to this holy land. Before shifting the blame to external factors, the continuing political divisions, prioritization of personal interests, and weak long-term vision among Muslims themselves pose an initial threat, making internal reform an absolute prerequisite for the successful liberation of *al-Quds*, as emphasized by Sayyid Quṭb in the context of (Q.S. Ar-Raʿd [13]: 11). This verse affirms that true change begins with oneself, with the awareness that Allah knows everything that will happen in the future.⁴⁸ Confidence rooted in past glories, combined with present strategic capabilities, will open up great opportunities in the struggle for the liberation of *al-Quds*. However, the fact is that there are still many individuals and groups who are unaware or unwilling to revive this spirit of liberation. Therefore, the narrative of struggle must continue to be asserted and instilled, starting from the minds of each individual.⁴⁹

Islam itself rejects the Nazi Germany approach of hatred and discrimination against Jews. Theological differences have never been a justification for depriving others of their human rights. History proves that Islam-Jewish relations were once harmonious. During the reign of Caliph ʿUmar bin Khaṭṭāb, after the conquest of *al-Quds* in 637 AD, Jews were allowed to return to live in the city after centuries of expulsion by the Byzantines. This step shows that Islam is capable of separating religious identity from political practice, providing space for peaceful coexistence for all.

This harmonious relationship was also reflected in Andalusia, where the Jewish community not only lived safely under Islamic rule but also played an important role in science, trade, and politics. Great Jewish figures such as Maimonides developed their important works under the auspices of Muslim rule. Overall, many Jewish sources themselves affirm the positive role of the Ottoman Empire in the social and cultural life of the Jewish community, making this period one of the golden ages for Jews in the Islamic world.⁵⁰ This history is strong evidence that Islam does not oppose Jews as a religious entity, but only opposes discriminatory practices cloaked in theological claims.

Therefore, Islam's opposition to Zionism is not a rejection of the existence of Jews, but rather opposition to a colonial system that is discriminatory, oppressive, and violates international law. The principle (Q.S. Al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 8) provides a clear ethical basis: Muslims are obliged to be fair to non-Muslims who

48 Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsir Fi Dhilal Al-Quran Di Bawah Naungan Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Gema Insan, 2003), 38.

49 Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Islam and the World* (Bandung: Angkasa Publishers, 2008).

50 Enes Karic, "Myths and Counter-Myths About Jews in the Ottoman Empire," *Necmettin Erbakan University Faculty of Theology Journal*, *Necmettin Erbakan University* 51, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 59–65, <https://doi.org/10.51121/akif.2021.15>.

do not fight them, but they are also obliged to fight those who commit injustice. With this principle, the struggle for *al-Quds* gains a firm moral foundation and avoids racial and sectarian bias.

This kind of theological spirit is also supported by beliefs outside of Islam, and interfaith diplomatic movements are increasingly being carried out, which certainly become a force to be reckoned with in the narrative of *al-Quds* liberation. Church leaders in the Middle East, Muslim scholars, and anti-Zionist Jewish figures such as Neturei Karta have united to call for a vision of *al-Quds* that is peaceful, open, and inclusive. This initiative effectively deconstructs the narrative that this conflict is not merely a conflict between religions, but in fact a form of modern colonialism wrapped in theological claims. Such interfaith movements have great potential to expand international support, as they can unite various faiths under the values of humanity: justice, peace, and rejection of colonialism.⁵¹

Shifting from theological support to the international community, the liberation of *al-Quds* must also be positioned as a global humanitarian issue that demands the attention of all nations and countries. International legal support is one of the important pillars, as reflected in the UN Resolution that explicitly rejects Israel's occupation and expansion of illegal settlements. Although its implementation is often hampered by geopolitical dynamics, these two resolutions provide a basis for legitimacy to pressure Israel in international forums.⁵² The use of the veto by the U.S. in the ceasefire resolution is often the biggest obstacle when the UN General Assembly is in session.⁵³

Arab countries, through the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), have also demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the status of *al-Quds*. The committee led by Morocco, together with financial support instruments such as the *al-Quds* Fund, has sought to strengthen the social and economic resilience of the Palestinian people, while maintaining the identity of *al-Quds*. However, the effectiveness of this measure is often hampered by the internal political fragmentation of the Arab world itself and pressure from major countries with strategic interests in the Middle East.⁵⁴

On the other hand, support from Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Iran provides a broader geopolitical dimension. Indonesia, for

51 Abd Al-Fattah El-Awaisi, "Grounding the Concept of the Prophetic Terminology 'Bayt Al-Maqdis': The Need for Reviving This Islamic Terminology," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 16, no. 1 (2021): 163–79, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.VOL16NO1.12>; Jasmine K. Gani, "Anti-Colonial Connectivity between Islamicate Movements in the Middle East and South Asia: The Muslim Brotherhood and Jamati Islam," *Postcolonial Studies* 26, no. 1 (2022): 55–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2023.2127660>.

52 Yordan Gunawan et al., "The Effectiveness of International Law in Limiting Humanitarian Disasters in the Palestine-Israel Conflict," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 5, no. 1 (March 27, 2025): 217–45, <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v5i1.307>.

53 Tommy Patrio Sorongan, "Tok! US Vetoes Another UN Security Council Resolution on Gaza Ceasefire," CNBC Indonesia, 2025, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20250919130136-4-668483/tok-as-veto-lagi-resolusi-dk-pbb-soal-gencatan-senjata-gaza>.

54 Oun, "Al-Quds as Mentioned in UN Resolutions," 19–28.

example, engages in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.⁵⁵ Malaysia promotes soft but consistent diplomacy in international forums. Pakistan utilizes the UN platform to assert its position, while Iran uses confrontational rhetoric and direct support for resistance groups. This diversity of approaches shows that although the strategies differ, the collective goal remains the same: to liberate *al-Quds* from occupation.⁵⁶

The culmination of the struggles of various parties has now ended in the international community's offer of a "Two-State Solution," proposing that Israel recognize Palestinian sovereignty, and vice versa, and work together to overcome HAMAS terrorism if that is what Israel wants and claims. However, in fact, Netanyahu, as Prime Minister of Israel, accuses the Palestinians of rejecting the offer. Their stubbornness this time has even angered their own allies, as evidenced by the renewed global solidarity with Palestine when 180 of the 193 UN member states, including the United Kingdom and France, walked out during Benjamin Netanyahu's speech. This is a strong protest against the previous sanctions imposed by the U.S. on ICC judges and deputy prosecutors who declared Netanyahu a perpetrator of genocide.⁵⁷

This global action brings a glimmer of hope, leaving Netanyahu, who always delivers empty rhetoric and one-sided accusations against Palestine and Iran, behind. This needs to be highlighted because cooperation, such as the walkout with the most participants above, only happen occasionally. Therefore, efforts to pressure those who consistently obstruct Palestinian independence must be consistently pursued, not just occasionally, to completely halt the largest practice of modern colonialism in this century.

The ultimate goal of this entire liberation struggle is to restore *al-Quds* to its status as a holy city that is open, safe, and free from discrimination, where all religious communities can worship without fear or threat. In this vision, the Al-Aqṣā Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the Wailing Wall are equally protected, reflecting the noble values that have been passed down from generation to generation. With this comprehensive vision, the liberation of *al-Quds* is not only a political project but part of an effort to build a peaceful civilization that rejects all forms of discrimination, colonialism, and genocide. Islam places this struggle as an integral part of the global justice agenda, which is not limited by religious and ethnic barriers, but is based on universal human values.

Conclusion

Based on the overall discussion, this study confirms that *al-Quds* has a special

55 Shahnaz Syafira Adira and Insan Harapan Harahap, *Indonesian Diplomacy in Supporting Palestinian Independence* (Jakarta: Bakrie University Press, 2025), 186–89.

56 Oun, "Al-Quds as Mentioned in UN Resolutions," 19–28.

57 UN Human Rights Chief Turki, "Türk Denounces Intensification of US Reprisals against International Criminal Court Personnel," UN Human Rights, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/turk-denounces-intensification-us-reprisals-against-international-criminal>.

position theologically, historically, and geopolitically. Theologically, its sanctity stems from revelations that place this region as a symbol of monotheism, free from all forms of polytheism and oppression, and one of the three mosques recommended for pilgrimage. Historically, *al-Quds* was once the center of civilization and interfaith tolerance under Islamic leadership, which provided protection and freedom of worship to all religious adherents. This perspective forms the basis for rejecting the Zionists' exclusive claim to "The Promised Land," because according to Islamic law, this promise is conditional on obedience, which their ancestors themselves once violated. Protecting *al-Quds* is part of *irādah tashri'yyah*, which requires strategic efforts by Muslims—through diplomacy, civil resistance, international support, and interfaith solidarity—to maintain its sanctity.

The liberation of *al-Quds* must also be positioned as a global humanitarian issue. Political support from the international community, across nations, ethnicities, and faiths, strengthens the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's struggle. Islam views *al-Quds* as a holy city not to antagonize Jews or repeat Nazi-style racial hatred, but to uphold peace, justice, and the protection of human rights without discrimination. This vision restores *al-Quds* to its original function as an open territory for all people, making it a model of peaceful civilization, rejecting colonialism and genocide. To achieve this, Islam needs to start from individual awareness, collective courage, and consistent promotion of international solidarity against Israel and its allies. For further research, it is recommended to conduct a broader study of integrative strategies between theological, political, economic, and digital technology approaches in the liberation of *al-Quds*, including comparative studies of international law, to produce a more comprehensive, measurable, and sustainable model of struggle.

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