



# NEWSLETTER

The Center For Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land

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## THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF AL-LIQA' REVIEW, 1985-2005

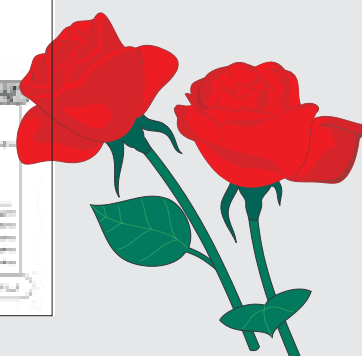
Al-Liqa' Center is celebrating this solemn occasion on two levels. Firstly, we are preparing a ten-year comprehensive index of the content of the review, 1996-2005, having issued in 1996 the first comprehensive index, 1985-1995. Secondly, the board of trustees, its working committees and the friends of the Center will hold a special gathering to commemorate the appearance of Al-Liqa' periodical in which leading representatives of the various Palestinian private and public sectors will celebrate with us this distinguished event.

It should be noted that the beginning of this periodical can be traced to 1984-1985, when a group of laity and clergy representing various Christian denominations decided to publish a religious, cultural and social review, Al-Liqa (encounter). It was a timely and courageous step by this group of Palestinians who opted to come to the forefront to participate in a Palestinian ecumenical dialogue to discuss pressing issues facing society, such as the emigration of Palestinian Christians which was and is threatening to transform the Palestinian church into a church of stones.

A year after its appearance in 1986, Al-Liqa's editorial board began to explore the idea of sponsoring an annual conference that would revolve around the theme of "Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land" in light of the many challenges that face the Palestinian church.

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### HAPPY BIRTHDAY AL-LIQA' REVIEW SEE YOU IN THE SILVER AND GOLDEN JUBILEES



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# Al-Liqa' Evening forums

**2.2.2006**

The January 2006 Palestinian legislative elections that surprised Palestinians and the world with its results was the focus of Al-Liqa evening forums of 2 February 2006. Dr. Geries S. Khoury introduced the topic of the forum and analyzed election results which led to the victory of HAMAS and the future of the Fatah movement and the Palestinians left.



Heated discussions followed Dr. Khoury's introductory presentation. Despite differences in opinion concerning the results, all present accepted the results with open mind since the elections were carried out in a very democratic and pluralistic manner that is rarely seen in the region.

**31.3.2006**

Professor Aziz Haidar, a frequent Lecturer at AL-Liqa' Center's gatherings and events, was a special guest of the Center on 31 March where he addressed the results of Israeli elections of March 2006.

Professor Haidar pointed out that 1/3 of Israelis eligible to vote didn't decide to vote until 3 days before elections. And 21 percent of this 1/3 didn't decide until the same elections day. The Russian list, "Israel Betenu"(Israel our home), and the retired list were the big winners. There was a general lack of confidence in the parties as well as ethnic splits representing Russians, Ashkenazim (European Jews) and Sephardic (Eastern Jews). Votes of soldiers which usually go to the right wing lists didn't help the right. Seventy of the Knesset members support social issues, while the most important issue that will face Israelis is the issue of "constitution".



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**6.4.2006**

The commemoration of the life and thought of distinguished Arab Scholar Ibn Khaldun, 600 years after his death, is taking place throughout the Arab world. In light of this occasion, Al-Liqa' Center held a panel to discuss the importance of this distinguished Arab scholar.



Professor Thiab Ayyoush, a member of Center's Board of trustees and well known scholar in sociology and social work, spoke about the pioneering role of Ibn Khaldun in the field of sociology and history while Dr. Mahmoud Abu Kitteh, a friend of Al-Liqa' and a lecturer in Arabic language, addressed Ibn Khaldun's contribution to the field of education. Dr. Walid Mustafa, a lecturer in geography at Bethlehem University, presented a paper on the contributions of Ibn Khaldun to the field of geography which was read on his behalf by Dr. Adnan Musallam of Bethlehem University and Al-Liqa'.

**29.4.2006**

Dr. Saleem Zoughbi, a lecturer at Bethlehem University and a friend of Al-Liqa, focused on the hidden war of the Middle East which is not a military one.



Dr. Zoughbi used Castell's "Information Age" and Fukuyama's argument about history to match recent developments in the Middle East, showing that the actual war is a hidden one and is based in the division of the Middle East helped by the digital divide, in such a way to show pro-West or pro-nationalism. He emphasized that the role of the Arab intellectual is the most critical one in this war, and there is little that can stop him if he has the courage to speak out and take the lead among the Arab peoples.

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# DAY OF LIBERTY

## 25 JANUARY 2006 PALESTINIANS LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Adnan A. Musallam

Wednesday 25 January 2006 was hailed by all Palestinians as the “Day of Liberty” and “A Palestinian Wedding Celebrations.” Physician Mustafa Barghouthi, a candidate who headed the Independent Palestinian List, described the elections as “pure and democratic” and with self-confidence asserted that “Palestine was teaching the Middle East a lesson in democracy and elections.”

Thousands of Palestinians, estimated at 980,000, or 77 percent of eligible registered voters, flooded polling stations in a festive mood to mark their ballots while supporters of various factions and independent candidates handed out campaign pamphlets to sway undecided voters at polling station gates, which were guarded by armed Palestinian police.

When polls closed at 7:00 p.m. that day and counting began, it was generally assumed that the ruling Fatah Movement, which led Palestinian

struggle for independence since 1965, was leading and would win over HAMAS (The Islamic Resistance Movement) by a very narrow margin. Exit polls undertaken by major organization such as that of Birzeit University gave Fatah a slight lead.

What pollsters and politicians did not know is that next morning a Palestinian election Tsunami would take place turning upside down all pollsters’ estimates and projections and Fatah’s guarded optimism of a close victory over HAMAS, as well as the Palestinian political map and scene.

By noon Thursday the 26th, however, HAMAS supporters were parading West Bank and Gaza Strip cities, towns, villages and rural areas to celebrate an overwhelming unexpected victory over the Fatah Movement. For contrary to all earlier polls, HAMAS had captured a large majority of the seats in the Palestinian legislative

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elections. With 95 percent of the ballots counted by 7:00 p.m. Thursday, the Central Election Commission announced that HAMAS captured 76 seats of the 132 seat Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) while Fatah captured only 43 seats.

Earlier in the day Prime Minister Ahmad Qurei' and his cabinet submitted their resignations on the ground that election results were the choice of the people. And if election results are correct then President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) should ask the largest faction in the newly elected PLC, HAMAS, to form a new government. It is to the credit of President Abu Mazen that under his leadership, since the death of President Arafat in November 2004, municipal, presidential and now legislative elections have taken place freely and without constraints, thus putting Palestinians in forefront of democratic regimes in the Middle East.

The Fatah Movement has been the ruling faction in Palestine since the return of President Arafat to Palestine from exile in July 1994 and the setting up of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). However, the Movement has been marred with internal dissension and corruption. The PNA security infra-structure was totally destroyed in 2002 during Israeli incursions and re-occupation of the West Bank, causing its demise and the gradual loss of public confidence in it, especially because the Authority in the last few weeks has been unable to put a stop to chaos in Palestinian streets resulting from the proliferation of armed

gangs involved in killing and kidnapping, who happened to be associated with the Fatah Movement.

On the other hand and since the late 1970's HAMAS has been building an infrastructure of clinics, charitable organizations, mosques and schools throughout Gaza Strip and West Bank thus winning over to its side thousands of committed Palestinian followers who see in Fatah and the PNA corruption and favoritism and in HAMAS the road to salvation and liberation.

Americans, Israelis and Europeans on their part did not help the situation by constantly warning Palestinians of dire consequences if HAMAS wins elections and becomes the majority in the PLC. These threats were seen by Palestinians as a clear interference in Palestinians internal affairs and thus causing massive anti- American, anti-Israeli backlash that was translated into massive pro-HAMAS ballots.

In other words, these outside threats and the rumors that Americans financed Fatah election campaigns only helped in HAMAS' march toward victory.

It appears that the victorious HAMAS would like to form a coalition with Fatah. But this latter refuses preferring to stay in opposition in the PLC. It could be that HAMAS will have to form a government without any other partner.

To transform itself from an Islamic resistance movement, pre-occupied with the idea of Islamization of society and liberating the whole of Palestine from the Israelis, to a pragmatic ruling body for the first time since its formation in early 1988, is not an easy task. It has to accommodate itself to new realities in intra-Palestinian politics, Palestinian-Israeli politics and world politics. Espousing Islamization mottos and ideologies will not suffice. It would only alienate people. HAMAS' success in Palestinian streets will be watched carefully by all sides concerned and will be judged by HAMAS' achievements in the educational, economic, social and political spheres.

The impact of HAMAS' victory on Palestinian society and on Palestinian Israeli relations is unpredictable. Already upheavals are taking place within the Fatah Movement and armed supporters are flexing their muscles in Palestinian streets by demanding the purging of the Fatah Central Committee members responsible for the defeat and the resignation of all Fatah candidates who ran as independent candidates and the rejection of any attempts by HAMAS to include the Fatah Movement in a national coalition insisting that Fatah remains in opposition as it goes at the same time through self-evaluation to pinpoint the factors that led to its defeat. Despite HAMAS' assurance to Palestinians of its intentions not to impose its own Islamization vision, secular oriented Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims, who are represented by Fatah and other Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) factions, are very nervous and apprehensive about a future

under HAMAS. Will HAMAS impose its own Islamist vision of a Shari'ah (Islamic code) on the Palestinian society in economic, educational, social and political spheres which include the prohibition of the integration of sexes in schools and universities, imposition of Islamic hijab (special dress) on Palestinian women, prohibition of alcohol etc. Many Palestinians ask this question. Since the liberalism of President Mahmoud Abbas and the ruling Fatah Movement led to free municipal, presidential and legislative elections which brought HAMAS gradually to power, will HAMAS renege the democratic game when it assumes power and eventually overthrow the liberal nationalist regime of President Abbas and the PLO and to establish instead its own vision of a Palestinian Islamic society?

HAMAS unprecedented victory is causing the jitters in both Palestinian and Israeli societies. What lies ahead is unclear and unpredictable. Difficult days are ahead for Palestinians as they try to heal the national wounds resulting from the Palestinian elections tsunami. The world is focusing their attention on Palestinians as they attempt to reconcile the secular and religious in their society. It is not an easy task even though it is the only way. Otherwise, troubled times lie ahead for the people in the region.

*(Note: This reflection was written on 26 January 2006)*

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**25.5.2006**



Mr. Alberto Issa Nazzal of Santiago, Chile, whose father and grandfather were born in Beit Jala, was the main speaker on Thursday 25 May. Mr. Nazzal who is currently making a film about Beit Jala takes classes at Bethlehem University. He sees himself as a connecting link between Palestinians at home



and the Chilean Diaspora and he would like to strengthen and revive these links between Palestinians. Mr. Nazzal spoke about Palestinians in Chile, their prominent role in business and finance. From the very

humble beginning of the first generation of merchants, Palestinians began to represent the emerging middle classes of Chile. Eventually, they were totally immersed in Chilean culture. Nazzal said that very little attention was given by the Palestinian community to teach new generations the Arabic language and heritage.



## CONGRATULATIONS

Al-Liqa' Board of Trustees  
and its President,  
H.B. Michael Sabbah,  
and Al-Liqa's working committees  
and staff  
extend their heartfelt congratulations  
to a dear friend  
of

**Al-Liqa' Center**

**Abuna Dr. Elias Chacour**



On his promotion to the Metropolit of  
Acres, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee.

We ask the Lord to bless him and  
wishing him the best of luck in his new  
capacity.

## AL-LIQA' INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa' Center, attended and participated in a conference in the United States, on May 4, 5 and 6, which was sponsored by the Catholic Studies Program of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, directed by Professor Scott Alexander. The

purpose of the conference was to exchange experience of contextualized dialogue in countries in which Christians and Muslims live. Dr. Khoury addressed the issue of the state of interfaith dialogue in the Holy Land and the challenges that are facing the dialogue.

On March 25, American students and the Director of Jerusalem University College, Dr. Paul Wright, visited the Center. Mr. Mousa Darwish, Deputy Director of the Center, addressed the group focusing on Christian-Muslim relations in the Holy Land. A question and answer session followed.



Rev. Dr. Uwe Graeb, Propst of the Church of the Redeemer in charge of the German speaking Protestant Congregation in Jerusalem visited the Center on June 1. Dr. Graeb is a long-time friend of Al-Liqa' Center who took part in one of the Center's annual conferences on local theology in 1996. Mr. Mousa Darwish and Dr. Adnan Musallam, both of the Executive Committee, hosted Dr. Graeb.



# AL-LIQA' CENTER PUBLICATIONS

## 1983-2006

**Seven publishing activities are currently underway. These are:**

1. The Arabic language quarterly review, Al-Liqa', now in its 20th year of publication (1985-Present). The review is directed toward the Arab community in the Holy Land, the Arab region and the world.

2. The English Language bi-annual review, Al-Liqa' Journal, is now in its 14th year, 1992-Present. This review is directed toward the international community. It is a scholarly journal concentrating on Christian-Muslim relations, interfaith dialogue, Christianity and Islam, and Palestinian Studies.

3. Proceedings of the annual "Conference on Arab Heritage for Christians and Muslim in the Holy Land" better known as the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Conference, now in its 17th session. Contents reflect the activities of the annual conferences, 1983-Present.

4. Proceedings of the annual "Conference on Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land", better known as the Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference, now in its 12th session. These reflect the activities of the annual conferences, 1987-Present.

5. Also available are miscellaneous pamphlets and publications giving brief overviews and analysis of a number of religious, social and cultural topics of current interest. Al-Liqa's documents are included.



6. The bi-annual English language Newsletter has been published since 1989. It includes news of the Center's activities and is directed toward the international community. No. 31 appeared in December 2005.

7. The bi-annual Arabic language newsletter, Risalat Al-Liqa', contains news of the Center's activities, and is directed toward the local community.

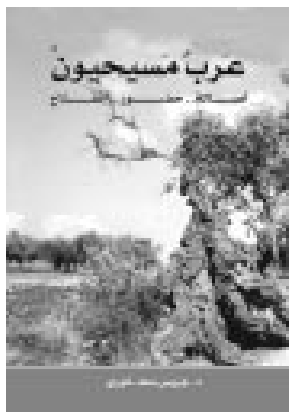
# MOST RECENT PUBLICATIONS

## Al-Liqa' Journal Vol. 25 (December 2005)

This issue of the Journal revolved around the Golden Jubilee of H.B. Patriarch Michael Sabbah. Included as well is an editorial on the golden heritage of the Patriarch, a book review of his Pastoral Letters and excerpts from these Pastoral Letters. In addition there are several articles that deal with Palestinian issues such as Arab press history in Ottoman times, tradition and innovation in Palestinian literature, the pre - 1948 Arab commercial center of Jerusalem and the ethics of withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.



Dr. Geries Sa'ed Khoury,  
**Arab Christians: Rootedness... Presence... Openness,**  
Al-Liqa' Center Publications, Jerusalem, April 2006. (In Arabic)  
This book by the Director of Al-Liqa' Center focuses on Christian Arab heritage in the Middle Ages, the role of the Local Church in the Holy Land and political, religious and social challenges, and the importance of the incarnation of the church in the cultural, political and social context with emphasis on the need to crystallize a local Arab theology that aims to help church's followers to live and understand their faith.



## CONDEMNATION

East Jerusalem Daily,  
Al-Quds, 7 February 2006

AL-Liqa' issued a strong condemnation of the Danish newspaper's publication of caricatures that were highly offensive to the Prophet, Islam and religious feelings of one and a half billion Muslims throughout the world.

This abominable act aborts all efforts that are being made to further dialogue between cultures and civilizations and the culture of tolerance between peoples.

In light of this inhumane and immoral act, Al-Liqa' Center stressed Muslim-Christian unity in the Holy Land and added that no one will be allowed to compromise the national unity of Christians and Muslims and demanded public apologies to all Muslims and the believers.



# List and Prices of AL- LIQA'S PUBLICATIONS (1983-2006)

(All publications are in Arabic unless specified)

## Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference (1987-2006)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Proceedings of the First Conference,<br>Jerusalem 1987 (196 pages).                            | \$6 |
| Second Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1988 (208 p.).   | \$6 |
| Third Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1989 (193 p.).  | \$6 |
| Fourth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1990   | \$6 |
| Fifth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1991 (174p.).   | \$6 |
| Sixth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1993 (125 p.).  | \$6 |
| Seventh Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1994 (177 p.).  | \$6 |
| Eighth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1995 (199p.).  | \$6 |
| Ninth Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1996 (Contained in Al-Liqa'<br>Journal, Vol. 9/10, (1997) | \$6 |

## Al-Liqa' Center's Documents

(Available in Arabic and English)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1.Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land,<br>(16 pages)    | \$4 |
| 2. In Jerusalem, Justice and Peace Embrace Each<br>Other, (5pages) | \$2 |

## Miscellaneous

|   |      |
|---|------|
| 1.Fr. Peter Madrous, <i>Paul the Apostle and the Man</i> (67 pages)   | \$5  |
| 2.Najib Nassar, <i>Under the Protection of the Arabs</i> (91 pages)   | \$5  |
| 3.Younis Amr, <i>Jerusalem the City of God</i> (152pages)   | \$5  |
| 4.Louis I. Hazboun, <i>Principles of Sociology of Religion</i><br>(162 pages)   | \$5  |
| 5. <i>Western Christian Zionism</i> , (43 pages)  | \$3  |
| 6. <i>Jerusalem Between Religious Freedom and Political<br/>Sovereignty</i> , (in English) (78pages)                      | \$5  |
| 7. <i>Christian Feasts between Unity and Pluralism</i> , (96 pages).  | \$5  |
| 8.Qustandi Shomali, <i>El-Carmel</i> (534 pages)  | \$10 |
| 9.Jerusalem: <i>Palestinian Muslim- Christian Studies</i> (600 pages)   | \$10 |
| 10.Anton Shomali, <i>Collected Poems</i> (255 Pages)  | \$7  |
| 11.Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>Contextualized Eastern Churches</i><br>(393 pages).   | \$8  |
| 12. Jamal Salsa', <i>Palestinian Poetical Message Between<br/>Religion and Nationalism</i> (174 pages)                    | \$6  |
| 13. Thiab A. Ayyoush, <i>Social Problems: An Islamic<br/>Perspective</i> (212 pages) (in English)                         | \$7  |
| 14. Sami Adwan, <i>Reality of Religious Education, both Muslim<br/>and Christian, in Palestinian Schools</i> .(404 pages) | \$8  |
| 15. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>Say your Word and Go! Quick<br/>Inputs into Vital Files</i> (273 pages)                      | \$11 |

|   |      |
|---|------|
| 16. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>The Book of Days: In Search of<br/>the Lost Word</i> (159 pages) | \$7  |
| 17. Geries Khoury, <i>Arab Christians: Rootedness...<br/>Presence... Openness</i> (278 pages) | \$11 |

## Christian - Muslim Dialogue Conference (1983 -2006 )

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Proceeding of the First Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1983<br>(221 pages). | \$6 |
| 2. Second Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1984 (257 pages).                     | \$6 |
| 3. Third Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1985 (257 p.).                         | \$6 |
| 4. Fourth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1986 (289 pages).                     | \$6 |
| 5. Fifth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1987 (206p.).                          | \$6 |
| 6. Sixth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1988 (216 pages).                      | \$6 |
| 7. Seventh Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1989 (143 p.).                       | \$6 |
| 8. Eighth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> . 1990 (143 pages).                     | \$6 |
| 9. Ninth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1991 (149 p.).                         | \$6 |
| 10. Tenth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1992 (143 p).                         | \$6 |
| 11. Eleventh Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1993 (82 p.).                      | \$6 |
| 12. Twelfth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> , 1994 (154 p.).                      | \$6 |
| 13. 13th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> . 1995.<br>(see no. 9 Miscellaneous)     | \$6 |
| 14. 14th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1996 (107 pages)                       | \$6 |
| 15. 15th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1998                                   | \$6 |
| 16. 16th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2001                                   | \$6 |

## Al- Liqa' Journal (in English) 1992 - 2006

|               |                  |                  |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Vol. 1 - 1992 | Vols. 7/8 1996   | Vols. 18/19-2002 |
| Vol. 2 - 1992 | Vols. 9/10- 1997 | Vols. 20/21-2003 |
| Vol. 3 - 1994 | Vols.11/12 1998  | Vol. 22-2004     |
| Vol. 4 - 1994 | Vol. 13-1999     | Vol. 23-2005     |
| Vol. 5 - 1995 | Vols. 14/15-2000 | Vol. 24-2005     |
| Vol. 6 - 1996 | Vols. 16/17-2001 | Vol. 25-2005     |

### Annual subscription:

|                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| Individuals         | \$20 |
| Institutions        | \$30 |
| Price per one issue | \$7  |

## Al-Liqa' Arabic Language Quarterly Review (1985 - 2006)

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Year 1-Year 3 (3 issues each year)  | \$ 20 per Year |
| Year 4-Year 20 (4 issues each year) | \$ 30 per Year |
| Price per one issue                 | \$ 7           |

*continued from page 1*

And as a prelude to holding the conference, Al-Liqa's Board decided to develop a document dealing primarily with Palestinian Contextualized Theology which is an extension of general Christian theology and it was completed and put forth for discussion in the first session of the Conference on Theology and the local Church in the Holy Land in the summer of 1987. Rev. Dr. Michael Sabbah, now H.B. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, was the first Palestinian scholar to examine the content of Al-Liqa's basic document: "Theology and the local Church in the Holy Land," in the conference. (See the Proceedings of "the First conference on Theology and the local church in the Holy Land.")

## Dear Benefactors and Friends of Al-Liqa' Center

A Change in Al-Liqa' Web Site

[www.al-liqacenter.org](http://www.al-liqacenter.org)

is now

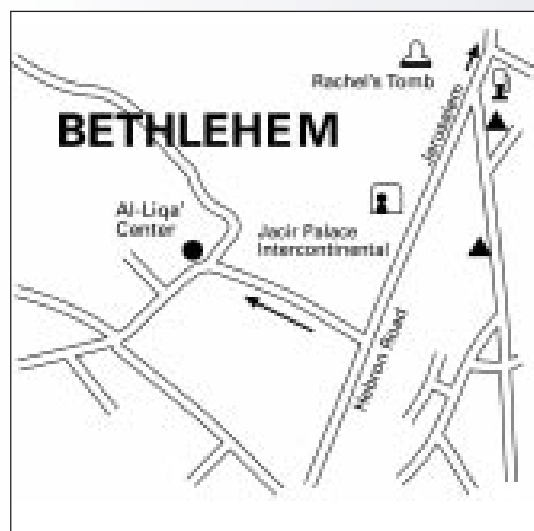
[www.al-liqacenter.org.ps](http://www.al-liqacenter.org.ps)

We hope you will have the opportunity to visit Al-Liqa' web site. We will appreciate any comments or suggestions that would help us to improve the content of the site which is proliferating our mission throughout the world.



## Al-Liqa' Center

In Jerusalem, the city sacred to billions of diverse believers, a Palestinian interfaith initiative led to the establishment of "AL-Liqa' Center", a unique place of research, study and dialogue on the religious traditions, institutions and daily life of the people of the Holy Land and the region. The program includes, interfaith dialogue, Palestinian Contextualized Theology in the Holy Land, international activities, and the publication of journals, newsletters, books, and occasional papers. Patriarch Michael Sabbah, President, Board of Trustees, and Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director.



### AL-Liqa' Center's New Headquarter 54- 56 AL-Quds Jerusalem Str.

The Center is now located less than 200 meters to the southwest of Rachel's Tomb at 54-56 AL-Quds Jerusalem Street. After passing the Jacir Palace Intercontinental to the right on the Hebron- Jerusalem Rd, take a right turn at the first intersection at the end of which AL-Liqa' Center is situated on the right side of the street.