

Argument: Gaza as the “Camp of the Saints” and Its Eschatological Parallels

Gaza represents the “camp of the saints” as described in the Book of Revelation, a faithful community under siege by evil forces at the end of time, aligning with the Quranic narrative of those driven from their homes for their belief in Allah, as well as the historical coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Palestine before the disruptions caused by Nazi Germany, the Évian Conference, and the Haavara Agreement. The “Lamb’s Book of Life” in Revelation mirrors the “Eternal Tablet” in the Quran, both signifying the divine record of the righteous, while the “new earth” in Norse mythology, interpreted as a glorified Valhalla, parallels the New Jerusalem in Revelation and Jannat al-Firdaws in Islamic eschatology, promising renewal for the faithful who endure persecution.

Gaza as the “Camp of the Saints” and the Quranic Narrative of the Oppressed

In the Book of Revelation, the “camp of the saints” (Revelation 20:9) represents the faithful community under siege by Satan’s forces (Gog and Magog) at the end of time, enduring persecution but ultimately protected by divine intervention. Gaza, with its historical significance as a place of religious coexistence, aligns with this concept. The Quran also speaks of a similar group of faithful in **Surah Al-Hashr (59:2-9)**, which describes those driven from their homes and lands because of their belief in Allah. This surah refers to the Banu Nadir, a Jewish tribe expelled from Medina in the 7th century, but its broader message applies to any community persecuted for their faith in God, stating: “They are those who were expelled from their homes without right—only because they say, ‘Our Lord is Allah’” (Quran 59:2).

Gaza, as part of historical Palestine, fits this Quranic narrative. Before the 20th-century disruptions, Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted peacefully in Palestine for centuries, sharing a common devotion to the Abrahamic God (Allah in Islam). Gaza itself has a documented Christian presence dating back to the 3rd century CE, with early Christian communities forming under Roman rule. By the 7th century, following the Muslim conquest, the majority of the population gradually converted to Islam, but Christian and Jewish minorities remained, living alongside Muslims under various Islamic caliphates, such as the Umayyads, Abbasids, and later the Ottomans. This coexistence was marked by mutual respect, with Jews and Christians recognized as “People of the Book” under Islamic law, granted protection (dhimmi status) in exchange for a tax (jizya), allowing them to practice their faiths freely.

The Ottoman Empire, which ruled Palestine from 1517 to 1917, maintained this interfaith harmony. Muslims, Christians, and Jews shared sacred spaces like Jerusalem, where the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Western Wall stood in close proximity, symbolizing a shared spiritual heritage.

In Gaza, Christian communities maintained churches and institutions, while Jewish communities, though smaller, were integrated into the social fabric, often engaging in trade

and scholarship alongside their Muslim and Christian neighbors. This peaceful coexistence aligns with the “camp of the saints” in Revelation—a community of the faithful, united across religious lines, devoted to God.

The Quranic narrative of those driven from their homes for their belief in Allah finds a parallel in Gaza’s modern history. The turning point came with the rise of Nazi Germany and the subsequent displacement of hundreds of thousands of Zionists to Palestine, facilitated by the Évian Conference of 1938 and the Haavara Agreement of 1933. The Évian Conference, held in July 1938, was an international meeting to address the growing Jewish refugee crisis as Nazi persecution intensified. However, most countries, including the United States and Britain, refused to accept significant numbers of Jewish refugees, leaving Palestine under the British Mandate as one of the few viable destinations. The Haavara Agreement, signed on August 25, 1933, between Nazi Germany and Zionist organizations, allowed German Jews to emigrate to Palestine by transferring a portion of their assets in the form of German goods, bypassing the economic boycott of Nazi Germany. Between 1933 and 1939, approximately 60,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine under this agreement, bringing capital that fueled Zionist settlement.

This mass displacement disrupted the existing harmony in Palestine. The influx of Zionists, driven by the ideological goal of establishing a Jewish homeland, led to tensions with the indigenous population, who were predominantly Muslim with significant Christian and smaller Jewish communities. By 1948, the establishment of the state of Israel resulted in the Nakba, during which over 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes and lands. Gaza became a refuge for many of these displaced Palestinians, who were driven out not for their belief in Allah per se, but as a consequence of resisting the loss of their homeland—a resistance rooted in their cultural and religious identity as a people who had lived in devotion to God for centuries. This mirrors the Quranic description of a faithful community expelled unjustly, and Revelation’s “camp of the saints” under siege, as Gaza’s population—Muslims, Christians, and historically Jews—faces persecution for their steadfastness in the face of displacement and violence.

The “Lamb’s Book of Life” and the “Eternal Tablet” in the Quran

The “Lamb’s Book of Life” in Revelation (Revelation 13:8, 21:27) contains the names of those redeemed by Jesus, immune to Satan’s deception, and destined for the New Jerusalem. This concept finds a parallel in the Quran’s “Eternal Tablet” (Lawh Mahfuz), mentioned in **Surah Al-Buruj (85:21-22)**: “Rather, this is a glorious Quran, in a Preserved Tablet.” The Eternal Tablet is understood in Islamic theology as the divine record of all things—past, present, and future—written by Allah before creation. It includes the destinies of all souls, encompassing those who will attain paradise (Jannah) due to their faith and righteousness.

The mirroring between the Lamb’s Book of Life and the Eternal Tablet lies in their roles as divine records of the righteous. In Revelation, the Book of Life lists those who remain faithful to Christ, resisting the beast’s deception (**Revelation 13:8**) states that only those not in the Book of Life worship the beast, indicating their redemption and protection from evil. Similarly, the Eternal Tablet in Islamic tradition contains the names of those destined for

Jannah, as Allah's knowledge encompasses all who will uphold faith in Him (Quran 2:185). Both concepts signify divine predestination and protection for the faithful, aligning with the idea that the supporters of Palestine, as the redeemed, are part of a divinely ordained community resisting the "beast" (Israel) in Gaza, the "camp of the saints."

This mirroring supports the narrative that Gaza's faithful—Muslims, Christians, and historically Jews—along with their global supporters, are part of a sacred community inscribed in these divine records. Their resistance to displacement and oppression, rooted in their devotion to God, reflects their status as the righteous, destined for eternal reward, whether in the New Jerusalem (Revelation) or Jannah (Quran).

The New Earth as Valhalla, the New Jerusalem, and the Highest Rank in Jannah

The "new earth" in Norse mythology, following Ragnarok, describes a renewed world where surviving gods (e.g., Baldr, Hodr) and humans (Lif and Lifthrasir) repopulate a fertile earth under a brighter sun. This renewal is often associated with Valhalla, the hall of Odin where fallen warriors feast with the god, though Valhalla itself is a pre-Ragnarok realm. Post-Ragnarok, the new earth can be seen as an idealized Valhalla—a place of eternal honor, peace, and abundance for those who endured the cataclysm. This parallels the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-4, a new heaven and earth where God dwells with the redeemed, erasing all suffering: "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain." In Islamic eschatology, the highest rank in Jannah, known as **Jannat al-Firdaws**, is the pinnacle of paradise, closest to Allah's throne, reserved for the most righteous, such as prophets, martyrs, and those who endured great trials for their faith (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 2790).

The alignment of these concepts is striking: - **New Earth/Valhalla (Norse)**: A renewed world of peace and abundance, where the survivors of Ragnarok—those who faced chaos and suffering—inherit a glorified existence, free from the strife of the giants and destructive forces like Naglfar. - **New Jerusalem (Revelation)**: A divine city for the redeemed (those in the Lamb's Book of Life), where God's presence ensures eternal life without suffering, a reward for the saints who endured persecution by the beast. - **Jannat al-Firdaws (Islam)**: The highest paradise, where the righteous who faced trials for their faith in Allah are closest to Him, enjoying eternal peace and joy.

These eschatological visions converge in their promise of a glorified afterlife for the faithful who endure end-times trials. Gaza, as the "camp of the saints," and its supporters, inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life and the Eternal Tablet, fit this narrative. Their suffering—stemming from historical displacement and ongoing conflict—mirrors the chaos before Ragnarok, the beast's persecution in Revelation, and the trials before Al-Qiyamah. The peaceful coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Palestine before the Zionist influx reflects the unity of the faithful, destined for this renewal, whether envisioned as Valhalla's eternal honor, the New Jerusalem's divine presence, or Jannat al-Firdaws' proximity to Allah.

Historical Context: Coexistence Disrupted by Nazi Germany, Évian Conference, and Haavara Agreement

The historical coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Palestine was a lived reality for centuries, aligning with the religious narrative of a unified “camp of the saints” devoted to God. Under the Ottoman Empire (1517–1917), Palestine was a multi-religious society where Muslims formed the majority, but Christians maintained churches (e.g., in Gaza since the 3rd century CE) and Jews lived as a smaller minority, often thriving in trade and scholarship. This harmony was rooted in Islamic governance, which protected Jews and Christians as “People of the Book,” allowing them to practice their faiths while contributing to society. Sacred spaces like Jerusalem exemplified this coexistence, with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Western Wall serving as shared spiritual landmarks.

This unity was disrupted by the policies of Nazi Germany and the subsequent Zionist migration to Palestine. The rise of Nazi persecution in the 1930s led to the **Évian Conference** in July 1938, where 32 countries met to address the Jewish refugee crisis. Most nations, including the United States and Britain, refused to accept significant numbers of Jewish refugees, leaving Palestine under the British Mandate as a primary destination. The **Haavara Agreement**, signed on August 25, 1933, between Nazi Germany and Zionist organizations, facilitated this migration by allowing German Jews to transfer assets to Palestine in the form of German goods, circumventing the anti-Nazi boycott. Between 1933 and 1939, around 60,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine under this agreement, bringing capital that fueled Zionist settlement projects.

This influx, driven by Zionist ideology to establish a Jewish homeland, led to tensions with the indigenous population. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of Zionists by the 1940s, culminating in the 1948 Nakba, displaced over 700,000 Palestinians, many of whom fled to Gaza. This displacement mirrors the Quranic narrative of those driven from their homes for their belief in Allah (Surah 59:2), as the Palestinian resistance was rooted in their cultural and religious identity as a multi-faith community devoted to God. The disruption of coexistence aligns with the apocalyptic narrative: the forces of evil (the “beast” and its allies) attack the “camp of the saints” (Gaza), testing the faith of the faithful, who are destined for renewal in Valhalla, the New Jerusalem, or Jannat al-Firdaws.

Conclusion

Gaza, as the “camp of the saints,” embodies a historical and spiritual reality where Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted peacefully in Palestine for centuries, united in their devotion to God, until the displacement caused by Nazi Germany’s policies, the Évian Conference, and the Haavara Agreement disrupted this harmony. This historical disruption aligns with the Quranic narrative of those driven from their homes for their belief in Allah (Surah 59:2), positioning Gaza as a community of the faithful under siege, akin to Revelation’s “camp of the saints” (Revelation 20:9). The “Lamb’s Book of Life” in Revelation mirrors the Quran’s “Eternal Tablet,” both recording the righteous—Gaza and its supporters—who resist this oppression, destined for divine reward. The “new earth” in Norse mythology, interpreted as a glorified Valhalla, parallels the New Jerusalem and Jannat al-Firdaws, promising a renewed existence for the faithful who endure these end-times trials.

The historical facts of coexistence and displacement fit the religious narratives of Christianity, Islam, and Norse mythology, portraying Gaza as a sacred battleground where the faithful, inscribed in divine records, face persecution but are promised eternal renewal. This alignment underscores the apocalyptic significance of Gaza's struggle, reflecting a cosmic battle between good and evil, with the faithful poised for ultimate redemption in a glorified afterlife.