

## FROM THE HERITAGE OF ARAB CULTURE ...

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### House of Wisdom (Bayt Al-Hikmah)

Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, (786-809 CE) formally built the scientific collection and Academy of Science in Baghdad.

“It was an unrivalled center for the study of humanities and for science, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, chemistry, zoology, and geography...”

The House was full to bursting with scientists or “Ulama”, and scholars, famous translators, authors, men of letters, poets, and professionals in the various arts and crafts.

The House was a cosmopolitan melting pot and languages that were spoken and written included Arabic, the Lingua Franca, Farisi, Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, which was used to translate the ancient Indian mathematic manuscripts.

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“Knowledge exists potentially in the human soul like the seeds in the soil; by learning the potential becomes actual” *Philosopher, Al-Ghazali*

“Seek knowledge from the cradle to grave”

*Arabic proverb*

“What is learnt in youth is like what is carved in stone”

*Arabic proverb*

**Caption:** Ibn Sina, also known as Avicenna (in the chair), in a 17th-century surrounded by students .

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“If he (the teacher) is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom. But rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.”

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

“Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and the nights. But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart’s knowledge. You would know in words that which you have always known in thought. You would touch with your fingers the naked body of your dreams.”

“You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts; And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime.”

*Khalil Gibran in his book ‘The Prophet’*

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Over a thousand years ago, we would have found a study circle or a Halaqat al-ilm or Halaqa gathered around a professor who was seated on a chair of kursi in Arabic.

Initially, it was just to give the teacher a comfortable place and to make him higher than the seated student so they could see and hear him better.

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“The Beginning of Wisdom is the Fear of God”

*Circular composition in Jali  
Thuluth style, illuminated in  
black ink of treated paper.*

*Written by calligrapher Fuad  
Bashar*

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“The book is silent as long as you need silence, eloquent whenever you want discourse. He never interrupts you if you are engaged, but if you feel lonely he will be a good companion. He is a friend who never deceives or flatters you, and he is a companion who does not grow tired of you.”

*Al-Jahiz, Muslim philosopher and man of literature, 8th century, Basra, Iraq.*

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The Umayyad rulers of Spain had six hundred thousand volumes in their huge Cordoba library. So much better was the company of books for al-Hakam II, caliph in Spain from 691 to 978, that he said they were ‘a more consuming passion than his throne.’

*Expansion of Hakam II at the Mosque of Cordoba*

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*Al-Khwarizmi, the father of algebra, on a commemorative stamp issued in 1983 by the former Soviet Union.*

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Ibn al-Haitham, on the left, and Galileo both explored their world through observation and rational thought. This is emphasized here on the front of Johannes Hevelius’s Selenographia, a 1647 description of the Moon. In al-Haitham’s hand is a geometrical diagram, while Galileo clutches a long telescope.

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**Ibn Khaldun** was a judge, university scholar and diplomat, known for his works of sociology, economics, commerce, history, philosophy, political science and anthropology. He wrote his famous al-Muqaddimah or ‘Introduction [to a History of The World]’ during a period of enforced exile in Algeria, while running from Fez because of the political unrest. The first volume gave a profound and detailed analysis of Islamic society, referencing and comparing it to other cultures. He also traced the rise and fall of human societies in a science of civilization.

*Modern artistic impression of Ibn Khaldun.*

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“Human beings require cooperation for the reservation of the species, and they are by nature equipped for it. Their labour is the only means at their disposal for creating the material basis for their individual and group existence. Where human beings exist in large numbers, a division of activities becomes possible and permits greater specialization and refinement in all spheres of life. The result is umran (civilization or culture), with its great material and intellectual achievements, but also with a tendency toward luxury and leisure which carries within itself the seeds of destruction.”

*From Ibn Khaldun’s al-Muqaddimah, in the 14th-century.*

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**Abu Nasr Al-Farabi** (870-950), generally referred to in the Arabic sources as the second teacher (Al Mu’allim Al-Tani), occupies a unique position in the history of philosophy, as the link between Greek philosophy and Islamic thought. Al-Farabi developed in his principal writing, such as the virtuous city (Al-Madina al-Fadila) and the civil polity (Al-Siyasa Al-Madaniyah), an elaborate metaphysical scheme in which the Qur’anic concepts of creations, God’s sovereignty in the world and the fate of the soul after death, are interpreted in an entirely new spirit.

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Ninth-century chemist al-Razi depicted in his Baghdad laboratory. Modern perfumes would not exist today without the distillation process, devised and perfected by Jabir ibn Hayyan, the alchemist Geber of the Middle Ages, who is generally known as the father of chemistry, in the late 8th century.

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“Al-Zahrawi remains a leading scholar who transformed surgery into an independent science based on the knowledge of anatomy. His illustration and drawing of the tools is an innovation that keeps his contribution alive, reflected in its continuous influence on the works of those who came after him.”

*L Leclerc, 19th-century French medical historian.*

**Photo caption:** A 1964 Syrian commemorative stamp showing an artist’s impression of the 10th-century Spanish Muslim Surgeon, al-Zahrawi.

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“We ought not to be embarrassed of appreciating the truth and obtaining it wherever it comes from, even if it comes from races distant and nations different from us. Nothing should be dearer to the seeker of truth than the truth itself, and there is no deterioration of the truth, nor belittling either of one who speaks it or conveys it.”

Al-Kindi [Abu Yousuf Yaqub Ibn Ishaq al-Sabbah alKindi], born in 801 in Kufa, Iraq, died in 873

Al-Kindi wrote over 361 books on a variety of subjects including ‘The Book of Chemistry of Perfume and Distillations’

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*The Public Library of Hulwan in Baghdad from a 13th-century manuscript of the Maqamat or Assemblies of al-Hariri.*

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“Behave with people in the same manner you wish them to behave with you”.

*“A Maxim” in composition of Jali Thuluth Style, by calligrapher Tagelsir Hassan (1427).*

*عامل الناس كما تحب ان يعاملوك*

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Traces of medieval Islamic astronomy are still seen today. The words zenith, azimuth and the names of stars in the Summer Triangle, Vega, Altair, Deneb, are all of Arabic origin. Today thousands of Muslim astronomical manuscripts still remain unexamined, but the most prominent of these thousand-year-old astronomers, who spent their lives looking into the heavens, are, at last, becoming known.

**Photo caption:** *15th-century Persian manuscript of Nasir al-Din-al-Tusi’s observatory at Meregā showing astronomers at work and the teaching of astronomy including the use of an astrolabe. Also note the astrolabe hanging on the wall.*

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**Ibn Sina**, known as Avicenna in the west, was so highly regarded that he was compared to Galen, the ancient Greek physician, and was known as the “Galen of Islam.” Because of his great notoriety, many nations competed to commemorate his anniversary, with Turkey being the first in 1937, nine hundred years after his death.

To appreciate his contribution in developing the philosophical and medical sciences, all members of UNESCO celebrated his one thousand year anniversary. He was born in Afshana, now in Uzbekistan, and left at age 21, spending the rest of his life in various Persian towns, and becoming a renowned philosopher and medic. Through his life he composed 276 works, all written in Arabic, except for a few small books written in his mother tongue, Persian. Unfortunately, most of these works have been lost, but there are still 68 books or treatises available in eastern and western libraries.

He wrote in all branches of science, but he was most interested in philosophy and medicine, so some recent historians called him more of a philosopher than a physician, however others say he was the “Prince of the Physicians” during the Middle Ages. The majority of his work was in medicine and 43 works were in this area; 24 in philosophy; 36 in physics; 31 in theology; 23 in psychology; 15 in mathematics; 22 in logic; and five in Quran interpretation. He also wrote on asceticism, love and music and wrote some stories.

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**Al-Kindi** was one of the first to realize the therapeutic value of music and tried to cure a quadriplegic boy with musical therapy. After consulting most reputable physicians, the boy's father lost hope and decided to try al-Kindi as a last resort. Seeing the boy, al-Kindi called his music students and ordered them to play. The boy relaxed, sat up and talked while the music played. Seeing this improvement, al-Kindi asked the boy's father to talk to his son, which he quickly did, but as soon as the musicians stopped playing the boy returned to his former ill state. The father wanted them to keep playing, but al-Kindi said, 'No, it was an episode in his life. No one can lengthen another person's life. Your son has fulfilled the divine term.' Today music therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to help physical, emotional, and mental conditions.

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### **Al-Qahwa**

More than 1,200 years ago hardworking people fought to stay awake without this stimulant, until a herd of curious goats and their watchful master, an Arab named Khalid, discovered this simple, life changing substance. As his goats grazed on the Ethiopian slopes, he noticed they became lively and excited after eating a particular berry. Instead of just eating the berries they were taken and boiled to create al-Qahwa (coffee). Sufis in Yemen drank al-Qahwa for the same reason we do today, to stay awake. They could now concentrate during late night Thikr (prayers in the remembrance of Allah). It spread to the rest of the Muslim world through travelers, pilgrims and traders, reaching Mecca and Turkey in the late 15th century and Cairo in the 16th century as a popular beverage.

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**Al-Azhar Mosque** was founded in 972, in Cairo, Egypt. This Mosque continues to be one of the most important institutions of Sunni Islam. It plays a central role in the every day life of Muslims. Its academic program has branches in different parts of the world. *"The Arch never sleeps." Arabic proverb*

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The first known alphabetical classification of medical terms, listing the names of illnesses, medicines, and physiological processes or treatments was called Kitab al-Ma'a or "The Book of Water". Written by al-Azdi, also known as Ibn al-Thahabi, it was called Kitab al-Ma'a because the word al-Ma'a, the water, appears as the first entry. The author, who died in 1033, in Valencia, Muslim Spain, left this 900 page manuscript for the benefit of his contemporaries and future generations.

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In the 13th century, Yaqut al-Hamawi toured from Mosul in Iraq to Aleppo in Syria, and then to Palestine, Egypt, and Persia. Only four of his works have survived until today. The best known is his "Dictionary of Countries". It's a vast geographical encyclopaedia, which summed up nearly all medieval knowledge of the globe, including archaeology, ethnography, history, anthropology, natural sciences, and geography and gave coordinates for every place. He described and named every town and city, giving details of their every monument, economy, history, population, and leading figures.

*13th-Century traveller Yaqut al-Hamawi's Dictionary of Countries is still widely read. This is a 20th-century German translation.*

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**Al-Muqaddasi** was a 10th-century Muslim geographer. He travelled throughout the Muslim world, observing, corroborating, weighting and sifting evidence, taking notes and writing. The outcome of years of travel was “Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions”, completed in 985. It appealed to a variety of people while also being an entertaining read. Like many before and after him, his reasons for scholarly research were divine inspiration. What he produced would be a way of getting to know God better, and he would also receive just reward for his endeavor. His great book created the systematic foundation of Muslim geography, as he introduced geographic terminology, the various methods of division of the earth and the value of empirical observation.

*Al-Muqaddasi was a 10th-century Muslim geographer and produced this book of his travels.*

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### **10th Century Jerusalem**

A dark period ensued at the beginning of the 11th-century, when the Egyptian Caliph Al-Hakim persecuted Christians and Jews, and destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. A later conquest of the city by the Seljuk Turks caused many oppressive reprisals on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The city then remained under Islamic Arab rule until it was captured by the Crusaders in 1099 AD. The Crusaders (“AlFiranja”) massacred Muslims and Jews, and turned Jerusalem into a Christian city where non-Christians were not permitted to live. Christian rule lasted until 1187 AD when Salah Eddin conquered the city. Salah Eddin restored Jerusalem’s true role; he left the Holy Sepulcher open to Christians and reopened the city in 1192 for pilgrimage. Again, following the fall of Jerusalem to Fredrick II in 1229, the city was forbidden to Muslims and Jews, and in 1244 the city came under the rule of Egypt (the Mamluks).

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### **Al-Buraq Wall (In Arabic: Ha’et Al Buraq)**

Al-Buraq Wall is part of al-Aqsa’s western wall. All the walls of al-Aqsa are Islamic endowments. Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammed honored and blessed the place by tying al-Buraq (the Prophet’s mount) to the wall during his Night Journey and Ascension to Heaven (*al-’Isra’ wal-Mi’raj*).

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### **Al-Mughrabi Gate (Bab al-Magharibah)**

The Mughrabi Gate was also known as the Buraq Gate and the Prophet Gate. It was renovated in 1313 AD (713 Hijri) by Sultan an-Naseer Ibn Qalawoun. It is named the Magharibah Gate because it led to the Moroccan quarters. The Moroccan quarters were destroyed by Israeli forces in 1967 and its inhabitants were made refugees. The area has now become a plaza and is accessible only to Jews. Most recently, the excavation work that Israel began on 5 Feb. 2007 near Al-Buraq Wall, has come to represent, as far as the Palestinians and the Arab and Muslim worlds are concerned, yet another ominous move on the part of Israel to ‘Israelize’ Jerusalem.

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### **The Islamic Museum (al-Mathaf al-Islami)**

The Islamic Museum in Jerusalem was built in 1929 AD by the Higher Islamic Council. It holds an extensive Qur'an collection, Islamic ceramics, coins, glassware, guns, swords and daggers. The main purpose of this museum is to preserve and document the history of the Holy Sanctuary

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### **Al-Maktaba Al-Khalidiyya**

This family library is located in Jerusalem's Old City and includes around 12,000 manuscripts. The library is housed in a historical building that is traced back to the Mamluk period, including the grave of a Mamluk Emir and his two sons. Khadija, the daughter of Musa Effendi Al-Khalidi (military Qadi of Anatolia in 1932), is said to have thought of turning the family's book collection in the building into a public library that could help spread the knowledge to the general public. She motivated her grandson, Haj Ragheb Bek Al-Khalidi to start the library, which was officially launched in 1899 after seeking advice from experts from Damascus. The building was subjected to the dangers of Zionist expropriation and the case was taken to the court, with the court ruling in favor of the Al-Khalidi family.

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### **The Golden Gate (Bab ath-Thahabi)**

Dating back to Umayyad times, the Golden Gate's two vaulted halls lead to the Door of Mercy, Bab ar-Rahmah, and the Door of Repentance, Bab at-Tawba. Imam al-Ghazali is thought to have written his "Revival of the Religious Sciences" while living above these gates and teaching at al-Aqsa Mosque. The most ancient Muslim Cemetery in the city is located just outside this gate.

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**Najib Azuri**, an Arab official under the Ottomans in Jerusalem, published "The League of the Arab Homeland" (Le Reveil de la Nation Arabe) in Paris in 1904. The book appeals to all Arab citizens to break away and establish a greater Arab Kingdom, which would include Syria, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula. It also warns of Zionist ambitions in Palestine and forecasts the conflict between national movements in the Middle East.

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1908: Palestinian journal Al-Carmel is founded in Haifa by Najib Nassar to reflect the Palestinian national consensus to oppose Zionist colonization.

1908: Al-Quds newspaper is established; edited and owned by George Habib Hananniya

1911: Palestinian writer Issa Daoud Alissa co-founds with his cousin Yousef the bi-weekly Arabic newspaper Filastin in Jaffa. The paper addressed its readers as 'Palestinians' and warns them about the consequences of Zionist colonization.

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### Is'af Mohammed Nashashibi (1882-1948)

Born in Jerusalem in 1882; educated at the Frères College in Jerusalem and the Patriarchal School in Beirut, where he was tutored by the notable Arabic language expert AlBustani; expressed opposition to Zionism as early as 1909 in his literary work *As-Sahir wa Al-Yahudi* (The Wizard and the Jew); returned to Jerusalem and occupied himself with literature and philosophy until the end of WWI; taught Arabic language, among others at Sahaliyyah College in Jerusalem; was known as Adib Al-Arabiya (Scholar of Arabic Language); became Director of Ar-Rashidiyah School in Jerusalem after WWI; was a founding member of the Muntada Al-Adabi (Literary Club) in 1918, was described as a 'Walking Arabic Dictionary'; was a member of the Arab Scientific Society in Damascus; was a prolific essayist and authored several books, incl. *An Arab Heart and European Mind* (Arabic, 1923) and *The Correct Islam* (Arabic, 1935); died on 18 Jan. 1948 in Cairo; his unique book collection was looted by Jewish forces during the 1948 Nakba.

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1909: Al-Mufid, a representative newspaper that advocates the cause of Arabism is founded in Beirut by Abdul Gani Al-'Uraysi and Fu'ad Hantas.

1910: Khalil Bedas begins to issue AnNafais Al-Assriah in Jerusalem (until 1913, then stopped before re-issuing it in Haifa in 1919 for another year).

1910: Lebanese artist Shuqeiri Ganeim (1861-1931) successfully stages a production of the classic Arab play 'Antarah' in Paris.

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**Dabkeh** is the traditional folk dance of both men and women in the Levant and is the national dance of Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan. The meaning of *dabkeh* is stomping of the feet, and stomping, as well as jumping and kicking, are moves that are represented in the dabkeh. The leader, called *raas* (head) or *lawwih* (waver), is allowed to improvise on the type of dabkeh being performed, while simultaneously twirling a handkerchief or string of beads known as a *masbha* (similar to a rosary). Meanwhile, the dancers use vocalizations to energize the performance and punctuate the rhythm. It is also a dance of solidarity and a way of expressing nationalism through art.

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### Mosque of Omar, Jerusalem

In the 7th-century, the city of Jerusalem opened its doors to Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, to whom the keys of Jerusalem were handed over by the Patriarch Safronios in 638 AD. The Arab Muslim Caliph granted the citizens of the city the status of "protected people" or dhimis, which gave them the freedom to practice their religion. This was a period in which harmony and tolerance reigned.

A mosque was established on the site where the Caliph and his men prayed 10 meters from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is well known that Caliph Omar turned down the invitation of the Patriarch to pray in the church fearing his followers would later transform the church into a mosque.



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One of the preeminent names in medieval medicine is that of Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya' al-Razi, who was born in 865 (251 H) in the Iranian City of Rayy and later died in the same city in 925 (312 H). A physician learned in philosophy, as well as music and alchemy, he served at the Samanid court in Central Asia and headed hospitals in Rayy and Baghdad.

One of his most significant writings was *The Comprehensive Book on Medicine* (Kitab al-Hawi fi al-tibb), where he recorded both his own clinical cases and research from earlier authors regarding diseases and therapy. The National Library of Medicine has the oldest known copy of this work; however, it is partially complete, containing only the section on gastrointestinal complaints. The unnamed scribe completed the copy on the 19th of the month Dhu al-Qa`dah in the year 487 of the Muslim era (30 November 1094).

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Built in the style typical of Ayyubid times (1171-1260), al-Kas is one of many fountains used for ritual ablutions before prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque. Sultan al-Adil Ab Bakr Bin Ayyub ordered its construction in 1193. It owes its name to the cup (al kas) standing at the centre of the circular basin of the fountain. The wrought iron screen was added as an embellishment by order of the Mameluke Governor of Greater Syria, Tankaz en-Nasri, in 1327.

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*"Stand up for your teacher and honour him with praise, for the teacher is almost a prophet."*  
*Ahmad Shawqi*

During the course of his 40-year career, Ahmad Shawqi both renovated the language of Arabic poetry and endowed it with verse drama. Educated in Cairo, he traveled to France to immerse himself in French literature. Upon his return in 1893, he became the court poet of Khedive Abbas Hilmi II. In 1898, during this phase, he published a collection of poems as a diwan entitled *al-Shawqiyyat*, which immediately established him as a leading poet in the Arab world. Later, he composed timeless odes in Spain honoring Spanish Islam. In 1919, he returned to Egypt until his death in 1932. During this period, his work contained Arab nationalist aspirations and it was then he composed his verse dramas, such as *Majnun Layla* and *Masra Cleopatra*. Four years before his death, his poetic brilliance was recognized when delegates from the Arab world feted him Amir al-Shu'ara (Prince of Poets).

Photo caption: *Post stamp showing Ahmed Shawki, date of his birth and death and a famous line of poetry. "It's by morals that nations can thrive, but once lost they can never survive."*

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### ***Mandelbaum Gate***

by Emile Habibi (1921-1996)

In this short story Habibi depicts the fragmentation of time and place after 1948 with the separation of Palestinians inside the Green Line those in the West Bank and Jerusalem. The story is told by a narrator

accompanying an elderly woman haunted by the irony of division on the Mandelbaum Gate (first published in 1954).

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“Jerusalem: Time Embodied”

“I don’t think that celebrating the day of Christ’s resurrection at the beginning of spring is a mere historical coincidence. For Jerusalem, indeed all Palestine in this season of the year, bursts with millions of wild flowers that fill the valleys and hills, and appear as though they clothe both soil and rock equally wherever one’s sight falls. Perhaps the most prominent of these flowers and the most beautiful are the red anemones that stud the earth surrounding the city on all sides and make it glow and glitter like a carpet as far as one can see. It is no wonder that anemones are, since most ancient times, the symbol of the murdered God and the symbol of his return to life anew, and consequently the symbol of the Holy Land”.

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (from: *the Eighth Journey*, 1967; translated from Arabic by Issa J. Boullata)

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Mahmoud Darwish’s poem “The Light of Darkness and the Stone” voices this relationship to Jerusalem in a dialogue between the poet and a young Israeli female soldier. When the poet enters Jerusalem stealthily after the 1967 War, the young female soldier stops him and asks about his “grenade and prayer”:

I apologized and said in answer,  
“I neither fight nor pray.”  
“Why then have you come to Jerusalem?” She strangely asked.  
“To pass through the grenade and the prayer,  
On my right arm the remains of war,  
On my left arm the marks of God’s hand,  
But neither warrior nor prayer be.”  
“What are you then?” The young soldier demanded.  
“A lotto ticket between the grenade and the prayer.”  
“What will you do with it,  
What will it do to you,  
If it wins,” she asked.  
“I’ll buy a color for my beloved’s mysterious eyes.”  
She thought me a poet and let me pass.

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“Lest We Lose”

You’re the one loyal to the cause  
You’re the ones who carry its burden  
You’re the ones who act without speech  
God bless your strong arms!  
A declaration from you equals an army  
with all its military might  
Your gatherings restore

the glory lost since Umayyad conquests  
But we still have bits of country left in our hands  
rest awhile, lest we lose what remains.

*Ibrahim Tuqan (1905-1941)*

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Honorable Prince!  
Before you stands a poet  
Whose heart harbors bitter complaint  
Have you come to visit the Aqsa mosque  
Or to bid it farewell before its loss?  
This land, this holy land, is being sold to all intruders  
And stabbed by its own people!  
And tomorrow looms over us, nearer and nearer!  
Nothing shall remain for us, but our steaming tears,  
our deep regrets!  
Oh Prince, shout, shout! Your voice  
might shake people awake!  
Ask the guards of the Aqsa: are they all agreed to struggle  
As one body and mind?  
Ask the guards of the Aqsa: can a covenant with God  
be offered to someone, then lost?  
Forgive the complaint, but a grieving heart needs  
to complain to the Prince, even if it makes him weep.  
Abdul Rahim Mahmoud (1913-1948)

*(This poem was recited on August 14, 1935 during the visit of Prince Saud Ibn Abd Al-Aziz to Anabta.  
Translated by Sharif Elmusa & Naomi Shihab Nye)*

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“From Jerusalem to the Gulf”  
*Abdul Latif Aqel (1943-1995)*  
Write to me, tell me how, when surrounded  
By palm trees and oil wells  
You weep when you remember  
Jerusalem and Jericho’s honied crops  
How, surrounded by all that sand,  
You weep when the news of young students  
facing enemy bullets with books, and a thousand  
rods arouses you [...]  
Write to me  
One letter of love can release  
in the prison and the prisoner  
the flowers of hope  
And on the walls of Jerusalem

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In “Orientalism”, Professor Edward Said (1935-2003) examines the historical, cultural, and political views the West holds regarding the East, and explores how they developed and where they originated. The resulting generalizations created a specific image of Orientals within the Western perspective, thereby infusing a bias in the Western mindset.

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## **Handala**

From approximately 1975 through 1987, Naji Al-Ali created cartoons depicting the complexities of the plight of Palestinian refugees.

Naji Al-Ali wrote: “His name is Handala and he has promised the people that he will remain true to himself. I drew him as a child who is not beautiful; his hair is like the hair of a hedgehog who uses his thorns as a weapon. Handala is not a fat, happy, relaxed, or pampered child. He is barefooted like refugee camp children, and he is an icon that protects me from making mistakes. Even though he is rough, he smells of amber. His hands are clasped behind his back as a sign of rejection at a time when solutions are presented to us the American way.

Handala was born 10 years old, and he will always be 10 years old. At that age, I left my homeland, and when he returns, Handala will still be 10, and then he will start growing up. The laws of nature do not apply to him. He is unique. Things will become normal again when the homeland returns.

I presented him to the poor and named him Handala as a symbol of bitterness. At first, he was a Palestinian child, but his consciousness developed to have a national and then a global and human horizon. He is a simple yet tough child, and this is why people adopted him and felt that he represents their consciousness.”

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## **“This City”**

Tell me your secrets, old city  
Teach me the ancient wisdom  
that fortifies your walls  
I want to unshackle you  
from your silence and sorrow  
dust off the evil  
that covers you  
Feel the calm  
of wind free  
Shine light on you once more  
One city, three prayers  
This city  
occupation, oppression  
prayers muffled  
How long?  
Aida Hassan Damouni

## Jerusalemite

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The Orient House, a building enjoying special architectural features, was first built by Ismail Musa Al-Husseinin as his home in 1897. The building later became part of various historical and diplomatic events, including the visit of German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm in 1898. It was here where condolences for the death of Sharif Hussein in 1930 were accepted, and where Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia sought asylum during the latter half of the 1930s. In 1983, the Arab Studies Society, headed by Faisal Hussein, rented the building, and soon it became the Palestinian national political, economic, and social address in East Jerusalem. With the onset of the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1991), the Orient House became the headquarters for the Palestinian national movement (PLO), including the “Technical Committees”, which drafted position papers for the Madrid Peace conference (October 1991) and the PISGA (Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority) document of 1992. Following closure of the Orient House by the Israeli authorities in 1988, staff continued to operate from their homes. In 1992, it was reopened and Faisal Hussein received numerous visiting officials to Palestine and Israel until his death in May 2001. On 10 August 2001, Israeli occupation forces closed down the Orient House and confiscated documents and closed its library.

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“It is the obligation of all of us to stand together to achieve peace and defend Jerusalem in the face of the enemy of peace.”

“I fear the day when Jerusalem will mourn its children before its children mourn Jerusalem.”

“We choose a peaceful route. But there are other alternatives...We must have two capitals in an open and free-access city. Nothing can convince us why the Old City should not be under Palestinian control. It is not logical for the Israelis to say they want control of the Old City.”

“Leadership without a building is better than leadership without people.”

*Faisal Abdul Qader Al-Husseini (1940-2001)*

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Ghassan Kanafani’s first novel, “Men in the Sun”, appeared in 1963. The book was adapted by the Egyptian director Tawfiq Salim into the film “al-Makhduun”. The film was banned in some Arab countries for its criticism of Arab regimes. “Men in the Sun” is the story of three Palestinians from different generations, who attempt to escape to Kuwait in the tank of a water truck. The characters represent three different generations. Ultimately, they perish in their journey across the desert, which symbolizes the end of the Palestinian people. While the refugees are dying under the heat of the sun, they knock continuously on the wall of the tank, crying, “We are here, we are dying, let us out, let us free.”

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