



No. 36, JUNE 2008

NEWSLETTER

The Center For Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land

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AL-LIQA' CENTER'S SILVER JUBILEE 1982-2007

Under the auspices of H. B. Msgr. Michael Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and President of Al-Liqa' Center's Board of Trustees, the celebrations of Al-Liqa' Center's Silver Jubilee took place on Friday, 15 February 2008 with inaugural prayers and invocations by Sheikh 'Abd Al-Majeed 'Ata, the Mufti of Bethlehem, and Mr. Lawrence Sammour, a member of Al-Liqa' Board of Trustees. Mr. Mousa Darwish, Deputy Director of Al-Liqa' Center and member of the Board, moderated the celebrations. The first speaker was Patriarch Sabbah who welcomed attendees and in the process underlined the importance of the mission of Al-Liqa' Center.

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Upcoming Event

Al-Liqa's 20th Session of the Conference on the
Arabic Heritage for Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land

will take place in Bethlehem Hotel in Bethlehem 10-12 July 2008

The theme of the conference will revolve around

“Palestinian Reality: Worries and Challenges”

Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land Conference
(Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference)

15th Session

**FROM FASTING TO EASTER:
A CHURCH VISION IN GALILEE**

2 February 2008, Mar Elias Institutions – Ibillin, Galilee



On the 2nd of February 2008, the Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land Conference was organized by Al-Liqa' Center/Galilee Branch. The conference took place at Mar Elias Institutions in Ibillin, titled **"From Fasting to Easter: A Church Vision in Galilee"**. The conference was inaugurated with a Biblical meditation and reflection by Rev. Fu'ad Dagher, pastor of the Evangelical Church in Shafa 'Amr. He stressed the importance and spiritual meaning of fasting. Dr. Geris S. Khoury gave the first lecture in which he put forth the issue of fasting in the Bible and fasting's history in early

Christian eras and among the eastern fathers of the church. Dr. Khoury pointed out as well fasting in Christian Arab heritage in the Middle Ages and among

a number of theologians and philosophers.

Following a lunch break a panel comprising Bishop Dr. Elias Chacour, the head of the Melkite Catholic Church in Galilee and Bishop Dr. Boulous Marcuzzo, the Latin Vicar in Nazareth took place. Bishop Elias Chacour said that the greatest love is when a person himself sacrifices to his neighbor. This is the teaching of Christ. I send my appeals to all faithful not to

aggress against their fellow brothers. Concerning Christian presence in the Holy Land, Bishop Chacour refuted all those who classify Christians in the land as a minority. They are an integral part of their people. Jews in the United States refuse their classification as a minority. Instead, they consider themselves as a community.

Bishop Marcuzzo questioned the presence of cultured Christians in public life and he called for attracting them to such positions. He added that the Church in our land is committed to renewal of faithful's life through the general Parish Plan. Faithful must renew himself/herself from the inside through prayer, parish work and fasting. Bishop Marcuzzo added that fasting is not an end by itself. It is a mean and essence and not outside appearance. He gave examples from texts on fasting derived from Christian Arab Heritage.

Dr. Johnny Mansour, a researcher and lecturer in Galilee, pointed out in his lecture, the spiritual and the popular traditions of Easter at different levels: families, young peoples, groups and children. These traditions are on the verge of extinction. At the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Boutros Dalleh delivered a poem, composed on the occasion of the beginning of the 40-day of fasting, and thanking in the process Al-Liqa' Center.

Dr. Gerjes Khoury, in addition, read the final communiqué of the conference which is directed to the leaders of the Church in the Holy Land: To allocate scholarships for researches and university students in the areas



of theology and Christian Arab Heritage; to uncover Christian Arab History, to study manuscripts located in international and local libraries such as the Vatican Library, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Egyptian monasteries which show clearly the role of Arab Christians and their contribution to Arabic civilization and humanity. This will only strengthen Christian Arab identity and the spirit of belonging to the land, nation and history.



Silver Jubilee Celebrations cont'd

in promoting dialog and in strengthening and deepening “life together” among Palestinian Christians and Muslims despite the very difficult circumstances that Palestinians experience under the Israeli military occupation and practices. Furthermore, he condemned the destruction of the YMCA library in Gaza, which took place few hours before the Jubilee Celebrations were taking place. He dismissed as marginal voices, such as the one of an American senator, who claims that Muslims persecute Christians in Palestine. His Beatitude likewise reiterated that present Palestinian friction into Gaza and West Bank entities must end soon since this division only serves the interest of the occupier. As far as the march of the Center, he stressed the need to broaden the base of Al-Liqa', to reexamine Palestinian educational curricula, especially in religious education, and to carry in-depth studies and research work on Muslim-Christian relations.

The Patriarch was followed by Dr. Geris S. Khoury, the Director of Al-Liqa', who briefed the audience on the accomplishments of the Center in the last twenty five years. He talked with similar organizations in the Islamic world and mentioned



the “Qatar Interfaith Forum” and possible relations with them in the near future. Professor Thiab Ayyoush, Vice President of Al-Liqa' Board, stressed that uniqueness of Al-Liqa' Center which was the first of its kind in the area of interfaith dialog and in the Arab nation. The success of Al-Liqa' encouraged other similar centers in Lebanon, Cairo and Amman. The Center underlined national partnerships, and held conferences and panels and participated in international conferences such as the International Jerusalem Forum which was held in Istanbul from 14-17 November 2007. He also mentioned the importance of research in the future. The person in charge of external affairs in MISSIO-Aachen, Germany, Mdm. Irmgard Icking, who came specifically to attend Al-Liqa' Silver Jubilee expressed her happiness for attending the celebration. MISSIO has supported Al-Liqa' all those years hoping that this support contributed to the proliferation of “shared living” among Palestinians as well as the development of “Palestinian Contextual Theology”. Dr. Harald Suermann and Dr. Richard Brosse from the Missiology Institute and other colleagues in “MISSIO- Aachen” extend their best wishes and continued support to Al-Liqa' Center. Dr. Uwe Grabe, the Propst of the Evangelical Lutheran





Church, Jerusalem, said that Al-Liqa' Center is different from many dialogue-initiatives, which sprung up from the ground of Palestine and Israel like mushrooms during

about the interfaith and the theological Conferences, youth activities, Wednesday programs, publications and in special way the Al-Liqa Magazine, the international activities and mentioned the establishment of the Galilee branch at the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin. Dr Khoury spoke also about the future vision of Al-Liqa Center. He thanked in the process all those who supported Al-Liqa' from the local community by their continuous presence and contributions, and thanked all Catholic and Protestant organizations, locally and internationally, for their financial support and in a special way he thanked "MISSIO-Aachen" for its unique support since al-Liqa was established in 1982. Dr Khoury thanked warmly the members of the

Board of Trustees and all those who worked and still in Al-Liqa and the Emerezian Est. Jerusalem. At the end of his speech, Mr. Osama Emerezian presented to Dr. Khoury a plaque congratulating Al-Liqa' Center on the Silver Jubilee. Following Dr. Khoury, there was a video presentation of Al-Liqa' Center.



The Chief Muslim Religious Judge of Palestine, His Eminence Sheikh Tayseer Al-Tamimi, stressed in his speech the Muslim-Christian solidarity and the important role of all Palestinians in defending and preserving the Holy city, Jerusalem from the Israeli occupation. Sheikh Tamimi spoke also about the importance of the Omar treaty and about citizenship and freedom for all. He remembered George Habash who was a dear friend to his father. Sheikh Tamimi mentioned also the importance to have strong relations the years of the Oslo Process and which soon succumbed, while the work of Al-Liqa' is deeply rooted in its Palestinian environment. At the conclusion of the Celebration, certificates of appreciation and medallions were presented to The Chief Muslim Religious Judge of Palestine, His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Tayseer Al-Tamimi and to the founding members of the Board of Trustees and other members of the Board. A special plaque and certificate of appreciation was presented by H.B. Patriarch Sabbah and the Director of Al-Liqa , Dr. Geris S. Khoury, to the representative of MISSIO-Aachen, Mdm. Irmgard Icking. During the celebrations traditional dance and songs were presented by "Arabella" and "Dalal" musical group.

At the conclusion of celebrations everyone attending was invited for a special dinner at which several persons spoke including Dr. Amal Jado, Attorney 'Ali Rafe' , and Al-Liqa' Board member, Mrs. Hanadi Soudah Younan. All of them spoke about their experiences in Al-Liqa' during the years present and past. Likewise, a hard cover bi-lingual Al-Liqa Silver Jubilee (1982-2007) was distributed to all attendees.



Wednesday Evening Forum

Bethlehem

10 April 2008, 4.30 p.m

Al-Liqa' Center hosted Mrs. Rawiya Shanti of Galilee who spoke on "the uprooted Palestinians in Israel." Following a brief historical introduction, the lecturer focused on the laws that were promulgated by the Israelis to displace Palestinians within Israel and the



Al-Liqa' Center's Activities in Bethlehem and Galilee

expropriation of Arab Lands leaving Arab towns and village with little land. Resistance against these measures began as a result. Detailed discussion ensued.

Bethlehem

7 March 2008, 5:00 p.m.

Professor Aziz Haidar was the guest speaker in the forum. He focused on "The current situation in Israel and opportunities for a political solution." Professor Haidar pointed out the centrality of "security" in the making of Israeli policies. Israeli failures in the 2006 Lebanese war proved the failure of these policies despite a viable and growing economy. Professor Haidar, in addition, explored controversies in the social and political situations in Israel.

Bethlehem

7 March 2008, 6:00 p.m.

Guest speaker in the forum was Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa' Center; He focused on "Christian Arab role in Arab and Islamic history



Ilaboun, Galilee, The Catholic Melkite
Church Hall, Saturday 19 April 2008

and their contributions to Arab/Islamic renaissance in the Middle Ages."

He stressed present and future march of the local church and its qualitative presence in society despite the constant bleeding of the phenomenon of emigration.

Sakhneen, Galilee

The Melkite Catholic Hall

11 March 2008, 6:00 p.m

In his lecture on Christian Arabs and challenges that face them, Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa' Center, focused on "Christian Arab's role throughout history. He spoke of Christian and Arab ignorance of their role in history, negative Islamic reaction to Western attitudes and policies toward Islam, the unjust Israeli policies toward Arabs in general and Christians in particular and the need of steadfastness of Christian Arabs in light of the dangerous phenomenon of emigration.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 60TH REMEMBRANCE OF THE 1948 PALESTINIAN NAKBA (Disaster)

Dr. Adnan Musallam
Member, Al-Liqa's Board of Trustees

Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights/1948, UN General Assembly Resolution 1947/1948, The Fourth Geneva Convention/1949, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Protocol/1963, UN Security Council Resolution 237/1967, UN General Assembly Resolution 2672/1970, among others, all of which call for the return of displaced persons to their homes, the 1948 and 1967 refugee problem has not been solved. In this year in which we commemorate the 60 years of the 1948 debacle, the 750,000 refugees who were uprooted and displaced in 1948 are numbering now at 5.5 million. Israel shows no interest in solving this refugee problem on security and demographic grounds. And as long as the Palestinian problem is not solved and complete



recognition is not accorded to the plight of the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the world wide Diaspora, there will be no settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict. Unfortunately, bloodletting will continue unabated. The remembrance of the Nakba, on the other hand, should give Palestinians in Palestine and the Diaspora further impetus to study past mistakes so that they do not commit them again. This remembrance should renew them the hope for a better future, for themselves and their posterities, at which time Palestinian society will become the model for other societies, a model that is based on national unity democracy and total social justice in society. I hope this is not a mere dream or a wishful thinking but a practical future vision.

Al-Liqa's International Activities

Dr. Geries S. Khoury participated in the 3rd session of the conference and “Coexistence & Peace Making” which was sponsored by the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center, 22-23 January 2008, in Royal Convention Center in Jordan's capital Amman.

Topics addressed and discussed include coexistence and understanding the other, the experience of Al-Nour Center. The Jerusalem experience, the coexistence message and peacemaking and coexistence and peacemaking: lessons and tool. Participants signed the Christian Muslim Declaration of Coexistence; in the final statement the conference stressed “the shared living” and the quest for a comprehensive and just peace. It stressed as well freedom of religion and dogma

and the dire need to pursue interfaith dialogue.

A visit of the American Council of Young Political Leaders

A delegation comprising members of the American Council Of Young Political Leaders led BY Cass Burton, attorney, Department of Insurance, Texas visited Al-Liqa' on Monday 16 June 2008. Dr. Geries S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa', briefed the delegation on the mission of Al-Liqa'. Other members of the Board of Al-Liqa' ,Mr. Mousa Darwish, Dr. Abd Al-Rahman 'ABBAD, Ms. Hanadi Soudah Younan, Ms. Makarem Awad and Dr. Adnan Musallam added to the lively discussions that followed. The delegation was accompanied by representatives from the Bethlehem Governorate and the American Consulate in East Jerusalem.



AL-LIQA CENTER'S MOST RECENT PUBLICATIONS

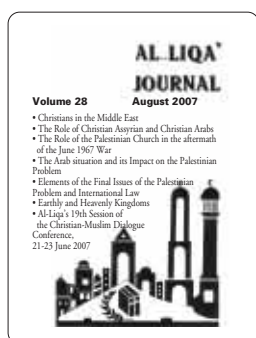
January 2007 – June 2008

• **Risalat Al-Liqa'**, June 2007, no. 10: This is the Arabic language newsletter which is targeted to the Palestinian community. It reflects Al-Liqa's activities, January-June 2007.



• **Al-Liqa' Journal**, vol. 28 August 2007

This issue focused on Christians in the Middle East and their important role in history. It also discussed Christian and Muslim interfaith dialogue. In addition, the role of Palestinian church in the aftermath of the June 1967 War as well as the impact of the Arab situation on the Palestinian problem and the final issues of the Palestinian problem in international law were featured. Al-Liqa's 19th Session of the Christian – Muslim Dialogue Conference was included in the content.



• **Al-Liqa' Arabic Language quarterly** Vol. 22, no. 4 (2007)

This issue contains 284 pages and it's a special issue which comprises the proceedings of the 19th session of the Arab Christian and Muslim Heritage Conference in the Holy Land which was held in June 2007 under the title: "Forty Years between the Tragedy of Occupation and the Will to Attain



Independence". This issue is important because of the important lectures, panels and discussions which took place during the conference.

• **Al-Liqa' Arabic Language quarterly** Vol. 23, no. 1 2008

This issue included articles and documents including the Silver Jubilee's celebration of Al-Liqa'. Major articles include the march lecture between Christmas and Easter, popular traditions of Easter and unifying Christmas feasts.



The Silver Jubilee of Al-Liqa' Center (1982-2007)

The hard cover bi-lingual (Arabic to English) edition (Feb. 2008) focuses on the Center's establishment, aims, objectives and publications. Also included quotations from what they said about the Center and what they say now about the Silver Jubilee. The book concludes with the Center and the future.



Al-Liqa' Journal Vol.29, December 2007

Contents focus on Easter theology, its march, its heading, regional discourse, meaning and structure, and experiences in Palestine and Egypt. These articles include radical Islamism, religious folklore in the Bethlehem District and Al-Liqa' 's theology conference repast from Galilee.

List and Prices of AL- LIQA'S PUBLICATIONS (1983-2008)

(All publications are in Arabic unless specified)

Christian - Muslim Dialogue Conference (1983 –2007)

1. Proceedings of the First Conference, Jerusalem 1983 to 12th Conference, Bethlehem 1994 \$6
 2. 13th Conference, Bethlehem. 1995.
(see no. 9 Miscellaneous) \$10
 3. 14th Conference, Bethlehem, 1996 \$6
 4. 15th Conference, Bethlehem, 1998 \$6
 5. 16th Conference, Bethlehem, 2001 \$6
 6. 17th Conference, Bethlehem, 2003 \$6
 7. 18th Conference, Bethlehem, 2005 \$6
 8. 19th Conference, Bethlehem, 2007 \$6
- (See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, vol. 22, no. 4, 2007)

Al- Liqa' Journal (in English) 1992 – 2008 Vol. I – 1992 – Vol. 28 – 2007

Annual subscription:

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

Al-Liqa' Arabic Language

Quarterly Review (1985 - 2007)

Year 1-Year 3 (3 issues each year)	\$ 20 per Year
Year 4-Year 22 (4 issues each year)	\$ 30 per Year
Price per one issue	\$ 7

Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference (1987-2007)

- Proceedings of the First Conference, Jerusalem 1983 to the Eighth Conference, Jerusalem 1995 \$6
- Ninth Conference, Bethlehem, 1996 \$7
(Contained in Al-Liqa' Journal, Vol. 9/10, (1997)
- 10th Conference, Bethlehem, December 1998 \$7
(See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, vol. 19, nos 1,2 (2004))
- 11th Conference, Bethlehem, June 2003 (There are no published proceedings) \$7
- 12th Conference, the Galilee, 2004 \$7
(contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, Vol. 20, nos 1,2,2005)
- 13th Conference, Bethlehem, 2006 \$7

(contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, Vol. 21, nos 3,4,2006)

■ 14th conference, Galilee-Ibillin, 2007

■ 15th conference, Galilee-Ibillin, 2008

(contained in Al-Liqa's quarterly review, Vo. 23, No. 1, 2008)

Al-Liqa' Center's Documents

(Available in Arabic and English)

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

Miscellaneous

1. Fr. Peter Madroux, *Paul the Apostle and the Man* (67 pages) \$5
2. Najib Nassar, *Under the Protection of the Arabs* (91 pages) \$5
3. Younis Amr, *Jerusalem the City of God* (152pages) \$5
4. Louis I. Hazboun, *Principles of Sociology of Religion* (162 pages) \$5
5. *Western Christian Zionism*, (43 pages) \$3
6. *Jerusalem Between Religious Freedom and Political Sovereignty*, (in English) (78pages) \$5
7. *Christian Feasts between Unity and Pluralism*, (96 pages). \$5
8. Qustandi Shomali, *El-Carmel* (534 pages) \$8
9. Jerusalem: *Palestinian Muslim- Christian Studies* (600 pages) \$10
10. Anton Shomali, *Collected Poems* (255 Pages) \$7
11. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, *Contextualized Eastern Churches* (393 pages). \$7
12. Jamal Salsa', *Palestinian Poetical Message Between Religion and Nationalism* (174 pages) \$6
13. Thiab A. Ayyoush, *Social Problems: An Islamic Perspective* (212 pages) (in English) \$7
14. Sami Adwan, *Reality of Religious Education, both Muslim and Christian, in Palestinian Schools*. (404 pages) \$8
15. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, *Say your Word and Go! Quick Inputs into Vital Files* (273 pages) \$7
16. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, *The Book of Days: In Search of the Lost Word* (159 pages) \$7
17. Geris Khoury, *Arab Christians: Rootedness... Presence... Openness* (278 pages) \$11
18. Geris Khoury, *Arab Christians and Muslims: Past... Present... Future* (272 pages) \$11

AL-Liqa' Center's Condemnations

February-June 2008

Al-Liqa' Center's Christian and Muslim members condemned the following:

- 1) The repeated publications of cartoons in Denmark which insult the person of the Prophet and Muslims throughout the world.
- 2) The destruction of the library of the YMCA in Gaza and the main entrance of the Rosary Sisters' School in Gaza by outlaws and renegades.
- 3) The repeated Israeli aggression against the innocents in Gaza as well as the siege of Gaza which makes life unbearable to Palestinians.

Dear Benefactors and Friends of Al-Liqa' Center

A Change in Al-Liqa' Web Site
www.al-liqacenter.org
is now

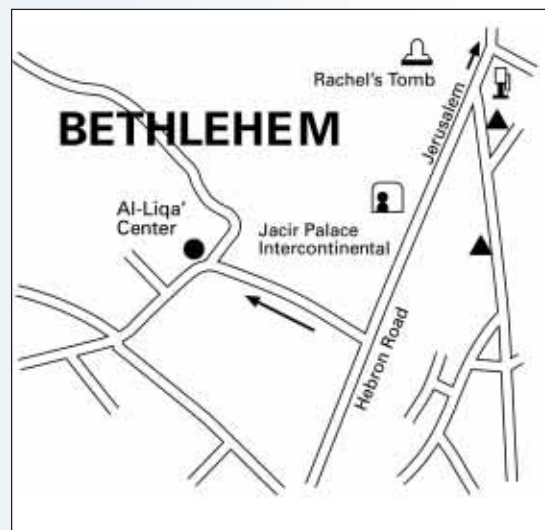
www.al-liqacenter.org.ps

We hope you will have the opportunity to visit Al-Liqa's 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. H.B. Patriarch Michael Sabbah, President, Board of Trustees, and Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director.



Al-Liqa' Center's Headquarter 54-56 Al-Quds Jerusalem Str.

The Center is 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.