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## What is happening at Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem?



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By Patriarch Michel Sabbah

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Sale of properties, trade and money! Prophet Isaiah and Jesus Christ also said to the merchants of the temple: the house of my father is called a house of prayer (Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 12:13).

All Jerusalem is first a house of prayer; it is not an issue of real estate and transfer of owners. It is not an issue of houses and change of the population of Jerusalem, even with money and according to the human laws. Jerusalem is a house of prayer and prayer cannot be bought or sold for money nor should anyone be sent away from his house or property. According to the Law of God and the law of holiness of Jerusalem, human laws and laws of real estate are void and null. Therefore, all these actions and purchase will remain injustices and cause of war and bloodshed no matter how human laws justify these actions.

It is the same thing about what happens in Al-Aqsa Mosque: It is not about prayer but an assault on the sanctity of the mosque and the holiness of the whole city. Lord Jesus Christ said, "You will worship neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria, but everywhere in spirit and truth" (cf. John 4:22-24). Prayer is not war or intrusion. Praying is humility and prostration before

God Almighty. A sincere prayer begins by searching for God and seeing his face in his creatures, in every human being of all religions. Then, it is mutual respect and love; it

is not evicting people from their homes even with money and law. It is not assault against mosques or any holy place of prayer.

Jerusalem needs to see God. People in Jerusalem need to see God. Seeing the face of God and true prayer is the 'profitable trade' in Jerusalem. Human money and trade is corruption and injustice.

Replacing the people of Jerusalem, sending them from their homes and changing the ownership of properties even if upheld by human laws, is an attack on the sanctity of the city. This is not prayer. This is war. God does not want Jerusalem to be a city of war but a city of peace. He is the master of history. He gathered us in Jerusalem, in which we have to remain; he invites us to attain mutual respect and to ensure the stability of all, each in one's house, property, mosque, and place of prayer.

In Jerusalem, God says to all the people of Jerusalem: As I gathered you, you have to learn to accept each other with equal dignity for all. The law of war and of law of the strong is not fit for Jerusalem. The war will not alter the nature of Jerusalem. It may destroy it, it may harm some of its people, it may increase the hatred in the hearts of some of its people but it will not change its nature. War in Jerusalem will remain war until the city returns to its holiness, until the strong cease their war and replace it by justice and peace.

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