

"100 and Two Winters in Exodus"

1.

a. What comprises your just, peaceful and sustainable Jerusalem in 2050?

"I love beginnings, I marvel at beginnings. I think it is a beginning that confirms continuation. If it did not, nothing could be or would be."

Louis Kahn

Beginnings hold within the essence of ends, they are the nearest to ends. An end always meets a beginning at the completion of the primordial circle, and the future is always nearest to the past. It may even occur to us that the beginning and the end amalgamate into the oneness of a presence. Ends will be what they are because of their beginnings, thus reverence to the beginning will produce knowledge of a visionary end, particularly in a time of a turbulent and an unknowing present.

To initiate the rationale of this proposal, concepts of justness, peacefulness, and sustainability need to be revisited. Are these ingredient concepts in essence doorways to our destination, are they truly portals of addressing the call of Jerusalem, are they beginnings, or are they ends?

Peace

I wish not attempt to recycle or reuse the word 'peace', said and written so many times it rests as an infamous political jargon overtly consumed till depleted of meaning. Peace -the flowery rhetoric- is no longer home to what it expresses or represents, it has become a 'word' per se, associated with ongoing and endless images of hasty political diplomats, advisor 'peace experts', numberless negotiations, agreements, treatises, initiatives, protocols & resolutions.

Peace has retired from its invisible chair as a nameless state or concept, "Peacemaking" has become the name of a provoked profession, it has grown to stand for the experimental field of hypothetical study professed by the political elite, peace cannot be deliberately made or induced, peace happens, it is a natural consequential state, it cannot be forcibly applied and there cannot be a discipline governing its appearance/disappearance, politicians and decision makers cannot claim an arranged marriage and foresee doves proceeding. Remarkable enough to consider is the observation that "living peace" and "studying peace" are two drastically different view ports. Justness and sustainability are synonym understandings of peace; it is one fulfilled package. In order to avoid any further insult of peace, it will not be said or written herein. Like love, peace is unspeakable.

My first questioning is that belonging to the choice of time-destination appointed for envision or prediction. Why 2050?

The time-destination of visionary is a statement by itself, it underlies an implicit and perhaps subconscious ideation of any utopia, that is to suggest an -unaware- recitation of "what will be has always been", or "one cannot learn that which is not inherently present within him", this escaping morphology of time rests as some form of disembodied archetype that resides silently in the backstage of the "imaginative heritage", which is somewhat responsible for the subconsciously executed process of vision delivery.

The most utopian of utopias are those that succeed at seeing imperfectness perfectly, rather than perform an impeccable fictional masterpiece upon debris of denial.

2050 should be disregarded as an indifferent chronological container of happening, as it holds within an elusive cue for an awaited predetermined but seemingly unknown and namely "unexpected" scenario, the fact that this aspired utopia needs to abide by a time destination is itself a partial answer. Every question does suggestively expect a certain answer.

2050 could be the year that celebrates the centennial anniversary of displacement, misplacement and replacement, it could also be the year recalling the launch of the "1950 Law of Return" to the –then- future Israelis, we would be 102 years away from the instant of history's discontinuity. It would complement a three generations' time span out of place. The very generations contemporary to the upset will not return, and the upcoming generations will suffer a tension of being Palestinian by culture whilst not of geography, these generations become anachronistic of their identity.

Circular Time

2050 should be thought of as a juncture, a time-hinge adjoining its ancestor and descendant years, it should be integrated to constitute a chapter year within the many chapters of the Jerusalemite story, a time destination for the arrest of an image of Jerusalem.

Spatial & Chronological Contextualism

To speak of Jerusalem without sincere address to the question of nationhood is like expecting to swim without a readiness to get wet, if this proposal is to validate its authenticity it is unlikely that it directs its will at extracting the Jerusalemite setting of its originary address, to deviate sight of both the chronological, political-attitudinal and regional incidents to which it pertains is but to cut off unwanted parts of the story and make of it an impersonal and unparticular task. A futuristic discipline that dissects and thrives at minute examination of a sole magnified particularity cannot survive the criticism of contextualism.

Addressing Livability

A yardstick measuring the livability of place cannot ensure a universal concord of this universal concept, nevertheless any rough and impure measure must in some form or another refer to the natural and unabridged continuity of its ingrained inhabitants, a certain degree of "place equilibra" must not cease to exist in any recorded quantum of time. Any foreign/outsider stimuli deforming this equilibra state will result in disturbance, instability, and a restlessly continuous urge to restore the former original, and permanent state of rest. It is always wise to analog macro scale situations and systems with similar micro scale ones, which qualify the very same innumerable and unchangeable rules of existence. When an outweighing force exerts itself on an object, reaction becomes a necessitude as an inbred and unstoppable yearning to the former state of placidity; pure nature physics. The physics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have scarcely been thought of as such, for, the political trend seems to popularly adopt a compulsive obsession with contemporary consequent discharges that are no more than temporary & consequential resultants, hence, the methodology herein will inevitably resist temptation of instant orthodox medicine practice repeatedly muting innate place disorders, and will commit itself to a reverence to beginnings. A viable vision should bear a surgical intervention.

Following the discipline that accords for the conservation of equilibrium in human environments some undoing must be done, acts of restoration, retrieval, revival, retention and restitution should participate in the process-vision of return to the state of rest.

b. How would you describe this Jerusalem in spatial, physical, symbolic or other terms?

"Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien."

Voltaire

There is a present schism between the abstraction of place, the place of religious fantasy Jerusalem occupies as a locus of religious overlap engraved in the universal religious psyche, a mythic, supernatural and often theatrical setting absenting and upsetting it's identity firstly and most importantly as a place of life, denying Jerusalem it's humblest of rights: to be inhibited; it being a city for it's ordinarily normal dwellers preceding it's being as an extraordinary manifesto of religions. A study of the following excerpt finds a manner of reference demonstrating the dramatic fashion by which the Jerusalemite setting was being pictured.

"Imagination takes flight, and the scene through the chink in the door grips and fascinates the mind. Two unwitting actors, oblivious, in all probability to the priceless setting which surrounds them & of the presence of the spell-bound, one man audience at the peep-hole, have succeeded in doing what the greatest actors long to do, to enchant and charm the imagination of his audience."

Palastine the land of my Adoption, p.18, J.W Clapham, Jerusalem

Such ideation of Jerusalem denotes the perceptual distance between a 'place of religions' and a 'religion of place'; The Jerusalemite religion.

Jerusalem is Palestine, it represents the most abstract idea of it, it is the foremost city of the Levant, and cannot be seen cropped out of its native habitat within some manmade perimeter of faulty lines arbitrarily drawn upon the many indifferent, albeit universally acknowledged maps. If we were to truly adhere to any nature of a line; the preference would be to the lines dictated upon us by the landscape itself. Thus my first concern is to redefine Jerusalem's territory, to reconsider the often given, and unquestionable Levantine Cartography, to rethink fluctuating lines & borders of nationality, identity and uprooted origins.

Jerusalem Opens its Portals: A Peripheral Approach

Vision foretells of a Jerusalem that would belong to its landscape, it will retain its immediate connectivity with its sibling cities. Waters of life will soon run through its veins. Its gates will retrieve their former function as nodes of departure and arrival. Jerusalem will again return to its prior state of locality, its arteries will supply life to it again, its regional solitude will come to an end.

The Scenario of Return: "From the Refugee camp to Jerusalem"

Jerusalem will witness the event of return, refugees from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank will have the right to return to Palestine and for once encounter the city of their nativity. A Levantine/Jerusalemite Railway will run from **Beyrouth – Zahle – Zabadani – Damascus – Izra - Daraa' – Irbid – Jerash – Amman – Jericho – Jerusalem**, this railway somehow reminds us of the 'Hijazi Railway' that used to operate through the Levant to Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. Refugees will arrive at the eastern heights that overlook Jerusalem, their first interface with the city will be through their "wall of return", provided by the segment of the Israeli barrier intended to separate the West Bank and Jerusalem at Eizaria and Abu Dis.

This barrier will be reused for a purpose that defies its initial motive, it will not be destroyed, it can still be there, but its presence will be questioned; where there is a wall there is a door, if not, a window that will soon grow into a door. It will be deployed as a 'Public Memoir of the People of Palestine', where the refugees can be the historians of their history, as most documents concerning identity, right to property and events have for long belonged to dispersed shelves and drawers of dusty archives pertaining to families and individuals. It will be an open air national history book, that will narrate the 'then' 102 year exodus.

This barrier will be penetrated by a series of gates: 'Portals of Return' which will be attributed name according to the occasion of expel or place of refuge e.g The 1948 portal, The 1967 portal, The 1950 portal, Nahr al-bared gate, Al-Baq'a'a gate, Khan al-Sheikh gate, Rafah gate, Qalandiya gate. Upon entering ex-refugees will follow rails of return that demonstrate a paradoxical tension between a separation border and the 13th century protective wall that embraces the real Jerusalem.

c. What are the motivations underlying your vision for this city in the year 2050?

I would not refer to them as motivations, they are expressive urges that seek light, it is a pursuit with which I wish to experiment the commonly uncommon events, happenings, seeming facts and realities surrounding the Jerusalem aura and here the Jerusalemite theatre cannot be divorced from its Israeli-Palestinian drama; it is an ensemble of event & place, no one of them should be seen without the other. This pursuit is not an analytical exercise of judgment as much as it is an examination of faculties

undermining the so called 'global' or public photograph of the situation, unconscious deeds lie in a real-life record of a lifetime spent across the border line whereby the imposition of unseen lines is responsible for the determination of identity and where lifetimes suffer a paranoid & critical identifiability. There a "Peoplescape" adapts its places of refuge to accommodate the virtual 'lost paradise'/Homeland picture they embrace within, a picture that is carried on to the succession of generations with the suckling of motherly milk. It is a childly impulse at retrieval, it learns more as it grows that there is no replacement of place. The picture of the evacuated heavens is passed on through the many melancholic narrations, memory archives bottled up in words that are said in the domestic realms of homes, always said and to a familial audience of listeners whom draw pictures of a place they have never seen only heard of, albeit it is the very place they are said to belong to. Photographs of this long lost Felix cannot be accredited honesty, photographs have always been a secure mechanism of disappointing wonder and the false accuracy of fresh moving coverage is further impersonal.

Hereafter, this attempt at constructing the vision frees one from the restrictions and conditions of the passing moment; for once it admits a reverie that orders the ridicule of reality to adhere to its utopia. Thus I wish compose a futurist moment of the expiry of the refuge. I wish of this foresight to break needless walls, not just physical walls, but provoked walls. I wish of it to allow for the birth of unrealized probability and potential of becoming; hence the "Filmographia of Return".

d. Under which of the political scenarios would you like to make your entry & why?

4. Other: The deployed political scenario does not wish to tear Jerusalem from the map and look at a detached image of it. It is a regional scenario addressing the Levant. It intends to eliminate borders between the West bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, through which a confederacy of all these countries may be established(which would pertain to a unified sovereignty and will be known as "The Levantine Confederacy" , and by which Beyrouth, Damascus and Amman could serve as active political and economical cosmopolitan centers and by which Jerusalem(eastern Jerusalem) could serve as the spiritual centre (a confederacy of Levantine cities); whilst Western Jerusalem may continue to be under Israeli sovereignty.

e. In what ways does this political scenario contribute to your vision of Jerusalem as a just, peaceful & sustainable city by the year 2050?

This scenario adopts a peripheral approach to Jerusalem, it intends to eliminate a conglomeration of unnecessary arbitrary lines acquired through sediments of mandate and occupation eras .These mandate remnants do not pertain to any justifiable logic of separation and partitioning; for, peoples of all the Levantine countries share the very same culture, language, heritage, ethnic and anthropological composition, not to mention the geography. Thus, the current scissoring of the region exists despite the contours of the land, it is a provoked arrangement and results in a manmade fracturing of one sacred landscape. On the one hand imprisoning the West bank within Israeli lines from the west and Jordanian ones from the east will only aggravate the present congestion, on the other it will ensure a "life between borders", whereby the West bank's allocation is evidently of a left over nature: a byproduct of the fracturing process. Any sensitive reading of a Levantine map does notice the peculiar ways these lines take. Recollecting the landscape asserts continuity and emphasizes context it also relieves the current captive lands of the West bank and makes way for the confined reverberations of Jerusalem's radius of presence into the depth of the east Mediterranean, it allows for a Jerusalemite depth of terrain countering a Jerusalemite depth foreseeing the Mediterranean horizon to the west. Furthermore, for Jerusalem to continue to be endowed with it's particularity as a city it should not be inflated to comprehend further environs, for, it should be noted that there do exist boundaries beyond which a city should not sprawl in order that it conserves its imageability, its essence must not be diluted over unverified stretches of land.

This sequential argument leaves a thought of the original, 'maiden' Jerusalem, -which over centuries maintained a self-sustainable balance in terms of a pluralist coexistence of contrasting but compatible, congruous entities, performing an empathetic orchestra of peoples-a historically forbidden city that has

been overwhelmed with politicized religion which rendered it an 'empty body'. If we presumably suppose that Jerusalem did not continue to propagate in the fashion that it had done there is great possibility that we would not have ended with the severely scissored city we now witness, when an entity grows beyond its natural contours of enclosure its tendency to explode into many shreds rises.

2. Why did you select this track/project as a means for realizing your above stated vision of a just, peaceful and sustainable Jerusalem by 2050? What is the causality between the project and the creation of a just, peaceful, sustainable and humanist Jerusalem in the future?

a. I believe that a valid and viable delivery of a vision should be allowed to prosper timely but surely in the mind's eye, and exaggerated concern with how to fully apply vision in reality depletes the vigor out of vision. There is a crucial difference of nature between an idea and the application of an idea, they run parallel and cannot be equated, but alternately affect one another; for which reasoning the Symbolic track is the most comprehensive, liberal and receptive of potential, it is the most immeasurable, addressing a multitude of layers that require a 'Jack of all trades, master of none' methodology.

As the critical hinge point here lies in determining 'what', which instinctively holds a genome of 'how', and should not bear in mind any stiffened, definite, doubtless or absolute resolution of the matter. There cannot exist a solitary self-fulfilled, self-sustained statement claiming a happily ever after terminus to the story of Jerusalem, and presumably an absolute vision is a terminus to the story disappointing uncountable probability, this proposal makes way for an incompleteness that awaits for fulfillment, it provides blanks and requires filling by the object of question, thus retiring oneself from the deputy position most decision makers hold.

b. How does your project relate to the city as a whole?

The project does not look to the city as a whole by itself, it cannot be whole if viewed on its own, it also cannot initiate an argument that encircles Jerusalem within study-facilitating borders that cut off the arteries nourishing its organs of life, for, the mere perception of Jerusalem as a dismantled, independent body is a misconception. In order that band-aid scenarios are omitted from the list, and so that an end may be put to expired beautification schemes, a sincere approach must manifest itself upon the common vocabulary that addresses the "Jerusalem Event" which cannot deny the greater Levantine theatre. The phenomenon of Jerusalem involves the entire region, and the relationship and fate of both is interdependent and interconnected. When Jerusalem underwent occupation the outcome and consequences of the Diaspora and the wars channeled directly and immediately into the region through the influx of refugees, and vice versa any stimuli affecting the region will inevitably mirror upon Jerusalem's visage.

c. How does your project for the future relate to the contemporary reality of Jerusalem?

The temporal context that contains the proposed vision incorporates the present as an intermediate interval intertwined with what has been and what will be. It is a temporal buffer that can act to segregate or correlate the past and the future, whom will eventually meet at the behinds of the present. The proposal holds a comparison between the past of Jerusalem and its current state and accordingly constructs its foresight. The record of the Jerusalemite clock acknowledges of a contemporary state that is a resultant reality of a prior cause, thus, priority of address is oriented to the first and inert past potential that had delivered this reality, and it does not intend to confine its scope to a consequential present.

3. The Logic of your creative process?

a. The creative process delivering this proposal is a lifetime across a border, within a population greatly

constituted by a shifted 'peoplescape', whereby refugee camps have become a substantial part of the community, and through a 60 year lifetime it has become part of the culture as well. The refugee camp is a dangerous, hazardous and shameful zone, it has become more of a symbol of poverty, ignorance and low class residency rather than a place of refuge, and its social structure has to a great extent undergone dramatic alteration. The definition of a refuge is not as determined and resolute as it had been to the first generation of expelled Palestinians.

Hereafter, a refugee camp is naturally a temporal place of dwelling, a place of limited asylum, it does possess an expiry date. But what happens when this temporary place of stay, gradually becomes not so temporary, when an alternative place becomes the only place.

There exists a subtle form of social division that arises as a result, it targets inhabitants of the same land according to their positioning relative to a manmade-mandate line, aggressive tension takes place on a ground of who is Palestinian and who is not. What is even more paradoxical is the debate on what makes anyone a Palestinian? Is it the place of birth? Is it the actual physical geography where one grows up? Is it the nationality he carries on his ID or passport? Or is it his upbringing?

From where are you? They ask.

Khaled Al-Saber is a 70 year old man who was a resident of Amman during the sixties ,he recites a story of how the one hour Journey from Amman to Jerusalem was performed with ease, he told to me of his 1967 journey to Jerusalem, he recalls how he had hired a knowing driver to tour him and his family along the way to the sacred city, he narrated that the villages of Palestine were intertwined like beads of a necklace, village after village till the gates of Jerusalem, on their way they stopped for lunch at the beauty of the Badan valley, then arrived at Nablus which is the place of origin to his family, it is also the authentic habitat to the treat of 'Knafe' which they enjoyed at 'Al-Ikr' delight shop. They prayed at Jerusalem and headed back home, it was a one day journey. 'It was as if we had known that the war would erupt, it was a farewell' he noted "then after two weeks or so it was all gone". On the last eve, no Palestinian expected what had happened to take place, it was a still night that was running deep under their feet.' They were not aware that if they left their homes there was any question of them coming back'. They had no second thoughts about that, because it had all been so obviously out of question. Jerusalem was never a city in solitude, it always pertained to its Levantine sister cities, and that we find in the toponymy of its ancient gates; The Damascus Gate, Bab el Ghor Gate/The Jordanian Gate, The Jaffa Gate . Jerusalem, Beyrouth, Damascus, Assalt, and Amman were in constant interplay, Levantine thoroughfares and historic highways to Jerusalem were frequently flooded with merchants exchanging goods, craftsmen ,pilgrims, scholars, one would very likely find relatives of the same family living in various cities of the Levant, there was no such thing as a border line or a cross point . The Levantine voyage ran across the entirety of the landscape without interruption. Unlike the isolationism of the Jerusalem of our days. Amman and Jerusalem were in a continuous state of human interchange, they were and still are 45 actual miles of metric distance apart, however their bridges have ever since been burnt away and superseded by virtual ones present in the many ways the image of Jerusalem has been replicated and reproduced outside its walls, names of places, names of genealogies, and names of dishes. There lives a Jerusalem in Amman, a Jerusalem in Beyrouth, and a Jerusalem in Damascus. When walking the streets of downtown Damascus, Amman or Beyrouth it is very often that you come across signage of a retail company or a restaurant that says (Damascus-Jerusalem), (Amman-Jerusalem) or (Beyrouth-Jerusalem).

b. Why do you consider your project a new/innovative approach to the problem of Jerusalem?

"Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau."

Baudelaire

Ponder and affiliation with the phenomena of Jerusalem which I do not prefer to refer to as a problem, corresponds to an actuality of a lifetime, it pertains to a span of concern preceding this proposal and following it, this proposal being a distinct node along a trail of a wider continuum, it is not the beginning and cannot be the end, it is an opportunity to a coming out that is viewed as a standpoint on a journey.

The style of approach deployed within does not regard the question at hand as an inventive act of 'creation', it is rather better expressed as a performance of an 'archaeology of thought', existent strata of inanimate/frozen 'probabilities of becoming' that have undergone an experience of exposure and laying bare of the otherwise clandestine or nocturnal realities, realities that have been dismissed, absented and buried. It is a resultant and consequential accord to tangential and intersecting lifetimes. Accordingly ,this proposal doesn't have an ambition to resolve but to question.