

The background is a close-up photograph of a stone wall, likely the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The stones are large, rectangular, and light-colored, with some showing signs of weathering and small plants growing in the crevices. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the wall, containing the title and subtitle text.

Zionism:

a Jewish Communal Response
from the UK

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Foreword

by Vivian Wineman, President,
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The Middle East conflict is one of enormous complexity: political, ethnic and above all religious. The religious aspect itself is hugely complex since the land is regarded as holy by three religions, not just two - and Christianity is the only one of the three to have its origins unequivocally in the Holy Land. Moreover, the Christian reaction to the conflict matters not only because of the presence of Christian Arabs in the region but also because of their influence as a part of the most widely followed faith in the world today.

For many Jews who see Israel's opponents as Muslim Arabs, it is hard to accept that not only do many non Arab Muslim countries such as Iran and Malaysia identify with the Palestinian cause but so do many non Muslim Arab groups such as most Palestinian Christians. In fact Christian Arab hostility goes back to the earliest days of Zionism and was seen by many Jewish leaders as the cause of their problems with the Muslims. The increasingly precarious position of Christians in Arab society in recent years with the end of colonialism and the rise of militant Islam has -if anything- increased this hostility. They are anxious to be perceived by the Muslim majority among whom they live and on whose goodwill they depend as good patriots, hostile to the common enemy.

In December 2009 Palestinian Christian theologians issued a statement known as the Kairos Document. Kairos is Greek for a point in time. In Christian theology it has come to mean a supreme or opportune moment when it is necessary to speak out for the cause. In 1985 South African theologians issued a Kairos Document calling for resistance to the apartheid regime and the Palestinian Kairos Document was modelled on it. Like its predecessor, the Palestinian document was conceived as a piece of Liberation theology. It was deliberately timed to coincide with the 61st anniversary of the passing of Resolution 184 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 calling for the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees.

Kairos describes the situation of the Palestinians under the occupation in very strong terms. It stigmatises the position even of Israeli Arabs as unsatisfactory and describes them as victims of discrimination, whilst acknowledging that they are citizens of Israel with full civil rights. It calls for resistance to the occupation as well as for a campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel (BDS). Kairos does not explicitly specify that such resistance must be non-violent and does not define occupation as relating solely to the territories conquered

by Israel in the 1967 war. Above all - whilst it accepts that Jerusalem is holy to all three Abrahamic faiths - there is no acknowledgement of Jewish national aspirations, or of the ties between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

The latest conference of the UK Methodist church held at the end of June 2010 adopted resolutions fiercely critical of Israel, supported BDS and explicitly based its approach to the whole conflict on the Kairos Document. It had long been felt even before the conference that there should be a Jewish response to Kairos. After the conference it was decided to put together responses from all the main streams of Jewish belief and practice in this country. This volume contains a collection of those responses drawn from almost all sections of the community.

Despite their varied background it will be clear that all the contributors have a common reaction to Kairos. In criticising it they focus not so much on its contents as on what is missing from it.

Rabbi Wittenberg, Senior Rabbi of the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, points out that the Jewish relationship with the Land of Israel begins not with European anti-Semitism but with the Bible. Even those who critique the Bible and see it not as the word of God but as a human creation put together over a number of centuries, have to accept that it describes at least a millennium of Jewish life in the holy land. As he states, it was in the Land of Israel that the Jewish people brought to the world the teachings which today lie at the heart of the universal moral vision.

Rabbi Bayfield, Head of the Movement for Reform Judaism, stresses that this booklet is a statement of Israel's place in Jewish theology. The existence of the State of Israel can be justified on legal grounds (UN Resolution); ethical grounds, (Jews were never granted, either in Christian or Muslim lands, the equality and respect that is the right of every human being); or pragmatic grounds (the survival of Jews is at stake). But the Jewish journey from slavery to the Promised Land; on through the Biblical period; in exile; and now both in Israel and in Diaspora is a journey in which God is present. Judaism, not just the Jewish people, has a geography as well as a history.

Dan Rickman, a leading educator in the United Synagogue, starts by recalling the yearning for Zion expressed by the very first exiles in Jeremiah and in Psalms. Over the centuries, the Land of Israel held a special status in Jewish literature and law. He shows how the emergence of the state presented orthodoxy with a challenge and outlines the responses. None of these ignores the centrality of Israel in Jewish life and thought. At the end, like the other contributors, he calls for an understanding of other people's narratives and a rejection of Messianic triumphalism.

Finally, Rabbi Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism, takes as his starting point also the ancient Jewish connection with the land. He suggests ten Biblical Hebrew principles and urges four further points: the appreciation of both narratives, rejection of violence and extremism, resistance of victimhood and acceptance that individuals are not governments and governments are not peoples. There is a tendency for each side to generalise from bellicose statements made by the other and to ignore the peaceful ones.

These contributions have come from right across the religious spectrum in a very divided community but they share certain fundamental points in their approach. They make the point that the common perception that Zionism was a creation of nineteenth century European Jewry fails to do it justice. The connection with the land and the passionate longing for it go right back to Biblical times. The criticism that they make of Kairos is that while dealing with its own side's narrative, it totally ignores the other side's - something that may be said of much of the literature on this conflict. All our contributors reject triumphalism and emphasise that any successful resolution of the conflict must take into account the aspirations and the pain of both sides.

I am proud to present these contributions in the belief that not only are they a group of learned essays on the conflict and an eloquent defence of Zionism but also that they are an attempt at a balanced understanding of a hugely emotive subject. Even those who reject their conclusions will, I hope, recognise the honesty and fair-mindedness that went into their creation.

Holding each other's chains: the narrative of the other

by Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg



“A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering”: this is how the document *Kairos* describes itself. *Kairos* is important because the anguish to which it testifies is all too real, has endured for far too long and its cry must and shall be heard not only in Christian, but also in Jewish and Israeli, hearts. According to all our faiths, God hears the outcry of the oppressed.

But for this same reason *Kairos* is a partial and, to that degree, unhelpful document. The true challenge of love, faith and hope in the Middle East lies in how they include the narrative of the other. Despite occasional glimpses of such acknowledgement, this *Kairos* does not do. It may be argued that Palestinian anger and frustration are simply too strong for there to be room for the other side's story, but one can point to the work of such groups as the Parents' Circle, the Abraham Fund and One Voice, as well as the conduct of numerous individuals, all of which are based on the need for profound recognition of the reality and sensitivities of the other. The Parents' Circle recently issued a call to all those who are partisan to be neither only on the Palestinian, nor solely on the Israeli, but rather on the human side. Only in that way will sufficient perspective and trust ever be established to create a foundation for true civic peace.

This response does not therefore deny the suffering and frustration to which *Kairos* testifies. I have stood in Palestinian homes and listened. I have seen something of how Israel looks from such windows. I have watched from the rooftop of a Palestinian village the demolition of a family home. These issues matter to me as a Jew because human dignity is indivisible: what applies to one, irrespective of his or her faith, must apply to all, and because injustice is an offence not only against Christianity, but against the ethical tradition of Judaism, and cries out for redress. I, therefore, like the majority of Jews and Israelis, long for a two-state solution in the Middle East, founded on justice and the assurance of peace, based on agreed borders and guaranteed by international endorsement.

The purpose of these words is to set down what is so sadly missing from *Kairos*, the Jewish and Israeli narratives. For true love, in its unromantic Biblical sense of getting on with the other who is my neighbour, lies in hearing both our narratives and in including each of them in an embracing vision and solution.

The Jewish relationship to the Land of Israel begins not with the violence of European anti-Semitism, but with the Bible. Even to those ready to critique our sacred texts, be it the Hebrew Bible, the Gospel or the Qu'ran, and acknowledge that they are not solely the expression of the unmediated divine will but reflect their political, social and moral contexts, the *Tanach* describes at least a millennium of the Jewish people's fortunes in the Land of Israel, their laws, leaders, wars, disasters, hopes and ideals. Attachment to the land is based not simply on the divine promise; rather that itself may be understood as the ratification of an ancient and deeply rooted reality, always understood in the Bible as conditional on the Children of Israel striving to follow God's will. In this land the Jewish people toiled, dreamed, sought and heard the voice of God and brought to the world those teachings which lie to this day at the heart of the universal moral vision: the dignity of the human being before God, the centrality of justice, especially towards the stranger and outsider, the overriding importance of compassion and the faith that one day humankind will 'learn war no more'. The ethical visions of both Christianity and Islam would be unthinkable without the background of the Judaism of the Land of Israel, which gave birth to their central principles.

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For this land, too, the Jewish people suffered. Commenting on Abraham's challenge to God, 'How can I know that I will inherit [the land]?' the mediaeval exegete Rashi says, 'By virtue of the sacrifices made there'. This response has reverberated throughout Jewish history and the Jewish consciousness. The Jewish people experienced exile in Babylon, persecution by the Seleucid Greeks and occupation by the Romans, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, increasing oppression and the impoverishment and decline, though never the extinction, of the local Jewish population. Yet against this very background and largely in the Land of Israel the rabbis created those institutions which enabled the Jewish People to survive in the many countries of its dispersion, through numerous exiles and waves of oppression, always preserving the hope of eventual return to its own homeland to serve God according to its faith and values.

This longing was enshrined in the daily prayers, familiar throughout the ages to every self-aware Jew: 'Restore our judges as of old...Speedily rebuild

Jerusalem...Bless your people Israel with peace'. Nor was it only in prayer that the Land of Israel remained central to Judaism. When the Jewish population of Babylon was largely destroyed, one of the places where Jewish scholarship continued to thrive in Tiberias; when the Jews were expelled from the Iberian peninsula, the town of Safed in the Galilee became the focal point of Jewish mystical teaching. Thus the land remained central to Judaism until modern Zionism created a political process at the culmination of which in November 1947 the United Nations voted in favour of the partition of Palestine, thus allowing the creation of the State of Israel, established when the British Mandate ended, on May 5, 1948.

None of this justifies the oppression or dispossession of others. The aspiration of the overwhelming majority of Jews is still best expressed in the words of the Declaration of Independence: '[Israel] will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace...it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights'. Where these ideals have been betrayed, there is cause for anguish, outcry and urgent action, not only among Palestinians, but among Israelis, as well as Jews throughout the world. The great majority realise that Israel cannot become the country it aspires to be while ruling over another people. A two-state solution is therefore morally imperative for both sides. This involves an end to the building of settlements; the evacuation of many as discussed in previous negotiations such as Camp David in 2000; the agreement of acceptable borders; an end to all forms of discrimination; and economic investment in the infrastructure of a viable Palestine. It equally requires a complete cessation of attacks, both military and rhetorical, against Israeli territory and Israel's right to exist. The actions required of Israel to achieve such a solution are justified by the ethical ideals of Judaism and the long rabbinic tradition of down-to-earth pragmatism regarding the borders of the country. Most deeply of all, we must hope that they will be warranted by the reward, assured by Israel's neighbours, of peace itself, which Judaism has always regarded as the ultimate blessing.

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But here too, *Kairos* is unhelpful. It fails to mention the violence unleashed towards Israel from before its very inception, indeed from the day after the United Nations passed its resolution, which was intended to create a Palestinian, as well as a Jewish, state, but which was immediately rejected by the Arab nations. It ignores both the fact that Israel was repeatedly attacked and obliged to fight in order to survive, and the impact of the rhetoric of annihilation directed, and still proclaimed, against it, notably in the Charter of Hamas, an organisation which, unlike the PLO and Palestinian Christians, has never recognised the State of Israel, and by Iran. It does not acknowledge the effect of acts of terror carried out in the heart of civic life, on buses, in shops, on the streets and by thousands of rocket attacks from Gaza. Its long history of suffering and persecution, culminating in the programme of extermination substantially implemented by the Nazis, has given the Jewish people ample reason to believe that those who declare that they want to destroy us mean what they say. Hence these actions and threats have fed those very fears in Israeli and Jewish minds which help to maintain the political stalemate under which the Palestinian people, indeed both peoples, now suffer. Thus our narratives are intertwined in a thick cord of pain.

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The daily realities faced by the two populations are very different: an Israeli does not confront the indignities and injustices encountered by many Palestinians on a daily basis. This is a core and intolerable part of the current wrong. But at a deeper level our destinies are more closely bound together, as expressed in Samih Al-Qasim's poem:

*From the window of my small cell
I can see your large cell.*

We hold each other's chains, but also each other's potential freedom, in our hands.

To end the injustice, remove the hatred and dispel the fear we have to listen to each other's narratives. To do so will be painful. We will not agree with each

other's understanding of events: the miracle of the creation of a country to the Jewish people is the Naqba to Palestinians. We will no doubt feel that each other's accounts are partial. The narratives that express life's suffering and meaning are never purely objective. But we have to hear and acknowledge the anguish in which we have locked one another.

Then we have to act for an end to hatred and injustice. We must do so through the ways in which we talk both to, and about, each other; through the relationships with one another we build, a sphere in which we all have influence; and through the policies we endorse in the wider social, economic and political domains.

Religious leaders have particular responsibilities: we must preach non-violence, firmly criticise those who misuse Scripture and the pulpit for militant ends, promote respect for each other as human beings created equal in the image of God and actively seek to understand each other's histories, fears and hopes.

The longer we wait, the greater the pain; the time to act, as *Kairos* makes clear, is now.

Israel as People and Land: a contemporary theology

by Rabbi Tony Bayfield



I have chosen 'Israel as People and Land' as the title for this essay because of its resonances for Jewish theology and because that is precisely what the essay is all about. I ought therefore to make my use of the terms clear from the outset. The people Israel is synonymous with the Jewish people. It is entirely a matter for Christians as to whether they choose to regard themselves as part of the people Israel as well. Where I use the term the Land of Israel in reference to the period since 1948, it is synonymous with the State of Israel. And now to explain!

One of the characteristic themes of Judaism is the journey.

The Jewish narrative begins with Abram and his summons to go on a journey. God said to Abram: "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you¹." From that point, the Book of Genesis is filled with a host of individual journeys. The promises that accompany the journeys are that the descendants of Abraham will become as many as the grains of sand on the sea shore² and that all the families of the earth will find a blessing in Abraham's descendants³.

As a Jew, my instinctive reaction to the promise of countless descendants is one of non-comprehension. Our small numbers make us an 'endangered species'⁵. It takes a moment to move on from my characteristic self-focus and realise that the descendants of Abraham are not just Jews but Christians and Muslims as well. At which point I raise my eyebrows at the other promise – or is it a commandment? – be a blessing to all the families of the earth. To most non-members of the Abrahamic family (all those who do not regard themselves as either Jewish, Christian or Muslim) and to many members of the family as well, our fulfilment of the obligation looks decidedly patchy. How many of the world's troubles and how much of its violence are attributable to this most dysfunctional of families!

If the Book of Genesis is filled with individual journeys, the very different books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – both different from Genesis and different from each other – are held together by the theme of the collective journey, the journey of the people called Israel. The journey begins with the exodus from Egypt, reaches its world-changing climax with the encounter at Sinai and then continues towards the anti-climax of the Promised Land.

The Promised Land is intriguing. It begins conceptually as an end point and a fantastic, much-to-be-longed-for end point at that. It is imagined as a land flowing with milk and honey⁵; a land where even the barren rocks are pure iron; and where vines and pomegranates and every other delight abound⁶.

The first real dent in the fantasy, the first intrusion of reality, comes with the report of the twelve spies⁷. It is true that there is food in profusion with bunches of grapes it would take two strong men to carry but it is a land of giants where the people of Israel will be dwarfed into grasshoppers. The Book of Deuteronomy leaves the people on the brink and the full nature of the anti-climax comes with Joshua and Judges and the vast preponderance of the Hebrew Bible.

It is not a Promised Land as we had led ourselves to believe, the arrival in paradise, the end point. Instead, it is a continuation of the journey in a setting even more challenging than the desert wilderness.

The second major paradigm of Jewish history, encompassing a period of more than 1,000 years, witnesses the people Israel's struggle with the mundane – moving in to the land; putting down roots; building the infrastructure of settled life; learning to deal with neighbours, with Others both friendly and hostile. It also witnesses Israel's search for holiness⁸ – setting aside aspects of the mundane for God's purposes, developing the praxis of faith, establishing the weekly, monthly and annual round of Sabbath and festivals, building a Temple in Jerusalem. The magnetism of Jerusalem is all-pervading. The City of David is named no fewer than 650 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is the heart of the Land of Israel.

Informed and inspired by Torah, the values, the ethical imperatives of Judaism are translated into the daily round of family, communal, agricultural and commercial life. This is exemplified by the opening line of Leviticus Chapter 19, "You shall be holy for I the Eternal your God am holy", the meaning of which is spelled out in the verses which follow.

The mundane, the ordinary is made holy through the primacy of values. God is the embodiment of justice. Justice and righteousness are synonymous⁹. The moral law is always supreme and governs all. But the mundane-made-holy is frequently compromised amidst the changing terrain of the journey – by economic greed,¹⁰ by the challenges of leadership¹¹, and by the ever present threat from great powers all around¹².

The astounding body of work known as prophetic literature focuses on power and the abuse of power as a crucial subject of religious concern. It also turns the fantastic and misunderstood vision of how the Promised Land would be into the most magnificent vision of the true ending, the end of days. When swords will be turned into ploughshares¹³; when every person will sit under their vine and under their fig tree and no one will terrorise them¹⁴; when the wolf and lamb

will feed together and none shall hurt nor destroy in a world made holy through God's values¹⁵.

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This phase of the narrative, the second great paradigm in Jewish history, comes to a shattering end in the year 70 CE. The Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed; the sacrificial cult ends; the priesthood loses its authority in Jewish life; and the people Israel are expelled from the Land of Israel.

The journey does not end there but it does bifurcate. Through a combination of the inner strength of the tradition and the external force of absolute necessity, Judaism is transformed. Pharisaic Judaism emerged during the late Second Temple period and its teachers, the rabbis, were able to take on the authority vested in the priests until the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. They replace the Temple with the synagogue and the sacrificial cult with a regimen of prayer. Through study and debate they develop a wondrous body of value-laden religious thought and practice – rabbinic Judaism – which is able to sustain Jews and their Jewish journey throughout the vicissitudes of nearly 1,900 years of exile.

Equally important, a second sibling is born, also a child of Abraham and Sarah¹⁶. The revelation implicit in a Jew called Jesus leads eventually to the partings of the ways¹⁷ and a different but related journey. It makes a significant contribution to the promise of numerous descendants but also raises a question over the promise – or command – to be a blessing to all the families of the earth, and only a blessing.

The Jewish journey enters its third chapter and continues in countless places and different environments. It takes on some of the characteristics of the first paradigm, the journey through the wilderness. Lack of permanence, being obliged to move on, a deep sense of homelessness, rootlessness and alienation are frequently experienced.

The journey takes in Arabia where a third sibling, Islam, emerges. Islam experiences a sense of rejection by the Jewish tribes of the area. But the text of the Qu'ran reveals deep kinship. Islam, like rabbinic Judaism and Christianity, shares Abraham. But Islam has a different mother, Hagar rather than Sarah. I have been using the term sibling precisely because it covers both those with two parents in common and those with only one¹⁸.

Despite frequent feelings of impermanence and alienation, the Jewish journey is far from being exclusively lachrymose¹⁹. It embraces much that is rich and nourishing. But the centuries ultimately demonstrate that Jews can never achieve the status and security that is the right of every people in the lands of either sibling, Christian or Muslim. Jews continue to pray for Jerusalem and Zion; the land is integral to daily, Sabbath and festival prayers²⁰. Whenever they can, they return²¹. But what follows is not merely pragmatic nor simply a facet of European nationalism nor prayerful longing. It is all of those things. But it is something much more as well.

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Dow Marmur²², one of Britain's (all too briefly) truly great rabbis of the post-war period, describes the Shoah which he experienced as a child as the last episode in the paradigm which had begun nearly 1,900 years earlier with destruction and exile. He describes the re-establishment of the State of Israel as a paradigm shift²³, the opening of a new era in Jewish history, the fourth.

It is a paradigm shift in Thomas S. Kuhn's classic definition. It marks a radical change which is nevertheless reflective of a former period. Says Marmur, "By returning to the old, pre-exilic pattern of Jewish existence the new paradigm is discovered in the old; what had been forgotten has been brought back to our consciousness"²⁴.

The Jewish journey continues in an old-new way. It has at its heart the land once again – the command to Abram was not to embark on a directionless

journey. Judaism has always had a geography as well as a history (albeit too little geography and too much history). But the journey also continues – as it must – in lands where the other siblings, Christianity and Islam, are the majority.

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There are Jews who misunderstand what is happening. Jews are prone to premature Messianism in difficult times²⁵. The belief that Jewish trials and tribulations are the birth pangs of the Messiah²⁶, coupled with the intoxication of biblical sites and sights, has led a small minority to lay claim to far more than is just, never mind realistic. They ignore the interpretation of Deuteronomy 16:20 which starts in the Talmud. The text says, "tzedek tzedek tirdof, justice, justice shall you pursue". Why, ask the commentators, is the word justice used twice? To tell you that no one is entitled to the whole of justice and compromise is always required²⁷.

The return to the land is not messianic. But it opens a new chapter – the fourth paradigm – in which Jews are compelled to face the challenges that they have not had to face for hundreds of years but which have haunted Christianity and Islam. How do you live with responsibility for a political entity? How do you exercise power? How does the state in which you are a majority citizen embody the values of Torah and answer the painful challenges of the Prophets? How do you live on the land with a God who is the embodiment of justice and insists that the moral law is supreme and applies equally to all²⁸?

It is clear that Jews and Judaism would not have survived and could not survive today without the Land of Israel. It is clear that the treatment of Jews both in Christian and Muslim lands creates an undeniable practical and moral entitlement. But I am not arguing the case for Israel on pragmatic, legal or moral grounds²⁹. This is an essay in Jewish theology.

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I am horrified by some strands of Zionism which treat the Bible as an exclusive title deed written by God³⁰. I do not regard the Torah as an extra-historical document written by the Divine hand³¹. The Torah is our ancestors' understanding of God. It is covered with divine fingerprints. It is wonderful beyond measure. But it is also limited and flawed, as were our ancestors and as are we. It is not Judaism's title deed to the land. Nor is it secular history. But rather it records a journey prompted by encounters with God. Not history but mythtory. It is that mythtory, rather than a creed, which defines Jewish identity³².

Judaism, Christianity and Islam share a profound sense of God in history. We are all challenged by what that means today. We struggle for a theology that is consistent with our own contemporary experience yet does not blaspheme our shared just and loving God³³. Nevertheless, despite the revelations of modernity, God is present in the journey of the Jewish people, as God is present in the journey of our siblings, Christians and Muslims.

From time to time God displays a mischievous sense of humour. I would have said a wicked sense of humour but that would be too blasphemous even for me. For reasons that I cannot fathom but which seem much more like Divine irony than profane chance, the newly re-established State of Israel stands at the very meeting point of two of the largest and most powerful tectonic plates – the Western³⁴ world and the Islamic world. It is an extraordinarily uncomfortable and dangerous place to be. The potential for being crushed, squeezed out of existence, is enormous and retains at least a subconscious allure for both younger siblings. After all, the elder sibling has aroused jealousy from the beginning. How ironic that the Biblical tradition so often favours the younger!

Yet the metaphor could still be transformed and Israel could, by virtue of its position in relationship to Christianity and Islam, by virtue of its position 'at the centre', become a bridge. Despite the smallness of numbers, the place above all other places where the three faiths meet in significant numbers, the heart, as it were, of the new paradigm, is Israel. I am aware of the shocking hubris implicit in this insistence on Jewish significance but that is how it appears to me³⁵.

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So let me return to the beginning. *Lech lecha me'artz'cha u'mi'molad't'cha u'mi'beit avicha el ha'arets asher areka*, go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land I will show you. That is how the journey begins – and continues through four paradigms – and continues today.

Notes

- 1 Genesis 12:1. The previous 11 Chapters provide the universal backdrop to the particular narrative.
- 2 Genesis 22:7.
- 3 Genesis 12:2.
- 4 There are 2 billion Christians in the world; 1.4 billion Muslims; and 14 million Jews.
- 5 Exodus 3:8.
- 6 Deuteronomy 8:8-9.
- 7 Numbers 13.
- 8 The allusion here is to the Hebrew root kof-dalet-resh, k-d-sh, holy. It means to take something ordinary – a period of time, a relationship – and set it aside for a special purpose such as the 25 hours which constitute the Sabbath (ushered in by the Kiddush ceremony) or a marriage Kiddushin.
- 9 Amos 5:24 "Let justice roll down like life-giving water and righteousness as a never-ending torrent".
- 10 Isaiah 5:8.
- 11 Hosea 5:1; Isaiah 3:14-15.
- 12 Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome of Jeremiah 1:13-15.
- 13 Micah 4:3.
- 14 Micah 4:4.
- 15 Isaiah 11:6-9.
- 16 Following the lead of Alan F Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World*, Harvard UP, 1986.
- 17 An allusion to James D G Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways*, SCM, 1992 and Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, U of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, which suggest a late date for the final break and an even later date for the ending of direct, mutual influence.
- 18 I have explored the sibling and dysfunctional family theme quite extensively. See, for instance, my 'Partnership in Covenant' in Bayfield, Brichto and Fisher (eds) *He Kissed Him and They Wept*, SCM, 2001, pp25-40.
- 19 The lachrymose conception of Jewish history is identified with the German Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz.
- 20 There is no traditional or current Jewish prayer book which does not include Zion and return.
- 21 A Jewish presence in 'the Holy Land' has been almost continuous and often significant of the influence of the Jews of Safed on halakhah, kabbalah and liturgy in the 16th century.
- 22 Dow Marmur b 1935 Poland, received rabbinic ordination in London where he served until moving to Toronto and Jerusalem. Author of *Beyond Survival*, Darton, Longman, Todd, London, 1982.
- 23 Dow Marmur, *The Star of Return*, Greenwood, New York, 1991.
- 24 *ibid* p47. Interestingly he quotes extensively from the American Christian theologian Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982.

- 25 This is not intended as a sideswipe at Christianity. I am referring to the disastrous revolt against Rome in the 2nd century CE led by the supposed Messiah Bar Kokhba and the debacle of Shabbetai Tzvi in the 17th century.
- 26 Chevelei mashiach, birth pangs of the Messiah is Talmudic – Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 98a.
- 27 Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 32b.
- 28 I did not want to labour the point in the body of the text because it would introduce an apologetic note which I resent. But let me make it clear that what I am saying is that Israel is not entitled to 'Greater Israel'. It is ethically obliged to compromise, to share the land, to work for two viable and secure states, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state. Equally, there can be no justification for denying justice or infringing the human rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel (Christians and Muslims) since God is the embodiment of justice and the moral law is supreme.
- 29 Many Jews would no longer be Jews, would no longer be alive without Israel. The State of Israel has been a legal entity under International Law since the 1947 vote of the United Nations. The moral right has been made clear in this essay.
- 30 Some right-wing Israeli Jews both religious and secular.
- 31 Which is a major point of departure with contemporary Orthodox Judaism.
- 32 The title deed to the Land of Israel is not composed of biblical verses. Nor is it set by the borders of the Davidic or Solomonic kingdoms. It is, rather, constituted by the journey as myth. The Land today is not simply metaphor as it becomes for Blake – building Jerusalem in "England's green and pleasant land". It is a physical reality to be accompanied and secured, if humanly possible, by a just compromise with the Palestinians. It is both a political and spiritual reality. The spiritual reality is embodied in the working out of the fourth paradigm, in the pursuit of ethical ideals relating to the use of power and the vindication of the equality of all its citizens.
- 33 We have learned that our sacred texts are not 'untouched by human hands'; that God does not save the righteous and zap the wicked in the world; that religion is far from being the same as wishful thinking.
- 34 I'm never sure precisely what term to use – Western or Christian or post-Christian or post modern. What I am referring to is contemporary Western culture, the culture within which I have been brought up, educated, live and work.
- 35 The last two paragraphs are largely drawn from my 'Happy Birthday Israel?' in Contemporary Church History Vol 21, Gottingen, 2008, pp66-85.

Bringing out the best in all our faith traditions

by Dan Rickman



The Book of Lamentations provides what is by tradition a first-hand account by the prophet Jeremiah of the impact of the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in the year 586BCE.

The prophet asks the poignant question "Behold, and see if there be any pain like unto my pain" (Lamentations 1:12), a question that has resonated throughout the generations as a corollary to Cain's response to God "am I my brother's keeper?"

The Kairos Palestine paper was written out of a feeling of pain and distress – and as a statement of faith it needs to apply the wisdom of all the faith traditions to look forward to see how we can apply the wisdom of our traditions to create peace and prosperity for all the inhabitants of Israel/Palestine.

This response takes a long view of the situation to assess how we can create a situation where we can recognize each others' pain and see a way to move forward in very difficult and murky waters.

The story of the Jewish People is an ancient one, stretching back into pre-history. It is one which has seen many changes and shifts both internal and external. Looking over this period, it is a remarkable story of persistence and continuity throughout both good times as well as times of tragedy, conflict and persecution.

One aspect has remained constant throughout this long history and that is the defining relationship of the Children of Israel (Jacob) with the Land of Israel. The name of the people has changed (Hebrews, Children of Israel, Jews etc) and the name of the land has changed (Canaan, Israel, Judah, Judea, Galilee, Syria Palestina, Palestine and Israel again) yet the dynamic which has linked People and the Land has remained steadfast.

One aspect has remained constant throughout this long history and that is the defining relationship of the Children of Israel (Jacob) with the Land of Israel

This relationship is established from the first person traditionally identified as a Jew, Abraham, and continues to develop throughout the Hebrew Bible. We read of the special commandments which apply only to the Land of Israel, regarding for example agriculture and tithes from this produce, we read of the ceremony of the first fruits which we still commemorate every Passover at the seder and there are many other examples.

So intrinsic is this relationship that we read from Psalm 137 “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” – in other words, how can the Children of Israel continue traditions in a land which is outside the context of the Land of Israel? Some rabbis even suggest that all the commandments apply only in the Land of Israel and that observance in the Diaspora has, at best much lower value (BT Ketubot 110b).

Judaism adapted and survived the Babylonian exile and this saw the first great split: between those who lived in Israel and those in the Diaspora. This period also saw the development of the Messianic ideal with the death of King Josiah at Megiddo (Armageddon) called by Jeremiah (Lamentations 4:20) “the anointed one of the Lord”, in Hebrew, this explicitly refers to the Messiah. As the rabbis said of the destruction of the 2nd Temple, the Messiah is born on the day of destruction (interpretation of PT Berachot 2:4). Whether one interprets this metaphorically or not, this encapsulates the ideal of the return to Zion from this early period.

Jeremiah saw this as being in the hands of God “They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be, until the day that I remember them, saith the lord, and bring them up, and restore them to this place.” (Jeremiah 27:22)

The Second Temple was destroyed in the year 70CE, followed by a period of persecution which is described in the Talmud, especially after the failure of the Bar Kochba rebellion in the years 132-35CE. This led to a rabbinic promotion of “quietism” and the Babylonian Talmud describes three oaths:

One, that Israel shall not go up [all together as if surrounded] by a wall; the second, that whereby the Holy One, blessed be He, adjured Israel that they shall not rebel against the nations of the world; and the third is that whereby the Holy One, blessed be He, adjured the non-Jews that they shall not oppress Israel too much (BT Ketubot 111a).

As the Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim wrote this placed Jews “outside history” – Jewish communities endeavoured to survive and did not get involved with politics or the grand events in society, by and large. However, the link to the Land of Israel was never broken and many pious Jews over the centuries made pilgrimages there.

Further, the rabbinic development of the laws of the Hebrew Bible enshrined the key status of the Land of Israel and the dependencies of many of the observances for being in the land. To cite one example of many, learning Torah in the Land of Israel is “noam” (pleasantness) whereas outside it is full of controversy and divisiveness (BT Sanhedrin 24a).

The Hebrew Bible refers to “The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth month, the fast of the seventh month, and the fast of the tenth month” (Zechariah 8:19) which are all related to the destruction of the Temple. The best known is the fast of the fifth month, Tisha B’Av, where pious Jews to this day fast and act as mourners who have suffered a personal loss in commemoration of the destruction of the two Temples in Jerusalem.

The verse in Zechariah continues that these fast days “...shall become for the House of Judah days of joy and gladness – happy festivals - [on the condition that] you must love and follow truth and peace”.

Over the centuries of exile outside the Land of Israel, Jews never set aside this messianic hope which would be heralded by the return to Zion. The daily prayers which the rabbis instituted to replace the Temple sacrifices contain the wish to be repeated three times every day “and may our eyes envision Your return to Zion [i.e. the Temple Mount] in mercy, blessed are You the Lord who restores his Divine presence to Zion.”

This quietism changed in the 19th century with the imminent collapse of empires and the birth of the concept of the nation state. The secular Zionist movement was born into this context and transmuted these religious ideals into political ones. It adopted a view that Jews had to return to history in response to what became known as antisemitism (a term coined by Wilhelm Marr, an antisemite, in the 1890s). Through this process, it was hoped, Jews would become “normalised”. Zionism depends on the fact that Jewish identity is as people, ie based on the “People of Israel” and is not an identity based on religious belief. The Jewish religion also acknowledges this aspect of Jewish identity, even though it also established the conversion process, but the most common way to be Jewish is through birth.

This new and radical approach produced a range of religious responses from Orthodox Judaism, which included acceptance, accommodation and rejection. We see these differences reflected now by some ultra-orthodox groups who reject Zionism, the majority who have accommodated themselves to it as the status quo and the religious Zionist movement which has adopted it within its own religious framework.

Whilst all these strands are sharply divided, they are in agreement on the ultimate goal which is the restoration of the Temple, and the coming of a Messianic age

of peace and harmony for all the peoples of the world. They diverge over the “three oaths” and the means of achieving the Messianic age.

Controversies over Zionism have of course been reflected more widely. People can and do take widely divergent views. However, history and religion have become entwined in the murky dialogue which has emerged. Our response, as people of faith, must be to rise above these disputes and try to address truth, recognising that this is multi-faceted and that we all have our own perspectives. Part of this action is to recognise each other’s pain and suffering in the process, which is not to equate them in any sense, moral or otherwise.

Our response, as people of faith, must be to rise above these disputes and try to address truth, recognising that this is multi-faceted and that we all have our own perspectives

Occupation and violence affect everyone and we need to learn how to listen to each other, to build on the shared prophetic visions and to avoid univocal dialogues, which simply play into the hands of extremists who thrive on mutual misunderstanding and mistrust.

As people whose world view is informed by our faith traditions, we have to look to these traditions for the eternal lessons which will move us forward towards peace and justice, to which we all yearn.

As part of this murky dialogue, for example, some humanist critics have looked at orthodox Jewish traditions such as the Talmud and mystical traditions, arguing that they are intrinsically prejudicial against non-Jews. They have also distorted the concept of Jews as the Chosen People which should be understood as the mission of Judaism to create social justice for the world, referred to in the sources as *tikkun olam*, literally a “repairing of the world”. The Hebrew Bible itself has been politicised and people seek to deny its historicity to undermine Jewish identity and connection with the Land of Israel. Often in so doing, people have misrepresented our traditions and inadvertently echoed antisemitic criticisms of Jews and Judaism which have occurred throughout time.

Orthodox Jews now face the challenge to avoid falling into the same trap and distorting their traditions by accepting or promoting a view of non-Jews which is negative, or of “making a spade of the Torah” (see *Ethic of the Fathers* 4:7) through using the religion for political ends. Orthodox Judaism is a rich and complex tradition with deep roots which significantly pre-date modernity. People

can always find sources for positions which are deeply problematic morally and indeed politically. However, this does not make them valid or true to orthodox Jewish tradition which values peace above all other things other than survival itself.

The Talmud and rabbinic works contain much which is universal and which follows Prophetic wisdom and calls for social justice, e.g. Zechariah (chapter 7) continues:

Pay attention to the very same things which the earlier prophets [had warned your forefathers] when Jerusalem and its surrounding areas were populated and tranquil [i.e. during the good years of first Temple period]... Execute true justice, deal loyally and compassionately with one another. Do not defraud a widow, orphan, stranger, or poor man, and do not plot evil against one another.

I started this response with the verse from Lamentations “see if there be any pain like unto my pain”. The Kairos paper passionately calls for recognition of the humanity of the “other” and this involves an understanding of each other’s narratives. I have tried to convey a flavour of the orthodox Jewish narrative in this response, focussing on what can and must unite Israelis, Palestinians and people of all faiths in our mission to “repair the world” through a shared recognition of Israel as the Holy Land, establishing the universal aspects of the traditions which emerged from it.

As the Kairos paper notes, the Palestinian response diverges, so does the response of orthodox Judaism. We need to help each other bring out the best in all our traditions to achieve social justice and mutual understanding and respect, as Zechariah so beautifully prophesied above. I hope and pray that the responses in this book will be read and understood by the authors of the Kairos paper, and that as people of faith we can move forward through mutual study and prayer to see how religion will be used to unite rather than divide us.

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As the great rabbinic figure Hillel, a contemporary of Jesus, said in *Ethics of the Fathers* regarding how we achieve the balance required for social harmony “If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” (*Ethics of the Fathers*, 1:14) The issues require work now, and the work to move away from hatred and distrust is always needed “now” to

keep moving forwards, not to “force the end” but to come closer through doing what we can to promote peace and justice for all people.

Hillel also said “Be of the disciples of Aaron—a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, one who loves all human beings and draws them close to Torah.” (Ethics of the Fathers, 1:12)

If not now, when? Too much suffering and pain has already occurred and it is time for us all to call out for this to end and help each other find a way forward recognising each other’s voices and narratives and within that each other’s pain. There is indeed pain like my pain, as groups such as the Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Family Circle have recognised. I am humbled by the good will that these groups and other interfaith groups are trying to achieve. Let us now see how religion can become part of the solution and not, as it has been to date, too often part of the problem.

Zionism: the case for fair-mindedness on all sides

by Rabbi Danny Rich



No people should live under occupation and no country’s right to exist should be constantly challenged. The tragedy of the current Middle East is that a people – the Palestinians – live under the occupation of a state – Israel – which feels its very existence is threatened. Given such an explosive mix, it is hardly surprising that informal and formal violence and oppression stalk the region. Desperate and fearful people justify the actions or reactions of their own party while demonising the other, thereby fulfilling the corrosive agenda of corrupt and incompetent leaderships fuelling and feeding off extremism.

In spite of these pressures there are men and women, Israeli and Palestinian, Jew, Christian and Muslim who, whether directly or indirectly harmed by the situation, have determined that, rather than remain prisoners of this reality of hatred, they will work together to counteract the seemingly inexorable tragedy. They seek to build an alternative future for themselves and their descendants in which neither party is seen as wholly innocent or considered wholly guilty but in which their common humanity can be used to create an environment in which both peoples can thrive.

A just and lasting solution has to recognise the rights of both peoples, acknowledge their separate and common histories, and appreciate that their futures are inextricably linked. While it is necessary to address the current situation according to the reality on the ground, to do so without taking account of the historical context risks emotional rather than rational responses to the immediacy of suffering. How this point was reached and how best to move forward requires a long view.

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Judaism, the religion and culture of the Jews (who were sometimes known as the Children of Israel or Hebrews), has its origins in the near East, and particularly in that part of it which is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the West, by the Jordan River to the East, by the Negev Desert to the South and by the Carmel Mountain range to the North.

It is the geographical features of this area which formed the backdrop to the Hebrew foundation myths. It is in this region that the Hebrew tribe evolved its social structures. It is over this land that Hebrew Kings ruled; it is to this local society that the Hebrew Prophets bore witness; and it is in this region that much of Jewish 'sacred' literature (particularly the Hebrew Bible) was told, written and redacted.

It was in this land that Jewish farmers planted crops; it was in this region that Jewish teachers taught; it was in an ancient city (Jerusalem) in this area that the Temple, the centre of the Hebrew cult and later Jewish worship, was constructed; and it was in the hills and streets of this region that Jewish soldiers fought first to conquer and then to preserve a society with institutions organised in accord with Jewish values and practices.

The Jewish people in their turn were first in, and later exiled from, this land, as for some 1700 years or so the centre of Jewish life was to be found outside the ancestral land – in Babylon, in Spain, in France, in the German and Polish lands, and in a number of entities that were to come under Muslim influence and/or Arab rule.

Nevertheless in all of this period Jews expressed in their liturgy and poetry, by pilgrimage – and by their continuing presence in the land in spite of real hardship – a persistent love and longing for the land and the possibility of return to it.

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In the nineteenth century Western Europe underwent dramatic change in the face of the breakdown of the feudal system, the idea of nationalism, and the concept of the nation state and citizenship. Some Jews began to see themselves as a 'national' people with an affinity to the land in which the Jewish faith and culture

had been born. Towards the end of the nineteenth century agricultural pioneers began resettling the land alongside indigenous Jewish and Arab populations, and, as the Holocaust claimed its victims in the middle of the last century, Jews began to see the land as a haven for refugees from persecution. In the later half of the twentieth century – after the arrival of the traumatised and displaced of the Nazi camps – the State of Israel, as it became in 1948, absorbed a vast number of immigrants from Arab lands, Ethiopia, and the former Soviet Union, and began to play a significant role in the scientific, educational and cultural achievements of the world.

It is in this context that the Jewish claim to its ancestral homeland is made out, and its power should not be denied by any persons who consider themselves fair-minded.

The Jewish claim is not the only or an exclusive claim. For millennia the Jews in the land had lived alongside non-Jewish neighbours and for some centuries under, until its defeat during World War One, the Ottoman Empire. The arrival of large numbers of Jewish immigrants and the creation of the State of Israel led inevitably to the displacement of some of the contemporary inhabitants, and, although the details are beyond the remit of this paper, it is certainly fair to say that the Palestinian Arab claim to the land, though different in substance from the Jewish one, has much to commend it. Any persons who consider themselves fair-minded would also need to take this into account.

Concerning Israel/Palestine, there appear to be two valid – and sometimes competing- narratives or claims. It is incumbent upon commentators and others to devise a set of principles by which the claims can be assessed and a solution proffered.

Concerning Israel/Palestine, there appear to be two valid – and sometimes competing- narratives or claims. It is incumbent upon commentators and others to devise a set of principles by which the claims can be assessed and a solution proffered

I want to suggest ten Hebrew Biblical principles which, although I write as a Liberal Rabbi, I believe would find an overwhelming level of consensus across the Jewish community and indeed the Christian and Muslim worlds too.

The God of Judaism is a universal God who has created the human being in the Divine Image, and, therefore, cares for each of them with an impartial love.

*Thus the Hebrew Prophet, Isaiah, was able to say in God's name (19:25):
Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and
Israel My heritage.*

The God of Judaism demands that the Divine attributes are reflected in human behaviour. Thus the Hebrew Prophet, Jeremiah, declares (9:2):

*Let not the wise glory in their wisdom, let not the mighty glory in their
might,
let not the rich glory in their riches; but let those who glory, glory in this,
that
they know and understand Me, that I am the power that makes for love,
justice and righteousness on earth; for in these things I delight.*

The God of Judaism considers each human life as precious. Thus the rabbinic commentators of the second century CE wrote (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5):

*Whoever destroys a single human life is considered by Scripture as if they
had destroyed the whole world, and whoever saves a single human life is
considered as if they had saved the whole world.*

Jews ought live their lives in accord with what came to be known as the Golden Rule or the greatest principle of the Torah (Leviticus 19:18):

You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

Jews should conduct their lives conscious of their history and empathetic to the disadvantaged (Exodus 23.9):

For you know the heart of a stranger...for you were strangers in Egypt.

Jews may not look the other way, whether the fate of another human being is in mortal danger or simply by silence when they are able to testify on another's behalf (Leviticus 19:16):

You shall not stand idly by when your neighbour's blood is being shed.

What Judaism demands of an individual is reflected in what it requires of society, that power is exercised in accord with the moral law. The Hebrew Prophets often found themselves in conflict with the ruling monarchies of the day, and of the ideal monarch Isaiah observes (11:5):

Righteousness shall be the belt around the royal waist.

Judaism demands that Jews treat equally and fairly those non Jews who live amongst them. As Leviticus (19:34) demands:

*The strangers who live with you shall be to you like the natives among you,
and you shall love them as yourselves...*

Judaism expects the Jewish people, not only to pursue its own self-interest, but to set a moral example, thus being, in Isaiah's words (49:6)

...a light to the nations.

Most importantly, what does Judaism teach is the future of humanity?

*It is the time when the nations will beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4) and every person will be
able to sit under the vine and the fig tree and none will make them afraid
(Micah 4:2).*

There is little evidence of these principles being applied on either side of the divide. If these are just 'ground rules' for the people of the region, how much more are they required of the fair-minded observer who seeks to make a positive contribution to the debate and has a genuine interest in promoting a lasting peace in the region?

How might these Prophetic ideals be applied in the 21st century in pursuit of a just solution?

First, it is to appreciate that there are two narratives, one Jewish/Israeli and the other Palestinian/Arab, and, while they may differ both in 'fact' and in interpretation of events, each story must be recognised in any proposed resolution. It is simply not constructive, for example, to challenge the idea of 'Palestinian nationalism' or to delegitimise the State of Israel.

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Second, it is to reject violence and extremism in word and deed as counter productive, since a fair solution must enable both parties to feel secure in their national boundaries. Jew and Israelis – reflecting on their history and indeed the recent statement by Iranian President Ahmedinajad – have a genuine fear that there are those who will seek to end the existence of the Jewish state altogether, and Palestinians are genuinely concerned that there are those who wish to deny them the freedom to have control over their own affairs.

Third, it is to resist the tendency of both Israelis and Palestinians to 'claim victimhood'.

Israel and Palestine – or at least persons claiming to act on their behalf – are both perpetrators and victims of wrongdoing, and playing the victim brings neither merit nor progress.

Fourth, it is to discern that individuals are not governments and governments are not peoples. Thus for every bellicose statement, aggressive policy and destructive action by an elected or self appointed representative, there are thousands and thousands of peace loving Israelis and Palestinians who only wish to go about their daily lives without causing harm to another.

A resolution to the conflict is within the sight and grasp of both Israelis and Palestinians. Any just solution will inevitably require a sharing of the land now known as the State of Israel and the Palestinian territories. At one time a bi-national state might have been a possibility, but in the absence of support for it from the mainstream of either side partition seems to be the only viable option. Partition, known as the two-state solution, will offer to both Israelis and Palestinians the opportunity to live in independent, secure national entities, one in which the population will be made up of 70% Jews and a significant minority of Arab Palestinian Israelis and the other made up overwhelmingly of Muslim Palestinian Arabs with a minority of Christian Palestinian Arabs *and perhaps Jews too*. The borders of the two entities will need to be negotiated to give territorial contiguity, to enable the majority of both populations to remain in the entity to which they wish to offer loyalty, and to enable both to establish a capital city.

If this were to come to fruition, Israelis could face a future in which their country's survival was not being questioned and Palestinians could contemplate a future in which they took control of their own lives, and the two independent States of Israel and Palestine could take their places in an economic union of Near Eastern states and in the United (family of) Nations.

The decision to do so rests, of course, in the political and military leaderships of both Israelis and Palestinians but persons who consider themselves fair-minded ought only say and do things which make this possibility more likely.

Persons of faith might add a prayer, perhaps on the lines of that written by my teacher, the late Rabbi John Rayner:

It is not enough to pray for peace. We have to work for it: to challenge those who foster conflict, and refute their propaganda; to ascertain and make known the truth, both when it confirms and when it runs counter to prevailing views; to denounce injustice not only when it is committed against us but also when it is committed against others; to defend human rights, not only our own but also theirs; to insist that peace requires sacrifice –of pride, or wealth, or territory; to practise and promote the way

of moderation, compromise and reconciliation; and to build bridges of respect and understanding, trust and friendship, across the chasms that divide humanity.

This is a treaty I would sign up to. Would you too?

Notes on Contributors



Vivian Wineman was educated at City of London School, Yavneh Rabbinical College and Gonville and Caius College Cambridge. Subsequently he qualified as a solicitor gaining honours. He set up his own firm, David Wineman, with a partner. It grew to be a 10 partner firm until he merged it in 2008. He has appeared on the radio and published various articles on law and Jewish History as well as a book on contract law. He has also lectured at the Spiro Institute and Limmud. Currently he is President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Chairman of The Jewish Leadership Council; Vice President of European Jewish Congress and Vice Chair of the UK Inter Faith Network. Previously he has been Senior Vice President of the Board and Chairman of the New Israel Fund UK. He is married with 3 children and lives in London.



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Dan Rickman has an MA in Hebrew and Jewish Studies from University of London (Jews College). His dissertation was on the subject of attitudes to non-Jews in the Talmud. He has written articles for the Jewish Chronicle, the Guardian and Yediot Achoronot online (ynet) on a range of subjects covering Jewish identity, Talmudic attitudes to non-Jews, the status of Jerusalem, whether the Tanya is “racist”, orthodox fundamentalism and Jewish attitudes to Islam.



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