A book that is a credit to the Albanian people

By Stephen Sylejman Schwartz
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The Center for Islamic Pluralism (CIP), an international network of moderate Muslim intellectuals, journalists, scholars, and Sufi shaykhs, is gratified to endorse the publication of my friend and colleague Vehbi Bajrami’s book on his journey to Israel in 2008, and to support its widespread distribution and discussion.

Vehbi, by openly travelling to the Jewish state as the leading Albanian-American journalist, author, publisher, and managing editor of the New York newspaper Illyria, showed great courage. While the majority of Albanians are Muslims, they, like most adherents of Islam around the world, know little that is simple, direct, and candid about the realities of life in Israel.

In composing his narrative, Vehbi has spared nothing of what he saw. He has expressed admiration for many aspects of Israeli life but has also asked hard questions, mainly concerned with recognition of the Kosova Republic by Israel. While encouraging him in its publication, we at CIP comprehend that such a book will be very controversial among many Muslims, but we have welcomed it as a contribution to a debate that must take place. The time is long overdue for Muslims, regardless of their views on the topic, to speak with a new honesty about the 62-year confrontation between Israel, on one side, and its Arab and other Muslim enemies, now led by Iran, on the opposite side. We congratulate Vehbi for breaking the silence on this topic, an action that embodies the role, principles, and goals of CIP, although Vehbi is not a member of our organization.

Vehbi Bajrami is a credit to the Albanian people.

Vehbi Bajrami
My Visit to the Holy Land

Cover of the book My Visit to the Holy Land, by Vehbi Bajrami, the publisher of Illyria.