

THE CITY OF GOD

Jerusalem is the holy city, the Center from which knowledge of the one God spread through the world; the city of the prophets and kings - David, Solomon, Jesus, Mohammad; the city where Judaism, Christianity and Islam will come together in reverence for God, as predicted in the Koran. Thus who owns Jerusalem? God. Who should govern Jerusalem? The leaders of the three religions for which it is holy. And how might that governance work out in practice?

- First, Jerusalem, God's city, will be a separate entity, like Vatican City, which is surrounded by Rome but is a separate country.
- Second, Jerusalem will be run by an administrator appointed by the religious leaders of the three religions (henceforth called the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Council). The administrator will be in charge of collecting taxes and maintaining the city. The administrator will consult with the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Council on all subjects: tax rates, building projects, citizenship for non-Israeli or non-Palestinian religious peoples, the use of tax revenues, maintaining the mosques and their schools, the churches and their schools, and the synagogues and their schools.
- Third, since the Knesset is located in Jerusalem, it will pay property taxes to Jerusalem as it continues to govern Israel. Comparably, the capital building of Palestine will be in Jerusalem, its president will govern Palestine from there, and Palestine will pay property taxes to Jerusalem.
- Fourth, the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Council will determine other matters such as making Jerusalem a place of God's peace with no deadly weapons present, even for crime prevention. Moreover, crime prevention patrols will expel prostitution, obscenity, and immorality while emphasizing modest dress in God's city.
- Fifth, the religious leaders will come to an agreement about rebuilding Solomon's Temple, which will be located on or near its original site, which is not the site of the Dome of the Rock or Al Aqsa Mosque. Then each of the religions will have a beautiful building on its ancient holy site. Moreover, Solomon's Temple will symbolize the convergence of the three religions to spread God's truth around the world.
- Sixth, the Judeo-Christian-Islamic Council will consider building a great library in Jerusalem to house the holy writings and scholarship of the three religions, if funds are available.

When the religious leaders govern Jerusalem, then God 's city truly will be a place of God, a light to the nations, and a center from which holiness will radiate to the world and inspire all to live according to God's law and God's peace. Then the three religions will fulfill their prophecies of bringing peace to the earth, and Jerusalem then truly will be the city of righteous peace.

THE FRIENDSHIP AND PEACE SOCIETY

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Dear Peace-Lover,

We know that Jerusalem is the subject of much discussion now and its fate will be decided in negotiations. We therefore would like to be sure that you have in your hand a non-controversial proposal on Jerusalem that has been approved during the past fifteen years by two Chief Rabbis of Israel, the PLO, religious leaders in Jerusalem, and even Sheik Yassin of Hamas, who had no objections to it. What is the proposal? To give Jerusalem to God to be governed by the religious leaders of the three Abrahamic religions. It will be the eternal undivided capital of Israel and the capital of Palestine, but it will belong to neither but rather to God.

Several important figures in 1992 worked on this proposal. The Chief Rabbis of Israel put in the wording that Jerusalem should be "a separate entity like Vatican City," that it should include all of Jerusalem, and their spokesperson, Zalman Loessner, said that Israel would agree to the proposal. Faisal Husseini also worked on it, particularly on the wording about the rebuilding of the Temple of King Solomon, a blessing that religious Jews have desired for 2000 years. The wording gives the Jews the right to rebuild the Temple, but at the same time it protects the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque permanently. The place for the Temple will be at the north end of the Temple Mount, where there is room and where Dr. Abramoff, Professor Emeritus from Hebrew University, thinks the original Temple was.

When Olmert was Mayor of Jerusalem, he liked the proposal well enough to appoint Meyer Kaplan to work on implementing it. Moreover, all of the religious leaders in 1992 liked it, including Patriarch Michel Sabah, Bishop Samir Kafity, and Mufti Akrima Sabri (who, however, said that he personally could not authorize the rebuilding of the Temple), and the late Sheik Yassin of Hamas, who had no objections to the proposal. Recently, Sheik Deeb, the Deputy Imam of Al Azhar Univeristy in Cairo, also had no objections to it and he was sure that the Council of Muslim Scholars from all the Arab countries also would have no objections. Now the PLO also accepts the proposal, according to Dr. Nabil Amr, in part because when the religious leaders govern Jerusalem, the refugees from all of Jerusalem, not just from East Jerusalem, will be able to return to Jerusalem though not to their old homes .

The peace talks between Barak and Arafat broke down over Jerusalem, particularly over the idea of the Muslims having the surface of the Temple Mount and the Jews having beneath it. However, this proposal is one that all can agree on, from Shas to Hamas. Therefore, we hope that it will be included as part of any peace initiative.

We will be happy to answer any questions about the proposal, which was first published in Al Fajr newspaper in Jerusalem on June 1, 1992, in English and subsequently in Arabic.

God's peace be with you and with all people,

Ellen Rosser, Ph.D., President

Ibrahim al Rifae, Gaza Director of the Friendship and Peace Society

Rabbi Menachem Froman, the Honorary Rabbi of the Friendship and Peace Society