

Sh'ma

a journal of Jewish responsibility

12/236, SEPTEMBER 3, 1982

About this special issue on Lebanon

We asked the entire SH'MA community to respond to the question which follows and invited the replies of a number of Zionist leaders as well. To include as many of the responses which arrived by Aug. 10 as we could, we have expanded this issue to 16 pages. We shall print subsequent replies in our next issue when our format returns to its regular 8 pages.

At these High Holy Days American Jewry faces a new challenge. Some American Jews find themselves sharing the turmoil of those Israelis who, in unprecedented fashion, demonstrated for an early end to the invasion of Lebanon. These American Jews believe the Israeli, Lebanese and Palestinian suffering caused by the Israeli advance beyond 25 miles from the Lebanese border, was unjustified by its potential results. More, they feel it has morally compromised the humane stance that, for many years, Israeli spokesmen have projected of their state. They wonder in what way, if at all, they can honestly resume their old roles as apologists and lobbyists in the United States for the State of Israel. What guidance do you have for them at these Days of Awe? ●

Harold M. Schulweis

A cruel double standard has been imposed upon our perceptions. From Israel one expects supra-moral rigorism, uncompromising scrupulousness, self-sacrificing conduct. From the PLO and Syria minimal moral standards are held to be inappropriate. They are excused because, well, that's the way they are. Consequently Arab provocations are minimized while Israeli responses are magnified. This form of moral schizophrenia accounts for the hoarse condemnation of Israel's actions in Lebanon which, if executed by any other sovereign state, would be lauded as morally just.

It accounts for the muteness with which the slaughter of 25,000 Syrians by 10,000 Syrian soldiers in Hama (Syria) was greeted in the press. It explains the misplacement of moral outrage. The ruthless and humiliating hijacking of the capital of Lebanon and the coercion of Lebanese to live atop PLO munitions dumps was accepted with faint protestation. The surrounding of West Beirut by Israel's defense forces in order to get at the source of terror is compared to Lidice and the Warsaw Ghetto.

The over-idealization of Israel damns with grand praise and it limits Israel's options to martyrdom. In 1938 Mahatma Gandhi placed Jews on such an idealized level. He urged the Jews of Nazi Germany not to resist the enemy aggressively but to break the enemy spiritually through the exercise of "Satyagraha"—soul-force. "If the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even a massacre could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hand of the tyrant." Against a fanatical enemy, Gandhi's over-idealization of the victim could only yield an impotence which invites murder.

Will the PLO infrastructure be destroyed only to be revived tomorrow? What of the civilian bystanders who suffer the wars? A cancer which threatens your life must be extricated. It is a painful decision. In the process, healthy tissue will be destroyed and the malignancy may grow back. There are no guarantees. Yet to do nothing, to pretend that the growth is not there, to fantasize health, is a denial which is neither wise nor moral.

The truth is that there are no holy wars. Even those with noble ends carry the stench of tragedy into the homes of the innocent. What is our alternative? The Bible recounts that the children of Israel were commanded to smear the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses so that the angel of death would pass over them. But surely, the sages remark, the angel of death can distinguish between Jew and Egyptian. They answer, "Once destruction is unleashed, it cannot distinguish between the wicked and the good." Therein lies the tragic ambiguity of wars. Yet the slaves would remain fettered by their tormentors without the plagues. Regrettably, no moral neutron bomb has been invented to single out the terrorists and pass over the civilians. To ask only Israel to live by supra-moral standards is immoral. As Ecclesiastes admonished, "Be not righteous overmuch....that you do not die before your time." ●

HAROLD M. SCHULWEIS is rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, CA.

Arnold Jacob Wolf

By the fourth day of every other Israeli war the Jewish community had organized fund-raising and support meetings all over America. Not this time. Almost every American Jew was greatly relieved at the swift victory of the Israeli Defense Forces, but none of us was entirely free from second thoughts or even from guilt. We knew that Israel would have to respond to the provocation of Syrian missiles (however ineffectual they turned out to be) and to the PLO's mindless rejection of even the most elementary rights to a Jewish home-state. But we were shocked, and most of us were deeply grieved, at Israel's relentless punishment of the innocent along with the guilty, of Christians and Muslims, of Lebanese and Palestinians, of the large-scale killing of all kinds of men, women and children. An Israeli invasion was, perhaps, inevitable. It does not seem to be wholly in proportion to her danger, or to her own stated desire for reconciliation. Gen. Sharon has by now killed more innocent people than Arafat, and that fact dismays us.

The fragile peace camp among both Jews and Arabs has been worn away, year by year. How can Israel ever learn to trust neighbors that won't even sit down to discuss peace, won't even say her name in public? How can the Arab states believe in peace with a nation that comes threatening and killing to the border of one of their capitals every few years? Israel is now known to be the powerful Mid-east super power that Ezer Weizmann said it was. But it is still surrounded by millions of potential enemies who are not reassured by Israel's massive, violent resistance to their foolish threats; not even a chastened and peace-loving Egypt, not even Christian Lebanon is entirely acquiescent.

American Jews always want Israel to win and we always will. But we are no longer so sure what winning is. We know that our own country will not forever supply Israel with two billion dollars worth of hardware each year to do with whatever she likes. But we do not agree with George Ball that we American Jews are the reason our government supports the State of Israel. Someone in the Pentagon and in the State Department and in the White House likes it this way. Someone wants to use Israel as a proxy to defeat decisively one Soviet dependent after another, in the hope that, like Egypt, they will turn away from Russian patronage, toward a friendly United States. Someone was even willing to risk an East-West nuclear confrontation.

The problem of the Palestinians cannot be solved in Beirut, not even by the decimation of the PLO leadership and strike force. The problem of the Palestinians is in Palestine/Eretz Israel. There is no path to peace that ignores Arab rights to that land, as there is

no path that ignores equivalent Jewish rights to the same territory. *One* state will inevitably be either colonialist or genocidal. *Two* states will have to learn to live side by side. American Jews are not unhappy that Israel will be by far the more powerful for the foreseeable future. But we fear the cost of occupation more than the danger of a Palestinian state, as recent polls disclose.

We American Jews are not pacifists. We are not even very hopeful about the prospects for a swift Middle Eastern peace. But we have seen the price of Israel's military victory, again, and it seems too high. ●

ARNOLD JACOB WOLF is *rabbi of K.A.M. Isaiah Israel in Chicago*. This article also appeared in the *Chicago Sentinel*.

Sh'ma

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Eugene B. Borowitz

The abuse of power is the most compelling moral problem of our time. It hurts in local relationships—love, family, work— but is terrifying in governments. What states mean when they call themselves “sovereign” is that they acknowledge no external limits to what they may do— and they possess the most awesome power we know.

I believe the Israeli government has grossly misused its power in invading Lebanon beyond 25 miles. My qualms about this decision were settled by the sizable minority of Israelis who publicly protested, more than once, to make this point. I am involved in this matter because I am a Jew and because once again the Israeli government is asking American Jews to be its lobbyists and apologists (not “to apologize for it”!).

The time has long since passed for keeping quiet about such immorality. I first voted against my conscience to support the State of Israel two decades or so ago when Israel attacked Kibya. For 15 years or so thereafter, to avoid giving aid to the enemies of the State, I regularly sat on my conscience when it badly troubled me. It took until the early 1970's before I realized I would never stop hearing “this is not the right time to protest.” Thereafter, when asked and when it seemed right, I became an occasional public critic of policies of the State of Israel.

What troubles me most deeply reaches far beyond the struggle in Lebanon. It is the fight for the soul of the State of Israel. Will the presently precarious balance now tip and force become the glory rather than the painful necessity of the State? Can the strong conscience of today's Israelis long survive if they know that quiet on the West Bank is achieved by getting the Palestinians to internalize the fear of an Israeli Lebanon-like onslaught? Can Israeli society ever approach normality if the creation and manufacture of weapons becomes the country's chief industry? Of course, the Israelis will have to decide the answers to these questions but loyal Jews everywhere will rightly be deeply concerned about the outcome.

At these High Holy Days we desperately need to recapture our former post-Holocaust hopes for world Jewry. Elie Wiesel's classic, *Night*, is only the first part of a trilogy. Its second part, *Dawn*, speaks of how Jews should relate to the use of force, even against their enemies. Its conclusion, *The Accident*, points to the healing of others' wounds as the only truly redemptive force. This is the time to go back and see where *Night* was leading us. ●

EUGENE B. BOROWITZ *speaks only for himself.* His

ninth book, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought*, is in press at Behrman House.

On withdrawing from sh'ma

This letter was received independent of our symposium call. Since SH'MA would not appear until the first week of September part of it was printed in the NATION and CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS. Ed.

Henry Schwarzschild

This is my resignation from the Editorial Advisory Board of *Sh'ma*.

The contributions from me that you have published over the years have been few in number and less than earth-shaking in import, and you are therefore not deprived of a great editorial asset. In any case, my resignation has almost nothing to do with my relationship to *Sh'ma* as such. It is the consequence of a very much superordinated reorientation by me of my relationship to the Jewish community in the largest sense. Let me explain as best I can.

For a generation now, I have been deeply troubled by the chauvinistic assumptions and repressive effects of Israeli nationalism. I have experienced the War on Lebanon of the past few weeks as a turning point in Jewish history and consciousness exceeded in importance perhaps only by the End of the Second Commonwealth and the Holocaust. I have resisted the inference for over thirty years, but the War on Lebanon has now made clear to me that the resumption of political power by the Jewish people after two thousand years of diaspora has been a tragedy of historical dimensions. The State of Israel has demanded recognition as the modern political incarnation of the Jewish people. To grant that is to betray the Jewish tradition.

The State of Israel and its supporters have probably been right all along in arguing that political power comes at the price of the normal detritus of the nation state, such as Jewish criminals, prostitutes, and generals. They may also be right in asserting that the War on Lebanon is the sort of thing a Jewish state has to do to survive. I am not disposed to await the outcome of debates by politicians and theologians on whether the threat from the Palestine Liberation Organization was sufficiently clear and present to justify the killing of so many Lebanese and Palestinian men, women, and children, or only so many. I will not avoid an unambiguous response to the Israeli army's turning West Beirut into another Warsaw Ghetto.

I now conclude and avow that the price of a Jewish state is, to me, Jewishly unacceptable and that the existence of this (or any similar) Jewish ethnic-religious nation

state is a Jewish, i.e. a human and moral, disaster and violates every remaining value for which Judaism and Jews might exist in history. The lethal military triumphalism and corrosive racism that inheres in the State and in its supporters (both there and here) are profoundly abhorrent to me. So is the message that now goes forth to the nations of the world that the Jewish people claim the right to impose a holocaust on others in order to preserve its State.

For several decades, I have supported those minority forces in and for the State that wanted to salvage the values of peace and social justice that the Jewish tradition commands. The "blitzkrieg" in Lebanon, terrifying and Teutonic in its ruthlessness, shows how vain those hopes have been.

I now renounce the State of Israel, disavow any political connection or emotional obligation to it, and declare myself its enemy. I retain, of course, the same deep concern for its inhabitants, Jewish, Arab, and other, that I hold for all humankind.

I remain a member of the Jewish people - indeed, I have no other inner identity. But the State of Israel has now also triumphed over the Jewish people and its history, for the time being at least. I deem it possible that the State, morally bankrupted and mortally endangered by its victories, will prove essential to the survival of the Jewish people and that it may likely take the Jewish people with it to eventual extinction. Yet I believe that the death of the Jewish people would not be inherently more tragic than the death of the Palestinian people that Israel and its supporters evidently seek or at least accept as the cost of the "security" of the State of Israel. The price of the millennial survival of the Jewish people has been high; I did not think the point was to make others pay it. That moral scandal intolerably assaults the accumulated values of Jewish history and tradition.

If those be the places where the State of Israel chooses to stand, I cannot stand with it. I therefore resign all connections with Jewish political and public institutions that will not radically oppose the State and its claim to Jewish legitimacy. *Sh'ma* is one of those. ●

HENRY SCHWARZSCHILD *directs the project on capital punishment for the A.C.L.U.*

Responses from Zionist leaders

We sent a personal letter to the heads of all the political Zionist organizations listed in the American Jewish Yearbook. We also asked A.I.P.A.C. to suggest names of people they considered strong proponents of Israel and we invited the ten they gave us. A similar request

to the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations was unavailing. Considering the pressures on all of these people, we are most grateful for the cooperation we received.

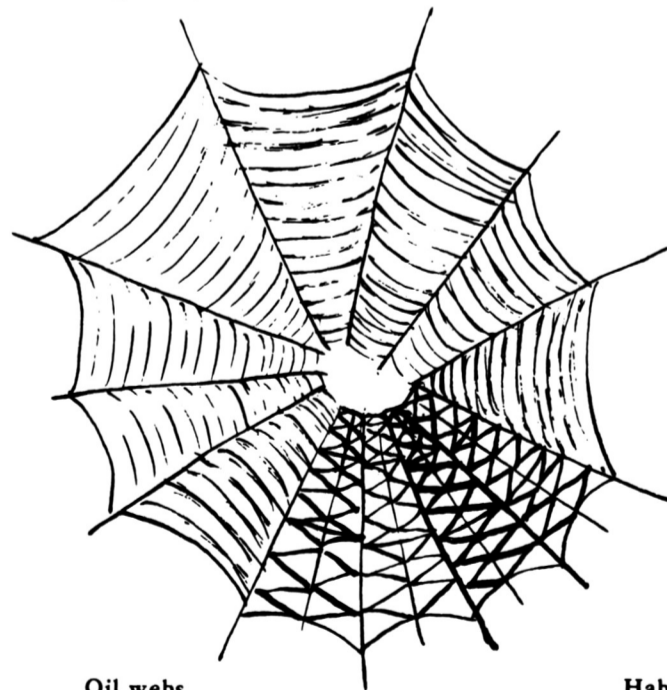
Congressman Barney Frank did not wish to use a "ghost" for our question and found himself unable to find time for a proper reply. Mrs. Frieda S. Lewis, National President of Hadassah, shared our letter with her Board. Since they felt that "if you were interested in receiving fair expressions of personal opinion, your question would have not defined a position so forcefully in advance," she declined to reply to it, adding a statement of support for the government of the State of Israel.

Roland B. Gittelsohn

I haven't experienced such anguished ambivalence since 1942 when, through a series of fitful days and sleepless nights, I transformed myself from an absolute pacifist into a revolver-carrying military chaplain. The issues are very much the same.

Then I had long been a critic of foreign policies—our own and those of other nations—which were impelling us inevitably toward war. Once the war had begun, however, criticism became idle. It was then a matter of sheer survival—survival of the Jewish people and of democratic decency.

Similarly, I have long been a critic of the Begin government. I am *persona non grata* among many of my colleagues on the World Zionist Organization Executive because of my frequent strictures. Two years ago I was one of fifty-six American Jewish leaders who joined in perhaps the severest statement ever issued



Oil webs

Haber

against certain of Israel's policies. I have criticized and—*im yirtzeh hashem*—will criticize again.

But not now! I did not criticize in my foxhole on Iwo Jima. I cried over the profligate loss of life all around me. I lamented the catastrophe which governmental folly had forced upon the world. But I did not criticize while shells were falling in frightening proximity.

The shells are falling again. During the third week of June I saw some of them with my own eyes in northern Israel and southern Lebanon. I stood within a few feet of the *kibbutz* nursery in which the PLO had held three-year-old children hostage, killing one of them before the others could be rescued. I saw samples of the incredible quantity of weapons captured by the Israelis, weapons which the PLO had stored in residential apartment buildings and hospitals and schools. Can anyone doubt the intended target of those rockets and mortars and guns?

Can anyone be so irresponsibly naive as to suppose that the nations of this world would have taken effective action to prevent a massive attack on Israel? There were arms and ammunition enough in Lebanon for one million fighters. From where were they to come? Whom were they determined to destroy?

Could the impasse of early June have been avoided? Perhaps so. But it was probably too late even in May; it is certainly too late now. Could Israel have averted the imminent danger to its survival by going only forty miles beyond its northern border? I don't know. I just don't know. Neither, in all honesty, does any other participant in this symposium really know.

What I do know is that the house is burning. My beloved brothers and sisters are in that house. Later there will be time and need to ask whose careless smoking or negligent wiring caused the fire. But not now. This is a time for providing every ounce of reassurance and reinforcement within our power.

Along with every other sensitive Jew, I am worried about ominous trends which would make of Israel less than a "light to the nations." I shall—very soon, I hope—resume my criticisms of those trends. But Israel must be before it can become a light. *L'maan Tsion eche-sheb*—at this moment of peril, "for the sake of Zion I will keep my peace!" ●

ROLAND B. GITTELSON is *Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Israel in Boston and President of the Association of Reform Zionists of America.*

Charlotte Jacobson

It is only a short while since Israel's tremendous sacrifice of oil fields, territory, air bases and Yamit proved

beyond doubt the unprecedented price she would willingly pay to obtain peace by negotiations. Egypt chose this route and discovered it paid off magnificently, and without the loss of a single life.

The other route for achieving settlement in this confrontation-plagued area is, tragically, war. If the PLO only had the diplomatic sense to eschew its fanatical dedication to Israel's obliteration for the productive path which Anwar Sadat had already blazed for it, it too would have learned that its problems could



Memory stone

Haber

have been settled peacefully and rewardingly at the negotiation table.

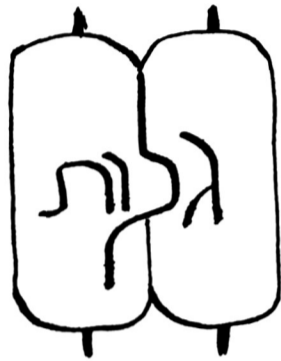
That a biased, double-standard world should so soon forget Israel's immeasurable sacrifice of Sinai and Yamit on the altar of peace is ironic and disillusioning, but understandable in the light of world history and the rapidly glossed over recent tragedies of Afghanistan and Hama. But that even a handful of American Jews should so readily forget Sinai's meaning and implications to the point of sharing prejudiced judgements, based on harmful media distortions concerning events in Lebanon to which I have been an eyewitness, is shocking.

American Jews, no less than Jews everywhere, react profoundly to human suffering no matter what the cause or the circumstances. We empathize sincerely and unhappily when a schoolhouse is attacked in Israel, and we are equally unhappy whenever and wherever children are hurt. But it is unwholesome and misguided self-flagellation for American Jewry to have a guilty conscience concerning Lebanon, where the Lebanese welcomed the Israelis with joy and relief as liberators from the harsh yoke of the PLO gun toters who had brutally ruled over them by trigger-finger intimidation.

The guilty conscience should be on the PLO as the terrorist precipitators of the tragic events in Lebanon.

History will record that in Lebanon, Israel made a major contribution to the cause of anti-terrorism and peace by exorcising the PLO invader-cancer that was consuming this land.

In Nabatiye I saw the Israel Defense Forces distributing blankets and food and busy restoring the water supply and electricity for the civilian population. The commanders told me of making every effort to spare the



people and buildings at the cost of soldiers' lives and casualties, and the heart-wrenching but literally life-and-death necessity to attack PLO army positions that had been set up on the roofs of houses, mosques, schools and hospitals.

Instead of a guilty conscience, American Jewry should lift its head with pride in the magnanimity of Israel in its search for peace, whether on the battlefield or at the negotiating table. ●

CHARLOTTE JACOBSON *chairs the American Section of the World Zionist Organization.*

Inge A. Lederer

Both as a Jew out of the prophetic tradition and as a socialist Zionist, I have never believed that it was our role to be "apologists and lobbyists in the United States for the State of Israel." To the extent that many of our organizations and leaders have played this role, they have not only strengthened the most reactionary forces in Israel, but they have sadly misled our people here, at best into a no-question-asked "check book Zionism," or, at worst, into alienation and indifference.

Understanding that realpolitic and long-term self-interest frequently go hand in hand with Jewish ethical values, our role now must be to pursue several goals, more complementary than they may first appear. We must, of course, never deviate from raising consciousness, within the Jewish community and without, that Zionism *is* the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, that the creation of Israel was the first in a series of steps that mainstream Zionism undertook, that its aim is to be a nation of social, political and economic justice. The delegitimizing of Zionism both within elements of the

Jewish community, particularly the young, and externally, in certain Christian and radical political circles, must be fought as though there is no other issue, for in truth there is none, since the forces disseminating this line wish to delegitimize Jewish *peoplehood*. Nor can we escape, as part of this process, the importance of explaining why *revisionist* Zionism, which the Begin/Sharon government represents, is dangerous to the Zionist vision which created Israel.

At the same time, we must begin the public process of separating our passionate commitment to Israel's *real* survival and security needs from our legitimate questions about its political and military leadership. It is crucial that American Jewry understand the lesson we should all have learned from the most traumatic events of this century: "My country, right or wrong," is not the best or wisest form of patriotism, of loyalty. To say that Israel's government is elected democratically, therefore sacrosanct, and must not be reproached when it behaves unwisely, un-Jewishly, and undemocratically is *not* in the best Jewish tradition—nor in the best democratic tradition.

If we should "lobby" for Israel—and we must, and we should, though I dislike the word, and even more the word "apologist"—we must lobby for those progressive forces and individuals in Israel who are requesting and desperately need our support. The specious argument that has been used to silence American Jews critical of Israel government policies—and some of those policies, in fairness, did not begin with the present government—has been that we are not going to pay the price in our own blood if we are wrong. In fact, it is the support for the most hawkish policies in recent years—whether on the West Bank or in Lebanon—that so many American Jewish groups and leaders have given



which may ultimately cause bloodshed. If the slogan "We are One" is to be taken as more than a fund-raising gimmick, then American Jews who have taken seriously their responsibilities as Jews and Zionists—who have, in other words, paid their "Jewish dues"—must begin to support the peace movement in

Israel and political solutions to problems that military actions will never solve. ●

ANGE A. LEDERER is president of Americans for Progressive Israel.

Aaron D. and Milton Rosenbaum

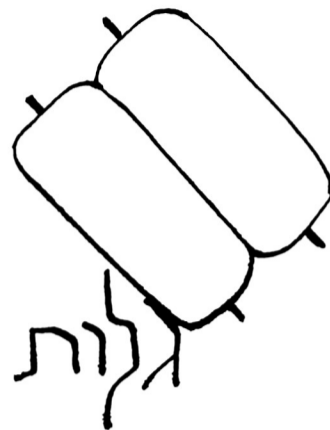
We have to recognize, and indeed, must assert to others, the context for Israel's salient: a continuing Syrian and PLO threat to Israel's north; a climate of terror that had depopulated northern Israeli towns and settlements; concomitantly, the physical and mental insecurity of Jews within the Jewish Haven. We also must articulate the political reality Israel confronted: one northern neighbor—Syria—which was in the advanced stages of preparations for an attack on Israel, and which was inveterately hostile. A second neighbor—Lebanon—that had been forcibly annexed into Syria's political sphere, and which had abandoned any semblance of sovereignty or control over its border with Israel.

A third element—the PLO—which had imposed a gangster regime on southern Lebanon and which, despite its dissimulations and the wishful interpretations by some of those ambiguous words, had shown no interest or ability whatever to accommodate to permanent peace with a Jewish state.

We must not hesitate to describe the reality of Israel's military action in Lebanon: its planning and delaying of actions in order to minimize the casualties of both civilians and adversaries [how else did Israel come to capture 6,000 PLO fighters in the south?]; its forbearance in attacking Beirut, even though the city had become the largest PLO hostage ever, and even though Israel was being asked to trust in an American diplomacy of doubtful efficacy; its being welcomed as a liberator by nearly every ethnic faction in Lebanon; and its service to its democratic allies—grudgingly accepted to be sure—in inflicting defeat on both international terrorism and its Soviet patron.

In undertaking this war, Israel assessed reality—the mortal threat to Jewish survival that the PLO posed and poses—and moved to create a climate of honesty. A climate in which the power of oil wealth is not so great that it persuades democracies that terrorists are moderates. A climate in which a nation's assertion of its right to defend its people is not viewed as inconvenient, tiresome or an aggression. A climate in which political coercion is lessened, as the threats of embargo, tumult and radicalism are shown to be empty and self-serving.

The actions now of Israel's supporters must similarly reflect a regard for a climate of honesty: the honest appraisal that war is inevitably violent, but that this war was necessary and fought with considerable moral



regard; the honest understanding that while the world has applied a selective conscience to Israel, the care and questioning within Israel—especially the general staff of the army—shows that the Jewish state has not lost its moral compass; the honest appreciation that our fate and security is bound to that of the people of Israel, that the *unjust* imputing of evil to Israel does us all evil. ●

AARON D. ROSENBAUM heads a Washington, D.C. consulting firm that specializes in international politics and defense.

MILTON ROSENBAUM is rabbi emeritus of Temple Emanu-El of Oak Park, Michigan.

Roselle Silberstein

When the first "Israel," the patriarch Jacob, prepared to confront his sworn enemy, Esau, he prepared for two eventualities. He divided his camp in anticipation of hostilities, and he set aside a substantial gift for Esau from the wealth he had amassed while working for Laban. As the meeting drew closer, Jacob showed his preference among the two choices: he sent advance men to greet Esau with gifts, rather than with a rattling of sabers. Happily, the second eventuality was avoided, and the two brothers parted in peace.

Every year before *Rosh Hashanah*, we strive to acquire a perspective for the coming year by reviewing the year that is nearing completion. If we look at 5742 *in its entirety*, we see a striking similarity between the approaches of today's Israel and her namesake. Many of us who now watch the events in Lebanon with concern were, during the months preceding April, watching the inexorable withdrawal of Israel from Sinai with equal concern. There were vehement protests and demonstrations against the withdrawal both in the United States and in Israel. Certainly none of us will quickly forget the trauma surrounding the removal of civilians who had "occupied" Yamit—or the extreme measures taken by the removing soldiers to avoid injury to the protesters.

The Sinai withdrawal was a major sacrifice—a "gift,"

in keeping with our metaphor—made by Israel to a formerly hostile nation which had shown itself receptive to a peaceful resolution of differences. It demonstrated Israel's preference for non-military dealings with her neighbors—even at what many felt to be considerable risk to her own security.

The PLO has never exhibited a similar preference. Unlike Egypt, it has consistently refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, and has utilized terrorist methodology almost exclusively to achieve its goals. There could be no question of taking even a considered risk in dealing with an organization which has made Israel's destruction an avowed—and reaffirmed—element of its charter.

Faced with this intransigent opponent, today's Israel was forced to resort to the second alternative that the Biblical Israel was able to avoid. For there could be no political resolution to the problem of the PLO without a military one; as long as a PLO military structure existed in Lebanon, PLO military/terrorist tactics would continue.

Yet even in the throes of the intensive fighting in Lebanon, the Israeli soldiers took the same care to avoid unnecessary injury to civilians as they had taken in evacuating Yamit. Bombers turned back from their missions rather than strike large gatherings of civilians; the "salami" strategy minimized casualties as the Israelis neared PLO headquarters. And Israel's relief operation in Lebanon was both extensive and generous.

We in the United States have come to abhor military operations of any kind because of our Vietnam trauma. But Vietnam is in Southeast Asia. If *we* were threatened with extinction by Canada and Mexico, doubtless our attitude would be different. We must take care to place Israel's actions in the context of her unique position.

And as to her "humane stance," aside from the extreme care she is known to have exercised in minimizing casualties during all her activities during 5742, it would behoove us to note that the nature of Israel's character is not determined by the projections of the other nations of the world, nor even by the Zionist establishment. Jacob was given the name "Israel" by a celestial being with whom he engaged in mortal combat on the eve of his meeting with Esau. As Jacob prevailed and dawn approached, the 'angel' pleaded with Jacob to release him. Jacob did so in return for a blessing, and the angel—as God's emissary—renamed him "Israel."

We are Israel only inasmuch as we remain aware of our heritage and conduct ourselves in accordance with the historic covenant between our forefathers and God.

Israel is, indeed, a humane people. Our humanity predates the standards of the modern world, and is inextricably linked with our survival. I have no doubt that it will accompany us, intact, to greet the Messiah.

May we witness his coming speedily in our time. ●

ROSELLE SILBERSTEIN is president of American Mizrahi Women.

Ezra Spicehandler

The question whether the Israeli incursion into Lebanon was *morally* justified or not, should not be linked to the question of Jewish support for Israel. Israel is a state and, like all states, acts in terms of self-interest, rather than out of moral considerations. Obviously most Jews (including most Israelis) would prefer that Israel's political acts coincide with the rules of morality, but there are times when the law of survival must be given preference.

In a sense the law of survival is in itself an act of morality. Certainly Jewish tradition has taught: *haba lehorgekha Hashken Vehorgo* (If one comes to kill you, kill him first). The very survival of Jews is in itself a religious imperative.

The dilemma we face in Lebanon therefore should be judged in terms of the pragmatics of Israel's survival in the face of the PLO threat. Indeed, the very wording of your question carries with it the implication that the attack itself was justified. The question of "morality" comes into play because the Israel army went beyond the original objective of 40 kilometers (25 miles). But then, is the morality or immorality of a military action to be measured by kilometers?

I believe that the attack on Beirut proper was pragmatically unjustified. As things stand now, it appears to have complicated Israel's relationship with the United States, cast the PLO in the role of a victim (!), led to the maiming and killing of soldiers and civilians, and failed to accomplish its objective of totally destroying the PLO forces.

It is too early to determine whether the above situation will change. An armistice agreement is about to be signed which should eliminate the PLO as a factor in West Lebanon. Both the U.S., Israel and Jordan have hinted that the solution of the Lebanon crisis may open the way for more realistic negotiations for a Palestinian settlement. If these developments follow in the wake of the attack on Beirut, Messrs. Begin and Sharon might yet be praised as peacemakers. *Halevai!*

All this is not meant to deny the right of those whose loyalty to Israel's cause is measured solely by purely

ethical criteria to abandon Israel. But those of us who believe that the right of Jews to survive is in itself a moral imperative must ask ourselves: were the amoral acts which are the inevitable consequence of war necessary for Israel's survival?

אתי
מלבנו?
"Come with me from Lebanon?" S.S. 4.8

I am sure you share the contempt which sensitive Jews have for the distorted coverage of the war by the media and the hypocritical moralizing of the European powers and the Asian-African Russian block. For these elements morality is measured in terms of their notion of their own self-interest. We should, in particular, be wary of the nefarious influence which the media might have on our own psyches. In the television-war, Israelis appear to have fiendish proclivity for bombing and shelling children and old people, hospitals and schools. West Beirut seems devoid of PLO soldiers and weaponry. The unanimity of the reportorial distortion leads one to suspect that what President Eisenhower called the military industrial complex may have mobilized the media to tarnish the image of Israel in preparation for changes in American policy.

Sensitive and committed Jews can in full conscience defend Israel and lobby on its behalf, even while questioning the political wisdom of some of the policies of the Begin government. They have every right to express their dissent in a responsible manner. Because this dissent is being used by Israel's enemies to justify their slanders, supporters of Israel must be especially sensitive and, as far as possible, keep the argument *en famille*. We must remain united against all who plot the destruction of the State of Israel. ●

EZRA SPICEHANDLER is president of the Labor Zionist Alliance.

Joseph P. Sternstein

It is a time of testing for our people. Therefore, it is, too, a time for candor. For only with clarity and honesty of expression will the issues be correctly joined.

The question posed elicits from me two levels of response, one semantic and the other substantive.

I have hesitancy in responding, for semantically, the question, to my mind, is couched in pious self-righteousness bordering on sanctimonious

chutzpah. It is "loaded" and "stacked" in a manner stylistically congruent with "when did you stop beating your wife?" One is impelled to ask: Could *any* reply satisfy the questioner?

Withal the hesitancy, there *are* issues which must be addressed.

I would put the Biblical question of Joshua to our people today: "Art thou with us or with our enemies?" Our enemies will impatiently and irritably dismiss the fact of Jews being bombed, terrorized, murdered and will pontificate to us about "overkill" and "disproportionate over-response." Our enemies will ferociously broadcast wildly exaggerated statistics of civilians killed (read Shipler's admission in a *New York Times* dispatch that Israel's reports were more correct). Our enemies will turn away from the amazingly extraordinary restraint and discipline of the Israeli Army in order to preserve, *as much as possible*, civilian life (I was witness, in Lebanon, to examples of this Israeli valor. The latest illustration is the capture of the Beirut National Museum). Our enemies will blandly abjure from condemning the murderous PLO—the record of whose savagery to fellow Arabs in Lebanon is just now receiving public documentation—whose tactics are to burrow into the camouflage of civilian surroundings so that *any* military attack will inevitably and unavoidably result in civilian casualties. Our enemies shrug their shoulders at implacable PLO onslaughts against innocent civilians and intractable Arab hostility directed at Israel's *very existence*, while preaching "morality" to Israel in the face of bullets and economic warfare.

To these "American Jews in...turmoil..." I ask: "Where were you during the days of the callous murder of 100,000 Lebanese by PLO and Syrians, and during the repeated slayings of innocent Jews by the self-proclaimed hands of terrorists trained and abetted by the PLO?" ●

RABBI JOSEPH P. STERNSTEIN is president of the American Zionist Federation.

Phyllis Sutker

The current situation in Lebanon is not one which makes any interested observer happy. Whenever there is war, loss of human life, dislocation of people, and disruption of normal life, sensitive and caring people are disturbed, disheartened and depressed.

As Jews, we regard ourselves as particularly sensitive and historically conditioned to concern for our fellow-man. The problem for those American Jews who feel

compromised by the Israeli advance beyond the 25 miles originally targeted is, I believe, that there has been an unwillingness to label this "action" as the war that it is—and war brings with it suffering and loss on all sides. As a homeless people, the Jews had no way to defend themselves—one of the aims of Zionism was to provide that home so that Jews would no longer be strangers wherever they lived. The corollary of sovereign statehood is the right and the responsibility of a government and its military to protect its citizens. The long list of terrorist activities against Israel and its representatives abroad by the PLO clearly warranted some action that would permit the people of the north of Israel to walk freely, outside of shelters, without the constant fear of terrorist raids against its civilian population. I know of no country at war which has gone to such lengths as Israel to permit civilians to be evacuated; the threat to the safety of Israel's soldiers was certainly aggravated by providing advance warning of raids. The help to victims of the war on the humanitarian level by Israel—by its citizens—by its organizations—is further evidence of the human stance we expect of ourselves and of our people.

Perhaps the designation of 25 miles as the target zone to be cleared of terrorists was a mistake. Since the objective was to wipe out the terrorist bases and protect Israeli citizens, it would have helped Israel's image if no geographic limit had been announced. In war, objectives change as circumstances change and the extent of arms, munitions, artillery in the hands of the PLO unfolded only as the army went north. The issue is not whether or not American Jewry believes the action is warranted. With Israeli soldiers at the battlefield, it must be the prerogative of Israel to determine the course of action. Citizens of Israel have the right to protest or demonstrate to express their views. Those of us who are concerned about U.S. support of Israel in aid, grants, loans and political support defeat our own purpose if we permit our legislators and our government to use what they perceive as a divided Jewish community as an excuse for reducing such support.

As American Jews I do not believe we are required to support and defend every action and policy of the Israeli government—no matter in what administration. But the conduct of war can not be "second-guessed" outside of Israel.

My hope is that by the time this goes to print Habib's efforts will have succeeded and that the PLO will not be political victors in military defeat. My prayer is that with the pursuance of the Camp David process the Palestinian people will not be caught in the net of

political maneuvering and that a solution will be found to their plight. ●

PHYLLIS SUTKER is president of Pioneer Women, The Women's Labor Zionist Organization of America.



E/L/U/L, the Covenant mouth.

"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." S.S. 6.3

Responses from our overseas readers

We sent our question to all our overseas readers by air-mail and in an envelope. We thought their replies would be of special interest and have put them together here, occasionally with abridgment.

David Bedein

While Israeli peace circles may challenge the wisdom of a full scale war against a guerrilla movement, few speak of an "immoral" policy *a la* Vietnam. When instances of inhumane actions have been raised, response has been swift. Witness the investigation and subsequent firing of Israeli West Bank officials in the military government after the courageous press conference called by Peace Now activists returning from reserve officer duty in the West Bank in the spring. The elimination of the PLO can only give Israeli progressives the greatest opportunity we have ever had to open the way for a Palestinian Sadat to address the *Knesset*. ●

DAVID BEDEIN, *community organizer, Safed, Israel.*

Geo. D. Braun

Israel can't drop a bomb and expect it to stay suspended in mid-air while the soul-searching goes on about whether to let it explode or not. In this Beirut matter, the die was cast when Israel went into Beirut. She should have just maintained her momentum, having made her critical decision, until the goal of peace was achieved—albeit at a terrible price, because the price of hesitation is still more terrible. The moral and humane action was, once the show was on the road, to use all the speed, surprise and verve (which had served Israel so well in the past) to put an end once and for all to the PLO and *its* threat to star, cross, crescent etc. ●

GEO. D. BRAUN, *Caracas, Venezuela*

Isi J. Leibler

Israel has struck a significant blow on behalf of the civilized world against Terror International run by the PLO acting as a proxy for Moscow. It has destroyed Syria's attempts to dominate Lebanon. And in the stunning triumph of its air force over the Soviet missiles in the Bekaa Valley it has shown that Western technology still has a decisive edge over Soviet military hardware. Moscow's standing and power have been diminished in the Middle East.

There is now, for the first time in a decade, a real chance that Lebanon can be reconstructed as a peaceful society, that Lebanon can indeed be for the Lebanese. As is obvious even from the distorted television coverage, those Lebanese in their thousands who have welcomed the Israeli troops as liberators regard the war, for all its horror, as preferable to the misery of what preceded it. There is also a prospect, perhaps for the first time since 1967, that the Palestinians, who, when it came to the crunch, found themselves abandoned by their Arab brothers, will now realize that the PLO has led them down a blind alley. They may well accept that the best hope for securing their legitimate rights lies in following Anwar Sadat's example of reconciliation with Israel, not Yasser Arafat's doomed fantasy of Israel's liquidation.

A double standard has overtaken judgements of Israel which has been dramatically underlined in the press coverage of this latest conflict... During the Lebanese civil war beginning in 1975, 100,000 civilians were killed as a result of the PLO presence and the invasion of the Syrian "peacekeeping" forces who all too often provided the peace of the grave. Where was the international community? In the same region in recent times 100,000 Iranians and Iraqis have been killed, many civilians amongst them. How many pious TV debates do we recall on the subject? The slaughter of 25,000 Syrian civilians by their own government earlier this year in the town of Hama was not even reported in most Australian newspapers. •

ISI J. LEIBLER, *chairman, Asia Pacific Branch, International Advisory Committee, World Jewish Congress, Victoria, Australia.*

Charles S. Liebman

I don't feel there was anything particularly non-humane in Israel's activity in the Lebanese war unless one adopts the position that since the war itself was unnecessary the killing that resulted is by definition inhumane. But I must say I am uneasy about those who condemn the morality of Israel's activity in Lebanon, not only because the world press distorted its action, but because, having served in Lebanon during the war,

I know that everything I saw and heard myself reflected great concern with civilian needs. In many respects, I believe the Israeli army behaved in exemplary fashion. Part of the reason may be that, beyond the basic humanitarianism that characterizes the IDF, the Lebanese civilians were viewed as allies or potential allies. The treatment of and attitude toward West Bank Palestinians, for example, is not nearly as exemplary.

All this, however, is to suggest that the wrong question is being raised. The Lebanese invasion was stupid rather than immoral. Though I confess, had the war ended the first week, I might have applauded the results. The government's attitude toward the West Bank and the Palestinians compounds stupidity with immorality. The question is what should American Jews who share this sentiment do. My own feeling is that the very existence of Israel as a "Jewish" state is at stake. I hope American Jews who feel as I do would overcome their reservations about interfering in matters affecting Israeli lives when their lives are not at stake. I think American Jews must overcome their scruples in this regard. *Et la'asot hefeyru toratecha.* "It is a time to work for the Lord, they may break your 'Torah'." Obviously, the most appropriate action is to come to Israel and make your voices heard here. But, short of that, I think American Jews are obliged to protest actively against the policies of the Israeli government. Silence is comparable to acquiescence and provides the government with indirect support. It seems to me that Peace Now is the best available forum for expressing one's protest. •

CHARLES S. LIEBMAN, *Professor of Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.*

הַשִּׁיבֵנו אֲבִינוּ לְתוֹרַתְךָ
וְקַרְבֵנו מַלְכֵנו לְעִבּוּדְךָ
וְהַחְזִירֵנו בְּתַשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה

Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah. Bring us near, our King, to Your service. Bring us to You in perfect repentance.

Noah Lucas

Diaspora Zionists listening to Israel will believe any propaganda if it is presented as the truth, but are unwilling to believe any truth that is presented as propaganda. It is therefore difficult to be politically effective in criticizing Israeli policy.

Can 'Peace For Galilee' be the true rationale for a war

which in 17 days took twice the toll in Israeli lives that the PLO inflicted on Israel in 17 years?

Israel's official fund-raising line that the war in Lebanon is being waged to expunge terrorism can be swallowed by Israel's lovers only if they implicitly acknowledge a catastrophic moral deterioration of Israel. The lack of proportionality in the slaughter of innocents for such an aim could only be vindicated within a racist frame of reference in which Palestinian-Arab and Lebanese life are held dirt-cheap.

Not that the geopolitical strategy which is the true foundation of Israeli policy is exempt from criticism on its own ground. Morality in this context is measured in success and failure.

Having draped a white sheet embroidered with the Red Shield of David over the stricken form of Lebanon, Israel can now confidently assert a monopoly of intimidation rights to its north and east. Hitherto it had to share these claimed rights with the PLO and Syria to the north, and with the PLO and Jordan to the east. Begin, Sharon and Eitan can now focus with total concentration and without interference on the subjugation of the West Bank through the skein of Begin's travesty of autonomy.

"may the Lord bless you and protect you; may his countenance shine upon you & be gracious to you; may the Lord favor you and grant you peace"	יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ: יְיָ ה' פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִזְנוּךָ: יְיָ ה' פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִשְׂמַח בְּךָ שְׁלוֹמֶךָ: פְּדוּתֵנוּ
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Can the greed for possession of the whole land be consistent in the long term with Israel's security? Can Israel justify its control of Samaria, Judea and Philistia even if this necessitates Israeli control over Phoenicia and Golan, and, who knows, Gilad, Moab and what not, at the price of settling down to permanent siege and permanent war with all its Asian neighbors, as Jabotinsky in so choosing in 1923 thought it could and as Begin in so choosing today believes it must?

If you like your Bible straight you can well understand and safely ignore the zealots. But when atheists like Sharon and Eitan are in the driver's seat and secularists like Begin adumbrate the biblical vision of national glory, the terms of discourse become uncomfortably fluid. When theology is reduced to ideology and presented in the guise of strategy you have to know three languages to understand what is going on and, as the war is waged in the name of peace, you need also

(eighteen months prematurely by Orwell's reckoning) to be adept in Newspeak.

Israel has inescapably politicized Jewish existence. For the sake of the West Bank it has undertaken a new war against all the Arabs east of Suez and has drawn the Jews of the diaspora into this war under false pretenses. For American Jews, perhaps uniquely in view of their strategic political location, political effectiveness is attainable: by opposition to the Administration's Middle East policy which underwrites the bill for Israel's adventures, and renders them capable, at least at the level of short-term delusion, of implementation.

DR. NOAH LUCAS, *Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Sheffield in Britain, author of The Modern History of Israel.*

Emanuel Rackman

Those American Jews described in the question should disqualify themselves totally from being apologists and lobbyists for the State of Israel. No accused who believes in his innocence would hire an attorney to represent him if the attorney did not share the same belief in his client's innocence.

And on the Days of Awe those same Jews should ponder, in the spirit of the tradition, what in their psyches prevented them from understanding how the overwhelming majority of their co-religionists in Israel felt. Perhaps like the rest of us they will discover a *sitrah achra* ["The Other Side, the devil"] of another kind, and even viler. ●

EMANUEL RACKMAN, *president, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.*

Reader responses

Over one hundred responses from our readers arrived by our deadline. We are grateful to all who wrote and appreciative of the outpouring of Jewish concern and compassion which the responses reflect. Alas, we cannot print every heartfelt word. What we present here may not be the authors' chief points. Since there was much repetition, we have given space to those comments which introduce a fresh aspect of this complex matter. At the same time we have tried to represent fairly the substantive division of the replies and the arguments commonly offered. We shall publish further reader correspondence in our next issue.

In a world uncongenial to angels it may be moral as well as wise to remember the Talmud's dictum (paraphrased): He who is soft where he should be firm will eventually be cruel where he should be compassionate. ●

NATHAN A. BARACK, *Rabbi, Congregation Beth El, Sheboygan, WI.*

A sovereign country has a right and duty to arm and fight for its freedom. Neither the U.S.A. nor the world at large has a right to sit in judgement of Israel. Israel's citizens alone are paying the cost. One may counsel the Israelis, privately, but one should not feed its enemies with pictures of internal differences that only fan the flames of anti-Semitism. ●

CHARLES BELLER, *New York, N. Y.*

Committed American Zionists have the right and the responsibility to make their voices heard on issues that will affect the future of the Jewish State and its relationship to Diaspora Jewry. The key issue is not support or dissent from specific policies, but rather the ongoing commitment of Diaspora Jewry to the State of Israel. This support is essential for the future survival of Israel as a Zionist State, as well as for the survival of the diaspora communities themselves. Meaningful dialogue is an essential element in this relationship. Diaspora Jewry cannot demand an equal voice in determining Israeli policy, but that does not mean that its views are of no importance. The dissenters from today's policy must continue to strengthen their ties and commitments to Israel, and realize that acquiring an equal voice in the determination of policy can come about only as a result of equal commitment as expressed by *aliyah*. ●

GARY BENNETT, *chief representative, United Kibbutz Movement in North America, New York, N. Y.*

I am a humanist and it has always been easy to rally to my beloved Israel's side because she too has always behaved, not as a nation of automatons, but as a nation of humanists. Until now. Now I say, "Shame! Shame on Israel for so violating that most sacred of commands 'Choose life'." ●

JUDY ANN BENNETT, *Rock Island, IL.*

I have been troubled by Israel's invasion of Lebanon and disappointed that so few of the rabbis in Canada or the United States have publicly raised the moral issues involved. Of course, there are huge pragmatic and political issues as well, and everyone expresses regret at the civilian casualties, but surely the moral issues for Jews go deeper and, if we are to remain true to our heritage, must not be dismissed as self-hate, lack of courage or divisive. In raising moral issues about the invasion, there is no need to argue about the aims of the PLO; for all of its political pretensions, it is at this time a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction. I do not know the answer, and I am not being helped to search for an answer by our rabbis. This

last is what troubles me most for our future. ●
DAVID B. BROOKS, *Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.*

My personal experience and belief is that God planned it this way. God guided the Israeli Cabinet and they accepted. No longer shall we devout Jews lie down in the square to be slaughtered rather than violate the Sabbath. We were taught a lesson at the Red Sea when we had to wade in up to our necks before God parted the waters. Were our Israeli brothers wrong, they would have been struck down early. ●

SAMUEL K. CLARK, *Lebanon, PA.*

In the end, the war in Lebanon may be seen as a major step, equal to Camp David, towards resolving the Arab-Israel conflict. If American Jews would like to see progress towards such a final resolution, the way to achieve it is not to engage in breast-beating about Israeli immorality, but to begin to encourage Israel to accept the concept of Palestinian rights. But with the PLO no longer a disruptive factor, there is now for the first time the possibility of the creation of a Palestinian state, tied to Israel by treaties of peace and economic cooperation. ●

JOSEPH ELLIN, *professor of philosophy, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.*

We Jews have enough enemies in this world without being our own worst enemies. The theory of the double standard applied by the hypocrites of this world is disturbing enough. When this view is applied by Jew to Jew it is indefensible. ●

WILBUR EPSTEIN, *Astoria, NY.*

It is time for our lily-livered lovers of long-lasting terrorist torment of the State and the citizens of Israel to understand the war of attrition with the Palestinians must be completed.

There are times when only one method will bring peace; and that is war. The attack against the PLO and their fellow travelers in Lebanon is such a case. ●

SHELDON EZRING, *Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Charlottesville, VA.*

Israel has shown great concern and demonstrated much restraint in the way she has conducted the "Peace for Galilee" operation. Most of the world will disagree. (Remember that much of the world saw Israel as the aggressor in '67 and even in '73). But Israel will not die so that the world will speak well of it. ●

EDWIN FARBER, *Rabbi, Temple Samu-El, Miami, FL.*

The impact of the shelling on the North has been largely unappreciated in this country. Social and economic life simply cannot be conducted from a bomb shelter. It is partly because the effect on northern Israel, as well as the growing ability of the PLO to disrupt and destroy, has been so minimized that it has been possible to regard Israeli action in Lebanon as overzealous and unjustified. Additionally, the belief that the effort to eliminate the threat of the PLO should be limited to pushing them back 25 miles - a belief that, in fact, lay behind the failure of the 1978 Litani operation - so that they can return to strike another day is painful to behold. Equally painful is the reproach that the world was betrayed by Israel's original declaration that it would only advance 25 miles. The conviction that Israel should have forewarned its enemies as well as the many judgemental bystanders as to its plans is unprecedented, tactically stupid and morally dangerous. ●

ELISHA S. FISCH, *Hopewell Junction, NY.*

Any reply to those American Jews (German descent mostly) who challenge Israel's invasion of Lebanon would be lending dignity to an undeserving understanding of the subject and an unknowledgeable understanding of New Near East Geography and the History of Israel's birth. ●

BERNARD F. FISCHER, *Longport, NJ.*

It is unfortunate that some people yearn for the good old days when Jews could be led to the slaughter with a song on their lips and gas down their throats. My advice to these people at these Days of Awe would be to please help somebody else! ●

WALLACE H. FLAX, *Jericho, NY.*

The Begin-Sharon government was not interested in peace. Security was not the issue. Israel the mightiest super-power in the Mid-East. Security the issue? Hardly!

What then was the motive for the invasion? Not terrorism, but terror. It was the refusal of the Palestinians and others to accept Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights as well as the impending annexation of the West Bank, together with Gaza. It was not so much to bring stability to Lebanon as it was to bring an end to the Palestinians. It was not for Israel's security or defense. It was for expansionism. It was to destroy by force the infrastructure of the Palestinians so that they have no choice but to accept permanent military subjugation and occupation of the West Bank. From all

sides, we hear and correctly so: What's happened to Israel? It's not the Israel we once knew.

How can we support the current government? In the name of God, in the name of Judaism, in the name of Torah, in the name of every Jewish value we hold sacred—how can we? We are God's messengers of peace and love, and not the Likkud's spiritual shock-troops of over-kill.

And let there be no mistake about it. You and I, we bear some responsibility for the blood-bath in Lebanon. We are responsible because of our unquestioned support of whoever rules the Knesset. And because of the political pressure we have brought to bear upon our elected officials in the United States government to accede to all of Israel's military requests.

We must send a message to Begin. We do and will support Zion. But it is Zion, the ideal. Not the aberration we have witnessed since the present government took power. ●

JEROME W. GROLLMAN, *Rabbi, United Hebrew Congregation, St. Louis, MO.*

Israel's supporters have not only the *right* but, indeed, the moral *obligation* to be critical of Israel when they feel the state has taken the wrong course. The Israeli advance into Lebanon has brought needless injury and death to many people of the country—*needless* because it will not bring the peace and security to Israel for which we all so fervently hope. The Israeli army may force the military arm of the PLO out of Lebanon, but it will not push the desire for self-determination out of the minds of the Palestinian people.

Because of my commitment to the State of Israel, I feel compelled to encourage acts of reaching toward peace and to express my concern that Israel's present hard-line policies jeopardize her own best interests as well as her moral integrity. To those American Jews who share my concern, I suggest that you speak out. Let the world know that American Jewish opinion on Israel is not monolithic. Israel and the Jewish community will be strengthened, not weakened, by evidence of conscientious dissent within their ranks. ●

CHERYL G. KASSON, *Denver, CO.*

Has Israel somehow betrayed her Zionist ideological birthright? Israel's Zionist heritage contains many, often contradictory, components - some religious, others anti-religious; some socialist, others free-market. Zionist history has been marked by the continuing clash of these ideas, and today's Israeli society contains

elements of all of these influences, many still in conflict with each other.

Assimilated American Jews who have absorbed the humanistic and Christian ethical standards and ideals of Western intellectual culture were naturally attracted to the secular Zionist ideology from which Israel's Labor Party originated. As the state of Israel evolved under Labor Party leadership it had to abandon many of the early principles of that ideology. The pious *Yerushalmies* and the idealistic Zionists soon found themselves vastly outnumbered by hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors and refugees from North Africa and the Arab states who were motivated by neither religion nor ideology, but were merely searching for a refuge and an opportunity to rebuild their lives along their own models. Israel's unavoidable pre-occupation with self-defense and the vivid memory of recent persecution which is the common legacy of so many of her citizens forced a continuing re-evaluation of her secular Zionist ideals even by the leaders of the Labor governments.

With the election of the Begin government the people of Israel clearly signaled to the world the need to thoroughly revise the secular Zionist principles cherished by the American liberal Jewish establishment. When Begin was elected a second time and the pressure of world events continued to force Israel to take up arms in her own defense, those American Jews felt themselves increasingly betrayed.

The truth, however, is more complex. Zionist principles have *evolved* through the hard experience of over three decades of statehood in an ever more hostile world. Israel's leaders have learned that, in order for a Jewish state to survive, it must heed a broader vision of the Jewish heritage. Although Israel's leaders still yearn to implement Isaiah's prophecies and beat their swords into plowshares, they now realize that first they must learn the lessons of the books of Joshua, the Judges, Samuel and Kings in conquering and defending a land coveted by others. The religious Zionist ideology, which has become stronger in Israeli society while secular Zionism has become weaker, anticipates the hostility of the community of nations, and includes guidelines for war as well as peace. It is based upon the Biblical vision of the original Jewish state, and claims the land of Israel for the Jewish people by Divine decree, without apology.

This certainly is not the vision of secular American Jews nor the liberal media, but it is the only one which will sustain a Jewish state in today's hostile world. American friends of Israel should therefore adjust their visions to

that reality, instead of pining for an Israel that never really was, and that could certainly never be again. ●

YAAKOV KORNREICH, *head of public relations, National Council of Young Israel, and editor, Viewpoint, New York, NY.*

To have stopped twenty-five miles into Lebanon would have permitted the PLO to regroup, rearm and start once again to implement their covenant which calls for the complete and systematic destruction of the Jewish state. This is what was tried in 1978 and failed.

All of us regret the loss of even one innocent soul in the campaign. But Israel's armed forces conducted itself above and beyond the call of duty practicing *Tohar Haneshek* purity of the use of arms, thereby suffering many casualties because the PLO was literally hiding behind civilians, guns ablaze.

First of all it has spared from constant attack the Jewish settlements in the Galilee bordering on Lebanon. Secondly it has destroyed the military capability of the PLO whose caches of arms revealed enough equipment to arm not the fifteen thousand men of the PLO but 150,000. It is thought that the Russians intended to use Lebanon as a possible staging base in which to deploy a large force in the future. Thirdly, it has provided the Lebanese, who by and large have welcomed the Israelis as liberators, Christians and Moslem alike, with an opportunity to once again become an independent state free of all foreign occupation, Syrians, PLO, and Israelis alike. Fourthly, it has struck a mighty blow against international terrorism which used Lebanon as a training base for the Baader Meinhoff gang, the Red Brigades of Italy etc. Two thousand non-Palestinian terrorists were captured by Israel. Fifthly, it has also dealt a blow against the military prowess of the USSR and bolstered the status of the U.S. military by its overwhelming victory over the Syrian missile bases in the Bekaa valley. ●

HERBERT ROSE, *Rabbi, Har Ha-Shem, Boulder, CO.*

I was in Jerusalem on June 6, and for a week after. Even the "doves" of *Shalom Achshav* agreed that, as a *temporary measure*, the Galilee settlements had to be liberated from being harassed by PLO shellings. To be sure, those who do not share the Begin-Sharon-Likud fantasies of the "Greater Israel," incorporating "Judea and Samaria," pointed out that the success of the "Peace for Galilee" action—it was attained in three days—did not provide a solution of the Palestinian problem.

It is unrealistic to argue that consideration for civilian populations should guide military strategists. In point of fact, exposing civilian populations to the horrors of indiscriminate bombings is often the decisive factor. Until war will be *outlawed*, we must reckon with the fact that those able to do so will do what the U.S.A. did to Hiroshima.

My *moral* objections and *reasoned* opposition to Israel's all-out war in Lebanon are that a.) Israel's superior war potential is not deployed *against an army* but tries to dislodge and destroy a PLO contingent of about 6,000 which holds the population of West Beirut as hostages *because* these people have no place where to take refuge. b.) The Palestinian problem will not be solved but aggravated by the destruction or immobilization of the Arafat group. Mr. Begin, of all people, should know that a political problem will never be solved by the military recourse to suppression! The expectation that the destruction of the PLO elite (only the elite) in Beirut will do away with Palestinian nationalism is a fatal illusion. On the contrary, Israel's two-month war has radicalized the Palestinians, who clamor for *independence* in a state of their own, and reject *autonomy*, just as the *Yishuv* did. ●

TRUDE WEISS-ROSMARIN, *Editor, The Jewish Spectator, Santa Monica, CA.*

(We shall continue with this correspondence in our next issue.)

We acknowledge but regret

Many other thoughtful, informed and moving letters came to us, not a few of them highly passionate. Despite doubling the size of this issue and holding a few for the next issue, we could not publish even a part of every one. But we wish to pay this small tribute to

those who shared their Jewish concern with us. Our sincere thanks to: Munya Benickes, Los Angeles, CA; Rabbi Esor W. Ben-Sorek, Seaford, NY; Ethel Cohen, New York, NY; Joseph G. Costantini, M.D., Cincinnati, OH; Louis Finkelstein, Lavercock, PA; Wilbur E. Hills, Vero Beach, FL; Morris H. Hirsh, Chicago, IL; Sol Klass, C.P.A., Maplewood, NJ; Sadie Landsman, Miami Beach, FL; Rudolf B. Lang, West Hartford, CT; Albert Liebowitz, White Plains, NY; William Miller, Roselle, NJ; James E. Myers, Springfield, IL; Carl W. Nelson, Jr., Arlington, VA; Professors Robert and Sally Power-Ross, Minneapolis, MN; Selma Ross, Hagerstown, MD; Benson N. Schambelan, Philadelphia, PA; Ivan C. Schatten, M.D., East Detroit, MI; Max Scheman, New York, NY; Benjamin Serota, D.O., Philadelphia, PA; Rabbi Joel E. Soffin, Succasunna, NJ; Tillie Wetter, Greenbelt, MD; Max Zimering, Brooklyn, NY.

WE WELCOME *Mitchell Cohen* as a contributing editor. He is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Baruch College and Editor of *The Jewish Frontier*.

OUR ART WORK for this issue was done by *Beth Klausner Haber*, Poughkeepsie, NY [on pages 124, 125, 126, and 127] and *Betsy Platkin Teutsch*, New York, NY [on pages 129, 130, 131, and 132]

TO PROVIDE *maximum space* for this symposium we have postponed *K'ra*, *The Sh'ma* Book Review.

APOLOGIES TO *Nosson Scherman* whose letter on tax credits we had hoped to print in this issue but which we have postponed until after our symposium.

GIVING TZDEKAH at this season? Please remember *Sh'ma*, Box 567, Port Washington, NY, 11050.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF POETRY for a special *Sh'ma* poetry issue should be sent to *Naomi Janowitz*, 406 Napoleon Blvd. South Bend, IN, 46617.
