

# Jerusalem: City of peace



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<http://www.ummah.com/islam/taqwapalace>



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"No, David, do not disturb this nest before you have sent away the mother!"

The boy stood before a bush in the middle of Jerusalem. He was perplexed.

"Why not, mom? Everybody can get to it."

"It is part of our scriptures, the Torah, David."

Amina looked at the Jewish family seating in her same alley of the plaza. She was shocked by the child's attitude, but a child was a child, after all. She looked right in the eyes of the woman and remembered her crushed Palestine, her country of birth.

Above the ancient buildings of the town, she could perceive the beautiful golden dome of the rock reflecting the sun's light like an aura. The dome had been the first *qibla* Muslims had used to direct their prayers before Mecca was chosen.

Jerusalem was sacred for the three major world's religions, but still Jews threatened to destroy the most sacred site for Muslims in order to erect their third temple. Its construction would have been ordered in their scriptures. 'What a mess,' thought Amina. Twelve times burned down and rebuilt, Jerusalem had been the center of huge misunderstandings between the greatest world's religions. Amina had walked many times around the walls of Jerusalem; it usually did not take her more than an hour but so much violence had happened in this small earth's square. She had tried all the gates, from the Damascus gate opened for the Muslim community to the Lion gate and the famous Golden gate closed by the Muslims to prevent the future Jewish messiah to enter the town. So much history lay in these walls. Mosques and synagogues had been destroyed since, and many innocent people had perished to avoid the supreme humiliation: being conquered.

Amina had put her fingers in the holes covering the walls of the sacred town and she had whimpered over the blood that had stained the most beautiful walls of the world.

Her people were not dead; they had lost their lives for her God, Allah, and they still lived over the grave. The stains on the pavement had purified her people's blood; they had gained Muslims their dignity back. However, children were still used for diversion and sacrificed for an ideal.

If the Jews had proven intractable and treacherous in many occasions, Muslims had been intolerant and extreme against all traditional teachings of Islam. But both had felt they were left with little choice.

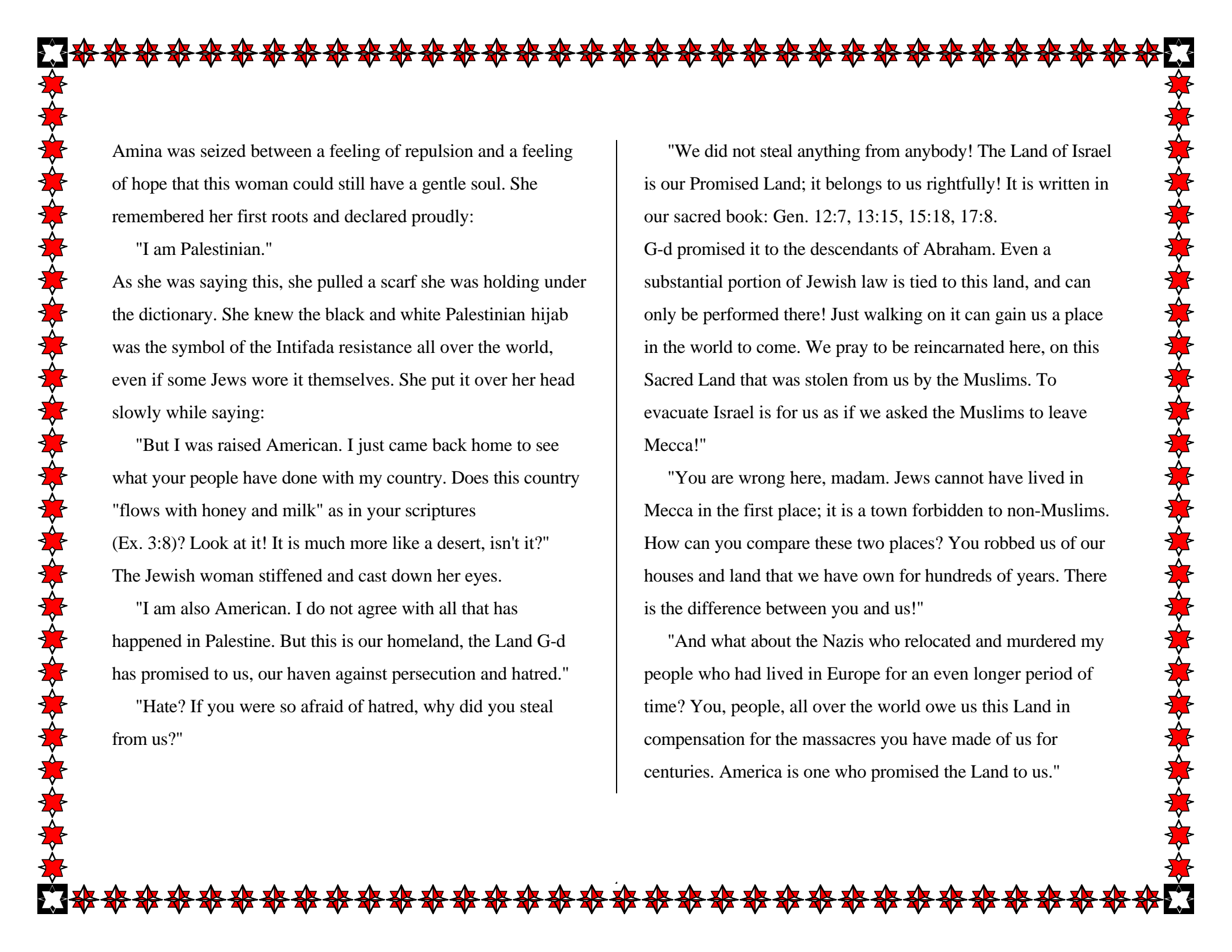
It was a pity on both sides.



Photo courtesy of: <http://paltel.8m.com/photo4.html>

The woman had stopped to observe Amina. She wore a black hat and a long dress like most conservative Jewish women. Suddenly, she talked to Amina.

"I am sorry we have disturbed you. My son is just a child; he has a lot to learn yet. Where are you from? I saw that you have a bilingual dictionary on your lap. Aren't you Arab?"



Amina was seized between a feeling of repulsion and a feeling of hope that this woman could still have a gentle soul. She remembered her first roots and declared proudly:

"I am Palestinian."

As she was saying this, she pulled a scarf she was holding under the dictionary. She knew the black and white Palestinian hijab was the symbol of the Intifada resistance all over the world, even if some Jews wore it themselves. She put it over her head slowly while saying:

"But I was raised American. I just came back home to see what your people have done with my country. Does this country "flows with honey and milk" as in your scriptures (Ex. 3:8)? Look at it! It is much more like a desert, isn't it?" The Jewish woman stiffened and cast down her eyes.

"I am also American. I do not agree with all that has happened in Palestine. But this is our homeland, the Land G-d has promised to us, our haven against persecution and hatred."

"Hate? If you were so afraid of hatred, why did you steal from us?"

"We did not steal anything from anybody! The Land of Israel is our Promised Land; it belongs to us rightfully! It is written in our sacred book: Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8.

G-d promised it to the descendants of Abraham. Even a substantial portion of Jewish law is tied to this land, and can only be performed there! Just walking on it can gain us a place in the world to come. We pray to be reincarnated here, on this Sacred Land that was stolen from us by the Muslims. To evacuate Israel is for us as if we asked the Muslims to leave Mecca!"

"You are wrong here, madam. Jews cannot have lived in Mecca in the first place; it is a town forbidden to non-Muslims. How can you compare these two places? You robbed us of our houses and land that we have own for hundreds of years. There is the difference between you and us!"

"And what about the Nazis who relocated and murdered my people who had lived in Europe for an even longer period of time? You, people, all over the world owe us this Land in compensation for the massacres you have made of us for centuries. America is one who promised the Land to us."

"How easy it is to meet one's moral obligations by sacrificing someone else's life? You come in the middle of the night, kill our families, destroy our houses to the ground and uproot even our trees to make sure that if we wish to return, there is nothing left for us. How do you call this, except stealing?"

The woman was grasping her bag with her two hands, holding it against her chest. She glared at Amina and declared, gasping:

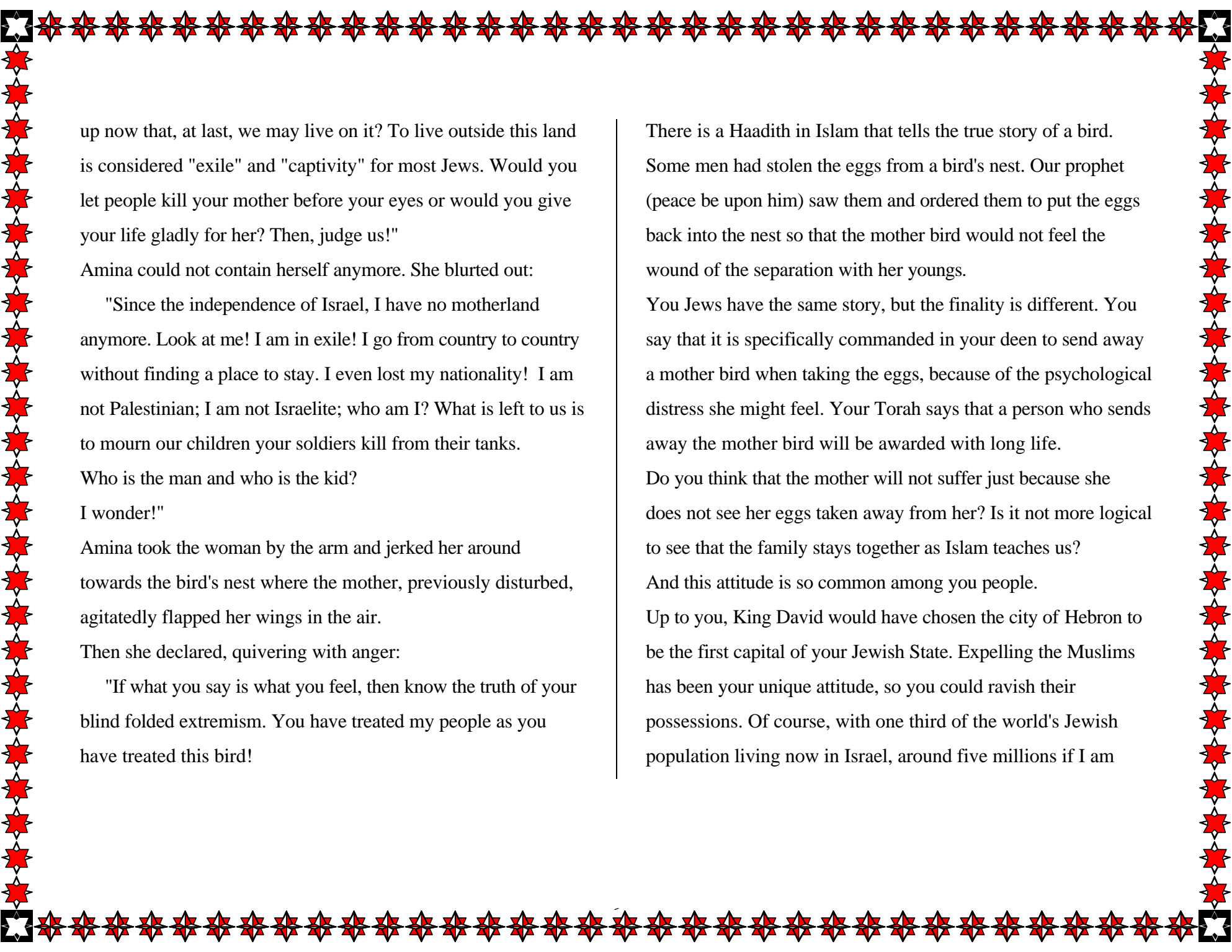
"The Ten Commandments order us not to murder. We are commanded not to leave a condition that may cause harm, to construct our homes in ways that will prevent people from being harmed, and to help a person whose life is in danger.

We are commanded not to afflict an orphan or a widow (Ex. 22:21), to love the stranger (Deut. 10:19), not to wrong him in anyway (Ex. 22:20), and that means YOU. As Jews, we have more responsibilities towards G-d than you have. We are the cherished ones. We do not consider ourselves superior to you. On the contrary, to be considered a good and righteous person in the eyes of G-d, a non-Jew needs only follow the seven Noahic commandments, whereas a Jew has to follow all

613 commandments given in the Torah. We have more responsibilities on this earth than you have. Contrary to the Muslims, for whom the entire humanity has been chosen over all creation, we are the only ones among the men who have accepted the Covenant with G-d. The only compensation for this incredible task is our most Sacred Land, Israel. Don't you think this is worth a sacrifice? More than that! It is *mitzvah* (a commandment) to take possession of Israel and to live in it (Num. 33:53).



Our daily prayers include the wish to return to Israel and Jerusalem. Our holidays and many special events are based on the hope for our Promised Land. Do you think that we can give it



up now that, at last, we may live on it? To live outside this land is considered "exile" and "captivity" for most Jews. Would you let people kill your mother before your eyes or would you give your life gladly for her? Then, judge us!"

Amina could not contain herself anymore. She blurted out:

"Since the independence of Israel, I have no motherland anymore. Look at me! I am in exile! I go from country to country without finding a place to stay. I even lost my nationality! I am not Palestinian; I am not Israelite; who am I? What is left to us is to mourn our children your soldiers kill from their tanks.

Who is the man and who is the kid?

I wonder!"

Amina took the woman by the arm and jerked her around towards the bird's nest where the mother, previously disturbed, agitatedly flapped her wings in the air.

Then she declared, quivering with anger:

"If what you say is what you feel, then know the truth of your blind folded extremism. You have treated my people as you have treated this bird!

There is a Haadith in Islam that tells the true story of a bird. Some men had stolen the eggs from a bird's nest. Our prophet (peace be upon him) saw them and ordered them to put the eggs back into the nest so that the mother bird would not feel the wound of the separation with her youngs.

You Jews have the same story, but the finality is different. You say that it is specifically commanded in your deen to send away a mother bird when taking the eggs, because of the psychological distress she might feel. Your Torah says that a person who sends away the mother bird will be awarded with long life.

Do you think that the mother will not suffer just because she does not see her eggs taken away from her? Is it not more logical to see that the family stays together as Islam teaches us?

And this attitude is so common among you people.

Up to you, King David would have chosen the city of Hebron to be the first capital of your Jewish State. Expelling the Muslims has been your unique attitude, so you could ravish their possessions. Of course, with one third of the world's Jewish population living now in Israel, around five millions if I am

correct, how could you think of living in peace with your neighbors?"

The woman's nostrils flared as she uttered harshly:

"And what would you have offered to MY people? In your Islamic law, we would be considered *dhimmis*, which means no more no less than "protected subjects". Our status would have been the one of people under Muslim domination! We would not have lived as a Nation. What kind of freedom would that be?"

Amina glared at her, showing her the dome of the rock.

"The freedom of Peace! Don't you call in you language, *Ye-ru-sha-la-im*, the "City of peace"? You could have chosen peace. On the contrary, you have chosen war."

"What choice did we have? People hate us. How is a lifetime of hatred? We are through hate."

Amina exclaimed in surprise:

"Why should we hate you? We hate Zionists, not the Jews! There is no place in Islam for hatred, except for those who are our enemies and attack us. Why should I hate you as long as you conduct yourself decently? Didn't Muslim countries sheltered

Jews in peace and this for many generation since the times of our prophet (peace be upon him)?

Hatred is not the work of two people; it is the work of a whole nation. How do you educate your children? In the idea that everybody hate them? If you stop considering yourself as a victim, maybe, yes maybe you could start to feel love for your human fellows as your scriptures order it."

In a valiant assault, the woman declared, offended:

"I do not know how I educate my children, but if they have to die for this Land; they will! And I will encourage them."

"And they will also fight rocks with gun machines, like their fathers? And they will kill villagers as in the Hula massacre and be exempt of any blame and be even praised for it?"

"Maybe they will. They will not be humiliated by your people if they can avoid it. They will be strong. Even if they commit mistakes; it is still worth it!"

"Then come with me and be glad of what you see. Your people intentionally kill the ambulance drivers who come to our people's rescue! They use chemical weapons against protestants. They smile while dragging the corpses of their enemies on the

ground. They make a joke of taking for firing target a father and his son travelling unharmed in an agitated street."

"This is war! My people were defending themselves against Palestinian assailants; your people were caught there by accident. You do not possess the whole truth..."

"Yes, this is war, and who is the prisoner of it? Those, Muslims, who are sent to prison for not carrying their official identifications, or those, Jews, whose heart is consumed with revenge? Now, judge for yourself between both extremisms. Which people are the most unjust and unfair? And, in the name of God, please tell me, for whom the end justifies the means?"



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