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Sh. Ahmed Arafat



## JERUSALEM, TRUMP AND DELIBERATE DECEPTIONS

As Donald Trump won the American presidential elections, Heiko Maas, the German Federal minister of Justice and Consumer Protection noted: “*Die Welt wird nicht untergehen, sie wird nur noch verrückter*” (The world is not going to vanish, but it will get crazier). As Trump’s administration acknowledged Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on December 6, 2017, one could easily discern that there is

profound wisdom in Maas’ evaluation, at least in the long run.

**The world will get crazier** as this announcement deliberately and grossly distorts history. Some refer to ‘the natural, historic right of the Israelis in Palestine’ as a justification for the occupation of Palestine, the expulsion of thousands of Palestinian people, the destruction and depopulations of hundreds of villages and the ongoing establishment of settlements since 1948, the year which marks the Palestinian *Nakbah* or Catastrophe. In the reference work *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, edited by Walid Khalidi, you find a detailed description of more than 400 Palestinian villages that were destroyed or depopulated by Israel in 1948. Names of these villages are removed from contemporary Israeli maps, yet, these names are engraved in the hearts of those Palestinian refugees and their families

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## JERUSALEM, TRUMP AND DELIBERATE DECEPTIONS

as their real homes that once they were evicted from due to the massacres, fear and panic incited by the Zionists. For instance, the Israeli historian Shlomo Sand admits that Tel Aviv University lies on part of what was once known as the village of *Shaykh Muwannis*. Furthermore, immigration waves of European Jews who own no inch in Palestine were subsequently facilitated to replace the Palestinians and to change the demography of the country by force.

Currently, many Israeli historians dare to speak out, refuting and exposing many of the myths of Zionism, such as Ilan Pappé in his *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Ilan Pappé belongs to the movement of New Historians who challenge the traditional versions of Israeli history. This movement includes Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Tom Segev, Simha Flapan, and Shlomo Sand. Many American Jewish leaders spoke against Zionism; such as Alfred M. Lilienthal and Elmer Berger, the executive director of the American Council for Judaism (1942:1955), and professor Norman Gary Finkelstein.

Historically, the existence of Palestine is pre-biblical. The Jews were not the original inhabitants of Palestine. "The early inhabitants were semi-nomadic tribes, but about the 20th century B.C. the Canaanites began to settle in the plains and on the coast. They built villages and towns and developed their own culture. In the Bible the country is called 'the land of Canaan' (Numbers 34:1, 35:10) or the 'the country of the Canaanites' (Exodus 3:17)." So the city was founded around two thousand years before Abraham. That is why Genesis 23 explains that when Sarah, Abraham's wife, died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven in the land of Canaan, Abraham addressed the people of Canaan: "*I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead*" (Genesis 23:4) NIV.

So the Israelis were not the original inhabitants of Palestine and would be later invaders, for a relatively small period, in a long list of other invaders. "The Hebrew period of rule started only in 1020 B.C. and lasted until 587 B.C. The Israelites were then overrun by Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Egyptians, and Syrians until the Hebrew Maccabeans regained partial rule in 164 B.C. However, in 63 B.C. the Roman Empire conquered Jerusalem and in 70 A.D. destroyed the Second Temple and scattered the Jews into other lands. In sum, ancient Jews controlled Palestine or some major parts of it for less than six hundred years in the five-thousand-year period of Palestine's recorded history—less than Canaanites, Egyptians, Muslims, or Romans. The U.S. King-Crane Commission concluded in 1919 that a claim "based on an occupation of two thousand years ago can hardly be seriously considered."

Politically speaking, to single out the Israelis, who ruled for a relatively small period of time, and say they are the real inhabitants of the land is nothing but religious fundamentalism. Historically, Muslims ruled the land for more than

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1000 years. Worse still, the expulsion of the native Palestinians and the destruction and depopulations of their villages, based on Zionist claims, is nothing but a heinous form of extremism. Bringing in religious claims of ownership does not help either, since Muslims have firm religious beliefs regarding Jerusalem.

Religiously speaking, Islam belongs to the Abrahamic tradition, and Muslims honor Abraham as their forefather and believe in all of God's prophets as belonging to a long line of one same primordial Islam. Furthermore, Islam considers Jerusalem as a sacred sanctuary, with its Aqsa Mosque as the third holiest place after the two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina. That is why Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 644) recognized this fact and liberated this sacred place from the Roman Empire. In *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land* (around the year 670 A.D.), Arculfus described Muslims' place of worship as four-sided house of worship that can accommodate three thousand men at once. So the Muslim place of worship was constructed long before Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan (d. 705) of the Umayyad period. Jews, Christians and Muslims lived together since then. At that time, the city had predominant Christian population, however "[m]any of the indigenous inhabitants were converted to Islam and, as a result, 'the predominantly Christian population became predominantly Muslim.'"

Socially speaking, as illustrated by Richard W. Bulliet in his *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, conversion to Islam was a social process. As a matter of fact, it took several centuries for Muslims to be the majority in lands like Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Interestingly, Muslims remained as a minority in other places, like India, in spite of ruling it for around 1000 years. Compare that with the Spanish Inquisition that expelled all Jews and Muslims from their homes. In Palestine, Muslims did not expel people from their homes or allow immigration waves to change the demography of the land. Muslims in Palestine are mainly the descendants of the native Palestinians. The Jewish population has always been there, getting along with their Arab and Muslim neighbors.

So it is a myth that there had always been an Arab-Jewish conflict in the region. After their expulsion from Spain by virtue of the *Alhambra Decree* issued by King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella of Spain in 1492, many Jews were lucky to immigrate to Turkey, and they were welcomed by Sultan Bayezid II who ridiculed the idea of the Spanish expulsion and under whose reign the Jews enjoyed complete peace. Other Jews immigrated to Egypt as in the case of Moses Maimonides who is considered to be the greatest Jewish philosopher of all times and his genius is a witness for the golden age of the Muslim civilization that held high the torch of knowledge for all. Some other



*A picture known as 'Jamal al-Mahamel' that became an icon which symbolizes the Palestinian struggle, painted by Sulayman Mansur, a renowned Palestinian artist*

Jews immigrated to North Africa and Italy. The Alhambra Decree was officially overturned on December 16, 1968, at the Second Vatican Council!

However, relations started to change with the Balfour Declaration that will eventually lead to the creation of Israel to help the Jewish minority unjustly control most of the country. "At the time of the Balfour Declaration (1917) the Jews represented less than 10 per cent of the total population of Palestine. After the end of the First World War and following the Balfour Declaration, there was a wave of Zionist Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Palestine census in 1922 gave their number as 83,794 out of a total population of 757,182."

**The world will get crazier** as we see many evangelicals and Zionist zealots praising Trump to the hilt and celebrating his decision as a fulfillment of a biblical



prophecy, an attitude that changes the whole issue from its political realm into a religious fanatic conflict. Trump's use of the phrase '*Israel and the Palestinians*' in his announcement is very alarming. If this is to be read literally, it goes in line with a very dark religious ideology that considers the Palestinians as foreign to their own land and Palestine as non-existent. Are contemporary political rights determined by biblical promises? This question is left for Trump's administration and advisors to answer if the impetus behind the Jerusalem decision is a religious one, and especially when it is very hard for political analysts to identify any US national interest in this sensitive issue in an already embattled region.

It is important to remember that many Orthodox Jews do not believe in Zionism at all as part of their belief system. For instance, **Neturei Karta** (Lit. the Guardians of the City) was founded in 1938 with their motto Jews United Against Zionism. This organization sees itself as representing the real Jews (Haredi Jews) and opposes Zionism as they believe that the Jews are forbidden to have their own state until the coming of the Jewish Messiah. Similarly, Moshe Menuhin (1893–1983) gave a thought-provoking reassessment of Zionist history in his *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time*. Discussing the Jewish arguments against Zionism goes beyond the scope of this brief article.

**The world will get crazier** as this announcement could be clearly interpreted as a change in the US role in the peace process from 'an honest broker' into a partner in inflecting more sufferings on the Palestinian people. The world sees Trump's decision as counterproductive and a clear violation of the international law that considers at least East Jerusalem as *corpus separatum* or an occupied territory with a special status that rejects Israel's attempts to settle its citizens there. Acknowledging Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and then expressing a willingness to be committed to the peace process is nothing but a provocative statement.

It goes without saying that the Muslim world is now suffering from weak, divided regimes and that most of these regimes do not actually represent their people; therefore, Trump's decision is not about courage since he estimates that some of the official backlash may be containable, no matter how dire and worldwide it appears. Accordingly, Trump's incendiary decision is unethically founded on the financial threats to cut off foreign aids to his opponents and the political divisions and domestic conflicts in the Arab world. In the long run, however, the decision seems to be delusional in establishing permanent peace and stability since it fails to take into consideration the power of the masses whose opinion is highly critical yet despairingly ignored. If Trump's administration sees the occupation as a reality, the truth is that Jerusalem resides in the hearts of 1.8 billion Muslims.

**The world will get crazier** because states are not to be founded by 'announcements' that distort history and deny people their basic human rights as free citizens. If power makes injustice right in the world of politics, history reveals that, in the world of truth, justice will always prevail, no matter how many decades or centuries it may take. History shows that this same Jerusalem was attacked and occupied by the medieval European crusaders for around two hundred years and eventually gained its freedom at the hands of Saladin who revived the weak, divided Ummah of his time. History shows that the Muslim Ummah could get sick, but it never dies. Many Muslim countries were destroyed by the Mongols in 1258, and in around thirty seven years the grandson of Hulegu became a Muslim named 'Mahmud Ghazan' in 1295. History is to be measured by centuries, not just the few years we are witnessing.

The purpose of evoking history here is two-fold. First, I want to emphasize that lasting and real peace, which we all aspire, can never be achieved by unilateral, unjust decision like that of Trump. Second, one of the greatest weapons Muslims, Arabs and free people worldwide have now is to keep having great hope for freedom, to keep denying Trump's decision as meaningless and unjust and to keep telling the Palestinian story.

Politics aside, al-Quds has always been in the heart of each Muslim and will always remain as such. We pray that God would cleanse all hearts from ignorance, envy, and hatred and that justice would prevail, and peace would spread. Ameen.

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<sup>1</sup> Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel*, Verso, 2012, p. 260

<sup>2</sup> Henry Cattán, *Palestine, The Arabs & Israel*, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> Paul Findley, *Deliberate Deceptions*, p. 4

<sup>4</sup> See *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land*, London: [publisher not identified], 1895. pp. 4-5,

<sup>5</sup> Henry Cattán, *Palestine, The Arabs & Israel*, p. 4

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

# WHY STEVE JOBS AND BILL GATES BOTH SEVERELY LIMITED THEIR KIDS' TECH USE

They built our tech-obsessed world, but they wanted something different for their own kids.



By Jessica Stillman

Technology has made **Bill Gates** the richest man in the world. You'd think he'd want to teach his three children to benefit from technology just as he has. Instead, the Microsoft founder seems more concerned about **keeping tech from harming his kids**.

In an **interview with the UK Mirror** earlier this year, Gates explained that he and his wife Melinda strictly limited their kids' tech exposure, banning them from owning a cell phone before they turn 14 or whipping out their devices at dinner time.

"We often set a time after which there is no screen time and in their case that helps them get to sleep at a reasonable hour," he told the paper. "You're always looking at how it can be used in a great way - homework and staying in touch with friends - and also where it has gotten to excess."

## Steve Jobs kept tech to a minimum too.

Things were similar at the Jobs house, **according to the New York Times' Nick Bilton**. When the Apple founder called Bilton to complain about a story shortly after the iPad's launch, Bilton asked how his kids were enjoying the wildly popular new product.

"They haven't used it," Jobs responded. "We limit how much technology our kids use at home." The conversation prompted Bilton to dig into the restrictions other tech titans institute at home with their kids. He found a stunning level of strictness was common across many of the best known names in tech.

“My kids accuse me and my wife of being fascists and overly concerned about tech, and they say that none of their friends have the same rules,” *Wired* founder Chris Anderson told Bilton. **Evan Williams** and his explained that “in lieu of iPads, their two young boys have hundreds of books (yes, physical ones) that they can pick up and read anytime.” Many others reported similar rules.

## They built it, so they should know it.

What are these iconic founders so worried about? The same things you probably stress about when you see your kid staring into an iPad screen, mesmerized -- cyberbullying, exposure to age inappropriate content, the crowding out of more beneficial activities by screen time, and the danger of developing an **addiction to the devices’ hollow pleasures**.

What makes the strict rules these tech pioneers institute in their personal lives so alarming isn’t the types of fears that drive them - nearly all parents worry about screen time these days - but the magnitude of that fear. By modern standards, Jobs and Gates come across as close to paranoid. These are, after all, the folks best placed to understand exactly how our gadgets work and just how harmful they can be. It’s far more likely that they’ve got an accurate handle on the risks than us non-tech geniuses do.

And as **the Guardian recently reportedly**, these concerns are shared by a whole host of lesser known but still hugely influential technologists who, having less financial stake in talking up current realities than tech company bosses, are often even more frank about their worries. One of the women who helped develop the Facebook “like” button, for instance, “has installed a web browser plug-in to eradicate her Facebook news feed, and hired a social media manager to monitor her Facebook page so that she doesn’t have to.”

## What limits should you set?



If all this gets you thinking that you might want to revisit your own household’s rules, what restrictions should you consider? Here are some **in-depth portraits of how various tech insiders handle the issue**. They cover important issues like avoiding a backlash over strict limits, teaching kids to control their own impulses, and making distinctions between creative use of tech and passive consumption.

Or, if you think Gates, Jobs, and the rest are pretty smart and you’d like to follow their example, then consider rules like these, all of which have been reported to be in effect in the homes of some of the biggest names in tech:

- No phone until kids turn 14 (some families hold off on a data plan until even later)
- Banning devices at family dinner
- Setting a curfew for kids to be off devices well before bedtime
- Setting strict limits on screen time during the school week (or even banning screens entirely for younger kids)
- Carefully considering what social media services to allow your kids to use (Snapchat, at least, won’t leave a lifelong record of youthful missteps)
- \* Banning devices in children’s bedrooms

*The opinions expressed here by Inc.com columnists are their own, not those of Inc.com.*

Source: <https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/why-steve-jobs-bill-gates-both-severely-limited-their-kids-tech-use.html>

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# PORQUE ME CONVERTI AL ISLAM

Si tu Señor hubiera querido, todos los habitantes de la Tierra habrían creído. Tu no podrás hacer que los hombres creen aunque se lo impongas. Solo creeran quienes Allah haya decretado que así lo hagan; y dejara en el extravío a quienes no recapacitan {en Sus signos}. Diles: Reflexionad en todo cuanto hay en los cielos y en la Tierra: pero que para quienes Allah decreto la incredulidad no se beneficiaran de los signos ni de los Mensajeros. (10:99-101)

Mi nombre es Esperanza Hernandez tengo 91 años y soy originaria de la Ciudad de México, he vivido en los Estados Unidos por más de cuarenta años. Yo conocí del Islam a través de mi hija, la escuchaba hablar sobre el Islam con mi esposo quien también se convirtió, y me gustaba mucho porque me di cuenta que solo se adora a Dios y eso fue lo que me atrajo mucho, conocí otras religiones pensaba que eran buenas porque glorificaban a Dios, pero lo que no me gustaba eran algunos de los rituales que hacían...y como pedían donaciones para la iglesia! lo hacían de una manera muy exigente y no era lo que la persona pudiera donar si no que exigían mucho más de lo que tuvieran, y eso no me gustaba. En todas las veces que he ido a la mezquita no he visto nada similar. Lo que más me ha gustado del Islam es la adoración pura a Un solo Dios, por eso es que decidí aceptar el Islam, me siento muy bien, siento tranquilidad y mucha paz interior, me gusta mucho y quisiera que todos mis hijos siguiera esta hermosa religión. Pero yo sé que solo Allah puede guiarlos. Todas las noches leo mi Corán una o dos páginas, no entiendo mucho pero le suplico mucho a Allah que me de entendimiento y también a cada momento pido mucho a Allah que guíe a mis hijos hacia el Islam y que me los cuide mucho.

Mi nombre es Sabrina tengo 24 años y soy musulmana. Mi acercamiento con el Islam comenzó por mi curiosidad por saber un poco más sobre la religión de algunas personas que había conocido durante mi estancia en los Estados Unidos. Así fue como comencé a buscar maneras de acercarme al Islam intentando entrar a una mezquita y buscando la manera de conseguir un Corán para leer. El Islam cambió mi vida ya que desde la primera vez que entre a la mezquita y conforme fui leyendo el Corán sentía una conexión inexplicable con Dios, la cual no había logrado sentir antes. Con ello quedé completamente convencida de que esta era la religión en la cual pertenecía y el último mensaje de Dios.

Alabado sea Allah que con Su Misericordia infinita ha guiado a el camino recto y ha bendecido a estas hermanas con Su religión Al-Islam, Alhamdulillah! De la oscuridad les ha brindado luz para que así puedan ver con certeza la verdad. Que tan maravilloso regalo de haber sido elegidos y guiados por Nuestro Gran Creador. Le suplico a Allah que nos mantenga firme en nuestra fe, Amen.

Su hermana en Islam, Celia Snowber

# ISLAM

is the religion of peace and mercy

The true message of God

لا إله إلا الله



Al-Siddiq School Encourages Quran Memorization and Provided Awards to 18 of its Students and Staff for Winning in the Competition



- Al-Siddiq School Empowers Parents with Another Workshop on Parenting
- Al-Siddiq School Holds the “Muslim and Proud” Program for Over 200 Students Teaching them Islamic Ethics and Strengthening their Muslim Identities.
- Two of Al-Siddiq Graduates Ameen Chehade and Hajar Alfiqui were Honored during a gathering of the whole community for memorizing the whole Quran, congratulations.

