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# Bridges for Peace

## Israel Teaching Letter

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## UNHOLY WAR

A new kind of battle is raging around the world. It is unlike any war in the past. It is hard to define. It is being waged without clear borders. It is staffed with soldiers that are unscrupulous and operate in underground cells which are nearly impossible to identify. Almost every news broadcast details another incident in the battle and a depressing by-product is that the world economy is taking a beating due to consumer fear.

Because this current war involves a religion, i.e., Islam, modern warfare methods are handicapped by the overly cautious. They are convinced, and perhaps rightly so, that it would be catastrophic to be guilty of attacking a world religion.

Westerners search introspectively to see if they have acted in some way to justify conventional terror attacks (if there is such a thing), but, the pivotal question is, "Might some of these groups loose upon the world a biological attack that would be almost impossible to contain before it killed hundreds of thousands of people?" Western leaders wage a war in their hearts over whether to act preemptively or to mercifully restrain themselves.

A tool of this unscrupulous and stealthy enemy, aimed to captivate world attention, is suicide bombing. Perhaps not the most powerful in waging war physically, but psychologically it is devastating. It existed only in the far-away and foreign Middle East until September 11. The power of this tool, its unpredictability, and its simplicity has the world by the throat. It is odd, but it has its genesis in a romantic Persian story of A.D. 1050.

Omar Khayaam, the famous Persian author of "The Rubiat of Omar Khayaam" made a youthful pact with two of his close childhood friends. Omar and his friends, Hasan-i Sabah, and Nizam al-Mulk vowed that whichever of them succeeded in life first would use his money and power to aid the careers of the other two.





Hasan-i Saba

Nizam found fortune and fame first when he became Vizier to the Sultan of Persia. He fulfilled his vow by offering government positions to Omar and Hasan. Hasan accepted, but Omar pleaded to be supported in his heart's desire of being a poet. Hasan joined Nizam in the courts of the Sultan. Too soon, it became obvious to Nizam that Hasan was a threat in his new position. Nizam set him up and disgraced him in the eyes of the Sultan. Shamed and enraged, Hasan fled to Cairo where he plotted revenge. There, Hasan fell into the hands of the missionaries of a radical sect of Islam known as Ismailis. Hasan was attracted to this secret sect, peopled by those with higher esoteric knowledge that liberated them from all laws, including those of Islam. In 1080, Hasan returned to Persia and sought a place to teach "The New Propaganda," as it was known.

Dogged by agents of the Sultan, Hasan located a remote and inaccessible castle fortress in Alamut. Alamut Castle stood high on a rocky outcrop guarding a 6,000 ft (1828.80 m), fertile plain stretching behind for 30 miles (48 km). With his new devotees, Hasan became the world-renowned "Old Man of the Mountain." The famous adventurer, Marco Polo, in *The Adventures of Marco Polo*, wrote this of him:

"The **Old Man** kept at his court such boys of twelve years old as seemed to him destined to become courageous men. When the **Old Man** sent them into the garden in groups of four, ten, or twenty, he gave them hashish to drink. They slept for three days, then they were carried sleeping into the garden where he had them awakened. When these young men awoke and found themselves in the garden with all these marvelous things, they truly believed themselves to be in paradise. And these damsels were always with them in songs and great entertainments; they received everything they asked for, so that they would never have left that garden of their own will. And when the **Old Man** wished to kill someone, he would take him and say: 'Go and do this thing. I do this because I want to make you return to paradise.' And the **assassins** go and perform the deed willingly."

Assassin is a title derived from *hashashin*, the Arabic word for hashish. In Persia assassins and their deadly deeds were born. Assassins were greatly feared and the institution caught on and spread. Literature is filled with tales of murder by the Assassins.

The good news is that Assassins as an institutionalized political force no longer exist. They were never defeated as such, but their usefulness and successfulness faded and they were simply incorporated into the fabric of Islamic society. The myth that the Assassins sprang out of a need to retaliate against the Crusaders is just that, a myth. The Assassins were an internal Islamic struggle predating the Crusades.

This leads us to ask more about Islam and hopefully to clarify its purposes today.

## Islam versus Islamist



Ayatollah Khomeini

It is necessary to separate Islam from the violence of Islamist movements. During many time periods, nations considered Islamic have coexisted with surrounding nations peacefully. The exception is when extremist elements gain enough power to began operations considered Islamist.

An Islamist is a follower of Muhammed who sees it necessary to subjugate the entire world to Islam through violence called "jihad" or holy war. An emerging worldwide Islamist movement advocates that the world's fifty-plus Muslim nations unite into a single *khali-fah*, e.g., pan-Islamic state. Certain nations fall into the category of Islamist and not just Islamic. Iran is a good example.

Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini was the first to declare the existence of an Islamic Revolution that should be exported worldwide. He stated, "We must strive to export our revolution throughout the world,

and must abandon all idea of not doing so, for not only does Islam refuse to recognize any difference between Muslim countries, it is the champion of all oppressed people. Moreover, all the powers are intent on destroying us, and if we remain surrounded in a closed circle, we shall certainly be defeated. We must make plain our stance toward the powers and the super powers and demonstrate to them that, despite the arduous problems that burden us, our attitude to the world is dictated by our beliefs.”

But, Islam is not a homogenous whole. There are serious schisms within Islam. Enclosed with this *Teaching Letter* is a brief history of Muhammed and Islam, and a chart which shows the division of Islam after the death of Muhammed. Two branches of Islam evolved, Sunni and Sha'ai - They could be thought of as the Friendship camp and the Kinship camp. The Ismailis, named for Ismail son of Ja'far al-Sadiq, appear about A.D. 800.

## Recognizing the Threat



Many Westerners do not like to discuss religion or politics. This is a sec-way of escaping confrontational topics. Many secular people also imag-themselves to be in the majority. The truth is that the secular population the world is only 850 million people as opposed to 2.2 billion Christians, 3 billion Muslims, 900 million Hindus, and 360 million Buddhists. In the jority of these religions, faith is their politics. We can no longer hide our eads in the sand and avoid discussing religion or politics.

The demographics of many nations changed in the 1970s, suspi-ciously linked to the Ayatollah Khoemini's call to export the Islamic Revolution. It was then that universities worldwide received an influx of Islamic students, and new Islamic communities began to crop up. Up until September 11, 2001, tolerance was the world's by-word regarding growing Islamic populations in Western nations. Then attitudes changed.

PBS (Public Broadcasting System) in the USA aired a program enti-tled *Jihad in America*. The program documented growing radical Islamist groups on American soil teaching violence against their host nations. Others followed with documentaries that ranged from panic to simple whitewashing of the very serious problem. World news agencies have sent confusing signals as on one hand they paint a peaceful face on violent

Islamists but on the other they present horrific documentaries on life in places like Afghanistan under the Taliban.

There is indeed a very credible threat to non-Muslim nations. But, we are beyond the point of containing the threat, neatly, on the other side of any given border. Besides, democra-tic nations are based upon the rights of everyone to live where they choose, and to practice the religion of their choice.

Yet, there is a key to understanding what is happening all around us—it is Jerusalem!

## The Lord Rebuke You Satan!

The book of Zechariah needs to be reread in our troublesome times. So many encourag-ing things jump off the pages of his book. A young man running to measure Jerusalem in chap-ter two is stopped by an angel and instructed that Jerusalem would be too large to be contained by a city wall. That brings the book right up to our time period since Jerusalem was contained inside the city walls until the late 1800s. It goes on to say, “*And I Myself will be a wall of fire around it, declares the Lord, ‘and I will be its glory within’*” (Zech. 2:4,5).

When Ehud Barak was Prime Minister of Israel in 2000, 96% of the West Bank, five vil-lages which constitute East Jerusalem, and a large chunk of the Old City of Jerusalem was being offered to Arafat. Arafat's resounding answer “NO!” only makes sense in light of God's announcement that He Himself would become a wall of fire around the city.

Yes, Jerusalem is central in our present distress. Simplistic as it seems, Jerusalem is the keyhole in the door of the future. The world's attention is constantly drawn to this “bull's eye” in the Middle East. And the bright red spot directly in the center is Jerusalem. Israel has served as the petre dish of terror. It has been the testing site for methods that will be exported to the rest of the world.



Zechariah records another astounding scene in chapter three. The scene appears to be Israel being restored as a priestly nation. Joshua, the high priest comes before the Lord and who comes to accuse him? Satan! Undoubtedly Satan's accusation had to do with Joshua's filthy clothes. Satan's accusations are built on generalized guilt rather than God's gentle revelation of a problem and its immediate solution. What makes this revelation astounding is God's rebuke of Satan.

In a time period when multiple gods were worshiped by all nations that surrounded Israel, God clearly delineates who is speaking when He rebukes the evil one.

*"The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!" (Zech. 3:2).*

The drama of planet earth has always been, and will always be anchored to Jerusalem.

## What is Our Mandate?

*" . . . You who call upon the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her **the** praise of the earth" (Isa. 62:6b,7).*

First of all, what is a mandate? A mandate bonds three parties: the creator of the mandate, the executor, and the lesser party whom the mandate is designed to protect. It is a commission from a higher authority to carry out an injunction on behalf of a lesser nation.

As the swirling dust of WWI settled and nations brought their soldiers home from foreign lands a new Middle East emerged. Far away and very different from the West, the romantic sands of the deserts of the Middle East were the stage for drama. Lawrence of Arabia and others like him were popular new movie material. Classics rose from the sun-baked land. From as far away as Australia, proud horsemen, known as the "Lighthorsemen," aided the British against the German-backed Turkish forces in photogenic settings, such as the oasis of Be'er Sheva, which sits astride the southern Negev Desert in the Holy Land.



Australian "lighthorsemen"

The Middle East was not content to remain a peripheral issue. The war shook many foundations, and solutions for repairing those foundations laid the groundwork for the implementation of mandates for the Middle East. The war drove back the once flourishing Islamic Turkish Ottoman Empire and left huge areas of the borderless desert sands wiped clean like a slate. The powers that were suddenly in command after the war unrolled their maps on the tables and began to draw new boundary lines. On the one hand, the lines drawn in the settling sands of the Middle East by Western powers were simply arbitrary guess work. The accusation of many Arab nations in recent days is that those Western powers had no right to "draw the lines."

On the other hand, some of the lines were not man-made, but decrees from heaven. They lay just beneath the sand and needed simply to be brushed off and reinstated from ancient times. The nation of Israel lay veiled in Islamic dust, awaiting God's perfect timing. A new chapter of spiritual history opened as the breath of His Spirit blew away the covering.

With that unveiling, many biblical references demanded rethinking, fresh interpretation, and resolution. From those biblical references, Isaiah's ancient mandate had come to fruition. It could not have been written for any other time period—it is for us, it is for now!

Christian history boasts a long list of godly men and women who understood the mandate to act in behalf of Jerusalem. The list is too long to print here but is available in *The Israel Teaching Letter* called, *The Risk and the Reward* or in Ron Cantrell's *Unholy War for an Islamic Empire*. It is all too true that Christianity persecuted Jewish people over the centuries, but throughout Christian history there were some who clearly saw this mandate. Some saw Israel's rebirth even before the Jews themselves were interested.

These Christian men and women, and their acts of valor on behalf of Israel, punctuate history books with selfless stories of aid to an oppressed people, desperately searching for a haven they could call home. Their involvement spans several centuries.

The question is, "Are you on that list?"

At the dedication of the first Temple in Jerusalem, King Solomon looked down through the

centuries and saw you and I! In his glorious prayer recorded in II Chronicles he said,

*“ . . . hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of You, so that all the people of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your own people, Israel”* (II Chron. 6:33).

That seems to constitute a blank check drawn on the account of heaven. It is drawn upon with purpose, and that purpose is, *“so that all the people of the earth may know Your name and fear You.”* If King Solomon looked down through the ages and saw us, let us boldly step into that prophetic picture and play out the role that was set for us from the heavenlies so long ago.

## How Then Do We Live?

Certainly we now live in the time described by Matthew. *“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved”* (Matthew 24:12,13).

We must be among those who stand firm to the end. It is vitally important to expertly interpret the Scriptures for our time. Things that never needed detailed clarification will now have to be reexamined with microscopic focus to receive clarity. For instance when Jesus commanded us to turn the other cheek, I believe this is speaking of interpersonal relationships. For international terrorism, turning the other cheek is not applicable. I believe we need to pray that leaders of terrorist and terrorist harboring nations will be tried as war criminals in an international court of justice. This falls under Paul's exhortation to the Romans regarding obedience of government authorities.

*“For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer”* (Rom. 13:4).

Saleh Abdal Jawwad, head of the Political Science and History Departments at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, said about suicide bombings, *“Sharon's policies are pushing the Palestinians to this!”* If this is true, why does Israel's long list of victims show an ongoing reign of terror from the PLO's inception in the 1960s? Why did Arafat decline ninety-six percent of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and a large portion of the Old City when it was offered by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak? Arafat should be among those tried for his crimes against humanity.

There must be an international court with power to try and prosecute terrorist criminals wherever they surface in the world.

We must stop promising Arafat and the Palestinians a State. If statehood is awarded to the Palestinians now, the world will be rewarding bloody violence. How will the Palestinians handle the myriad of other important matters like water rights, municipality division, electricity (now provided by Israel) health care and on and on? Will they continue to blow up busses and send suicide bombers until their state is perfect?

There is no dearth of documented evidence indicting most of the PA's head leadership. Israel's incursions into Ramallah, and Jenin last year yielded hoards of boxes of manuscripts with hard cold evidence of criminal activities.

I realize that terrorism is no longer just aimed at the Middle East. But, the accusation seems to come back time and again that Islam would not act badly if the Palestinian issue were solved. Don't believe it. However, for all intents and purposes, I believe God is focusing our attention on the Middle East generally and Israel specifically.

This is not a time to draw back, it is an opportunity to see God's hand at work in the Middle East specifically and in the rest of the world as well. It is a time, especially if you never have before, to participate in what God is doing, to run alongside Him as He ministers to His people and sets the stage for the return of the Messiah.

I love Rees Howell's prayer journal entry of September 12, 1940 when Hitler's blitzkrieg was ravaging Europe and England.

*“We prayed last night that London would be defended and that the enemy would fail to break through, and God answered prayer. Unless God can get hold of this devil and bind him, no man is safe. If we have protection for our properties, why not get protection for the country? What wonderful days these are!”*

Wonderful days? Yes! We must rejoice knowing that the time Yeshua (Jesus) has longed for, when God will say *“It is time to go redeem Your bride!”* is ever closer. The signs that are a harbinger of that moment are all around us. Whatever you are called to do in God's kingdom,

resolve do it better and with more gusto. We can surely agree with John the Revelator when he said, “*Even so, come Lord Jesus!*”

“*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus*” (Rev. 22:20).

Shalom from Jerusalem,



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# Muhammed and Islam



Though captivating, we have space here for only a short overview of Muhammed's history. A seemingly troubled youth fraught with violent visions, delusions, orphaned at the age of six and raised by his slave girl's uncle, Muhammed is the prophet after which Islam models itself.

One of Muhammed's earliest visions was of two white robed beings digging through his intestines searching for something. Later, what he considered a life-changing vision was in a cave outside Mecca. He describes a raging voice with terrible force demanding something of him he had never learned to do - read!

"Read in the name of your lord, the creator, who created man from a clot of blood!  
Read, for your lord is most merciful, for he has taught men by the pen  
And revealed the mysteries to them."

Years of succeeding visions, marriages to girls as young as 9 years of age, conquests of villages who opposed his new religion, and raiding of camel caravans to support himself financially swirled around Muhammed and his followers like a vortex. The early years of Islam were tumultuous to say the least.

Muhammed focused Arabia's worship of 360 various gods into a monotheistic religion. In the crystal clear air of the ancient desert, flaming shows of falling fire in the form of meteorites and asteroids were understandable reasons to stand in awe of the heavens. In the desert, the ease of finding a stone fallen from heaven gave way to worshipping these symbols of the gods. In fact, deification of them became common. Three main goddesses were worshipped: Al-il-lat, symbolized by a squarish stone at Taif, east of Mecca; Al-Uzza, the morning star symbolized by a gray granite stone in the shape of a thigh bone; Manah, goddess of destiny symbolized by a black stone in the village of Qudayd. These three goddesses were known as the daughters of Allah (sura 53:21-22). Finally, Hubal, a Moabite/Nabatean/North Arabian demon moon god symbolized by a reddish brown stone which still resides in the Ka'aba at Mecca.

Mecca rejected Muhammed's new teachings out of hand. The reputation of a lunatic dogged the prophet and he sought the company of those who were kinder in nearby villages. Nevertheless, the Ka'aba, Mecca's center of worship was a magnet to Muhammed. In order to worship at the Ka'aba, Muhammed struck a ten-year treaty with Mecca's leadership. They agreed to vacate the premises three days a year to accommodate his new religion if he would agree to leave off trying to conquer them, stop converting citizens of Mecca, and return all his present converts from Mecca to their families. Muhammed withdrew to the nearby village of Hudaibiyah. There he waited for the Meccans to relax and let down their defenses, then he violently conquered Mecca, threw out all idols and installed Allah as the sole deity.

In the years following, Muhammed's visions became more violent. Visions that served as rubber stamps for his violence came as he looked around at other towns and villages he sought to conquer. Massacres of Jews and conquering of Christian towns and villages ensued when they rejected his message. Upon this rejection, a change in prayer direction came and his faithful, who until then, had faced Jerusalem to pray, now turned their backs on the city and faced Mecca. Muhammed finally announced that the sword would be the ultimate tool by which to spread Islam.

Following Muhammed's early death in A.D. 632, Islam split into two camps—Sunni and Shi'ai. They could be referred to as the Kinship Camp and the Friendship Camp. Abu-baker, one of Muhammed's closest friends and initial supporter of his religious philosophy became the first Caliph (spiritual leader) in the Sunni camp. Fatima, Muhammed's daughter and her husband Ali challenged the rights of Abu-baker and Shi'ai Islam under the rule of the Imams was born. The Caliphate and Imamate currents within Islam have warred against each other ever since.

As seen in the chart on the reverse side, the shaded boxes on the right track the emergence of the Ismailis from which sprang the Assassins under Hasan-i Saba.



# Time Line of Successive Islamic Dynasties after Muhammed

