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Sh'ma שמע

We are now faced with an apparently intractable, increasingly ferocious Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This issue of Sh'ma *offers a series of perspectives on how American Jews might talk about the crisis. Some of the reflections might shock. These are shocking times, and that some are now thinking the unthinkable might well unsettle us. But the only way out of the present quagmire is to listen intently, to weigh previously inconceivable options, and to arrive at conclusions that contain just enough morality and just enough pragmatism.*

At the Crossroads

Stephen P. Cohen

The collective narrative of American Jews is changing much faster than our collective consciousness and our way of thinking and talking about ourselves. We used to think of Jewish history as unfolding somewhere else. If it was the saga of victimhood, it was in Europe, or Russia, or maybe in North Africa or South America. If it was the epic of national rebirth and individual refuge, it was in Israel. We were passive spectators exhorted to become active in rescuing the endangered and aiding the effort in Israel. We were acting as responsible Jews insofar as we fulfilled the commandment of memory, and insofar as we advocated for Israel with our government. Some few of us felt keenly enough that this was inadequate and, searching for participation in Jewish history, made aliyah.

This was a narrative that ignored the American century as a Jewish fact. It treated the American Jewish success story as a story of individual achievement, not as a primary element of Jewish national life. It treated the ideology of center and periphery as if it were an existential truth. It was a Ben Gurionist hope for aliyah, based on his laser focus on his life's work of founding the Jewish State, but distorted by his East European nationalist optical illusion that the emergence of Israel combined with the inevitability of anti-Semitism would guarantee the withering away of the Diaspora. We internalized the notion that we were a vanishing community, as we had already been so diminished in our understanding of our significance in Jewish history.

On September 11, the enemy of Israel and the enemy of America became the same enemy.

This misperception cannot survive September 11. On September 11, the enemy of Israel and the enemy of America became the same enemy, and the same allies became necessary for both countries to defeat that enemy. The two bastions of Jewish refuge and security were both shown to be vulnerable: New York and Tel Aviv, and their vulnerability came from the same sources. American Jewry is at the crossroads of these two vulnerabilities, and seeing ourselves clearly at the intersection of these historical crises is what we owe ourselves, what we owe America, and what we owe Israel. This should be the great moment of American Jewry to understand we are now center stage — not behind the scenes, not in the audience, and not just the producers. We also have to write our own lines and direct our own performance. American Jewry's great American patriotism and voluntary,

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therefore creative, deep Jewish sensibility come together not as a dual loyalty but as a redoubled loyalty and responsibility. We should have a depth of understanding of what this war is and what peace after this war must be, and what "winning" this war requires and what "winning" it forbids. What this war means, not only militarily but conceptually and spiritually, is what we should help to articulate.

September 11, 2001, and September 28, 2000 (the beginning of the second Intifada), are two dates that should make American Jews uniquely able to understand both events and meet the challenges of each. We should be able to link the two without fear; to distinguish the two in strategy and tactics; to be awakened to the needs both of our own unbending resolve and of empathetic living with the other; and to know how to defeat hatred with superior force but not with superior hatred, to fight not with cruelty but with a common vision of a better future.

The American Jewish intellectual and communal leadership must have the wisdom and perspective to guide the war of ideas that is at the core of this battle. Within Islam and within the Arab world, there is a struggle we should understand well. The militant defense of a tradition that seems threatened is a problem for Islam as well as Judaism. The effort to defend Jews who seek a balance of tradition and modernity, of conservation and change, against the sneering and contempt and ostracism of fundamentalism is never completely over in any of the great religious traditions.

Neither America nor Israel can afford to confuse the projection of power to defend ourselves and our right to the wealth our societies produce with the refusal of dominance of others, the rejection of imperial ambition and practice, and the assumption of a proper role in economic development for others.

American Jews as a people with historical perspective should be reminding America and Israel of the long-term perspective of the consequences of historic, cultural, and religious hatreds while we fight our immediate battles. American Jews should have empathy for one of the great religious traditions, Islam. It is a monotheism that emerges out of the Jewish understanding of God. We know that separating extremism and extremists from the pious and the faith itself is a matter of enormous importance. It requires respect for the whole, while cutting out the rotten worm.

This is our time to be Americans to the Israelis and Jews to Americans. Being American Jews means being good citizens here, and good Jews everywhere, and carrying history with us, within us. This is our time.

Dr. Stephen P. Cohen has pioneered Track Two Diplomacy — behind the scenes efforts in bringing Arabs and Israelis together. He founded the Institute for Middle East Peace and Development in 1979 to act as facilitator and private intermediary in peace-making and peace-building, and has served as its President ever since. He also currently serves as the National Scholar of the Israel Policy Forum.

Taking on the Ideology of Islamicism

David Makovsky

I consider Stephen P. Cohen to be a good friend, and deeply admire his life-long devotion to Middle East peace. His commitment is rooted in deep concern for the future of Israel and its neighbors, and is matched only by his well-lit, analytical mind. My understanding of Steve's core thesis is that American Jews should avoid the "clash of civilizations" confrontationalist school of thought, and recognize that clashes exist within civilizations. Since the United States, Israel, and American Jews have a direct interest in the outcome of that internal battle waged between Moslem moderates and extremists, the actions taken in Jerusalem, Washington, and New York need to be guided with this uppermost in mind.

While I basically agree with this, it is important to be modest about the role of external factors in shaping such a largely internal, monumental, historic debate within Islam — one that has to be fully waged. I tend to believe that external factors are at the margins while the bulk of the effort comes from within. I want to emphasize this should not exempt any and all of us from acting judiciously.

There is no doubt that, for purposes of survival, several Moslem and in particular Arab regimes have, often ruthlessly, crushed people wanting to foment

revolution in the name of political Islam. While the state has taken on this people known as Islamicists, rarely have they taken on the ideology known as Islamicism (not to be confused with mere practitioners of Islam). The reasons for this vary from country to country: viewing the ideology as enhancing the legitimacy of these non-democratic regimes; deflecting attention from their own shortcomings; tapping into the frustrations in the Moslem world as it watches the ascendance of the West and centuries of economic and technological Moslem decline; and, of course, anger at American and Israeli policies that they find objectionable.

Not taking on the ideology of Islamicism has disastrous consequences. Religious intolerance does not enable countries to adequately educate their next generation, create democracies, and grow their economies, as Pakistan's leader Pervez Musharraf has said. While it should be noted that Musharraf has yet to be elected, he has demonstrated remarkable courage. He represents a rarity among Moslem leaders, understanding that the real war is a cultural war from within the Moslem countries. Leaders need to say why Islamicism is a disaster. According to Musharraf, Moslems represent a quarter of the world but their economic output equals only half that of Germany. It is not enough to denounce the problems of Islamicism. Their peoples need to be confronted with an alternative vision of good governance, economic growth, pluralism, and tolerance; otherwise, terrorism will continue to reappear.

I am not arguing that every Moslem country should have its own "Altelena" (Hagana firing on the Irgun ship in 1948) and face the prospect of civil war. The cultural war that I am suggesting must be multipronged and, hopefully, peaceful. But, at its core, it must have a commitment to pluralism of ideas and religions, coexistence with the West, and governance by way of an evolutionary (not revolutionary) political and economic reform. In key countries, that would include more women in education and the workforce. Otherwise, Islamicism wins amid economic desperation, rampant corruption, and a general lack of hope for a better future — amid countries with an extraordinary demographic youth bulge about to enter the job market. (U.S. officials say more than 70 percent of Saudi Arabia is under fifteen years of age.)

In other words, this problem runs far deeper than settlements in the West Bank or U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia. Even though they are clearly irritants, each for very different reasons, both need to be addressed seriously and, in the case of settlements, most will need to be dismantled; U.S. bases will most probably be phased out at a later date. Yet, this is cold comfort to those concerned with peace in the Middle East who have never heard Yasser Arafat say, sounding like Musharraf talking to his clerics as he did three months before September 11, "it is intolerance that holds our society in its grip."

While a resolution of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians requires a different essay, it is fair to say that it seems impossible for peace to seriously take hold, or for a resolution to Jerusalem and the holy sites, without a historic and religious dialogue between Moslems and Jews. Admittedly, this will not be easy. Unlike the relatively successful dialogue between Jews and the Vatican, Moslems have no central ecclesiastical address, no guilt over the Holocaust, and no *a priori* Western orientation. The famed Maimonides, who served as a royal physician to the Sultan in Egypt, even wrote that such ties between Jews and Moslems may be harder than with Christians because Moslems believe that Jews forged the biblical story.

Any dialogue involving Jewish and Moslem clerics could be held on the basis of the Alexandria Declaration. The good part of that event is that it brought together prominent Moslem, Jewish, and Christian religious figures declaring that terrorism was antithetical to religion and voiced prayer for reconciliation in Jerusalem. Its definition of terrorism, however, was rather vague and thus open to interpretation. Moreover, there seems little doubt that the event was only possible because world attention was turned toward Islam in the wake of the September 11 tragedy. Nonetheless, this declaration should be the foundation of future dialogue between leading religious figures.

Yet, as arduous as such a dialogue may be and as relatively minor as it may be in the context of a broader cultural war within the Moslem world that must be waged, it is an imperative that it be tried. There is still a lot at stake.

David Makovsky, Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, is former Executive Editor of The Jerusalem Post *and diplomatic correspondent of* Ha'aretz. *He is currently working on his second book on the Middle East peace process.*

At the Divide

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

I have always regarded *Sh'ma* as a unique forum where the private and the public intersect and am therefore taking the liberty of beginning my remarks on a very personal note. Since we first met as graduate students at the Cambridge intersection between the Vietnamese and the Six Day Wars, Steve Cohen and I have walked down many roads, stood at many barricades, and reached many crossroads. We have invoked the first-person plural to designate our personal attachments and our collective loyalties. So it is with great sadness that I find in his essay a plurality of selves that is not large enough to include me.

When he refers to "*our* collective consciousness and *our* way of thinking and talking about *our*selves," Steve Cohen, who was born in Montreal and spent a few years living in Jerusalem and many more years working tirelessly for peace in the Middle East, is leaving me — who was born and remain American and have lived most of my adult life in Jerusalem — out. Not because I am a self-declared "Israeli" and he a self-declared "American." But because, rather than abandoning the scheme of center and periphery altogether, and looking at Israeli and American Jewish cultures as manifestations of a reconfigured global civilization — each realizing different but equally authentic reflexes, and each requiring maximum vigilance to protect threatened democratic and humanitarian sensibilities — he seems to prefer to reverse periphery and center, now raising America over Israel as the place of privilege.

"The collective narrative of American Jews" may seem to Steve as plain as the nose on the collective Jewish face. To me, however, it is as *varied* as noses on faces. America, like Israel, presented 20th-century Jews with a set of invitations and opportunities. In both places history conspired with predilection to actualize certain potentialities and suppress others. No Jews anywhere in the world can afford to congratulate themselves (*our*selves) on being part of — and protected by — a more benign narrative. If we have a common cause, it should be the struggle against fanaticism, against exclusive claims to a purchase on "truth" as on "territory." Particularly because the escalation of terrorism has hijacked more ordinary political and cultural conflicts, threatening to transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a religious war between Jews and Moslems, it is necessary for Israeli and American Jews to find a common ground that does not give in to oversimplification. Precisely because the "Al Aqsa Intifada" is becoming more a tribal war, uglier and bloodier by the hour, it becomes harder for even liberal-minded American Jews to do anything but express their "solidarity" with other Jews under siege. We must do better.

Because the Intifada is becoming uglier and bloodier by the hour, American Jews feel they can do little more than express "solidarity." We must do better.

American Jews should, at least, know better. As a benign place to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, the "American century" is where the "lachrymose" Jews learned to play, where they — *we* — discovered that there is a profound but hardly explored Jewish mandate for self-invention and infinitely expandable borders of identity. I don't know that Jews have much to "teach" Americans, but I do believe there is a profound harmony between the deepest impulses of American life and the healthiest impulses of Jewish life. America as audience for or shadow of the great dramas of Jewish history "unfolding somewhere else," in Steve's words, has indeed claimed a stage of its own, and it is the stage for Jewish comedy, for celebration, inclusiveness, and the (ever-deferred) promise of a "happy end."

Israel, on the other hand, is not a very pretty

place these days. Apocalyptic despair, those post-Holocaust suicidal and homicidal reflexes that were so successfully sublimated into the eros of state-building in the 1950s and '60s, have resurfaced with a vengeance over the past eighteen months. Suicide bombings and random shootings have reduced Israeli Jews to a state of terror; bulldozing of homes by the Israeli army, destruction of the already-fragile economic and political infrastructure, and indiscriminate shooting in the territories have reduced Palestinians to desperate and vengeful attitudes and acts. Incompetent leadership on both sides has suffocated the voices of moderation and political wisdom.

Of course on the Israeli side, this scenario is more than a belated reaction to the toxins of Auschwitz. It is a largely understandable response to the violence fueled by Palestinian desperation, the legacy of Arab belligerence, the fear of Islamic fundamentalism, and the weaponry of apocalypse. But it is also something home-grown. And American Jews are not only not immune by virtue of being safe in another narrative; they have in many ways become accomplices or co-authors.

There is an overwhelming number of Americans on the xenophobic, racist side of the political and social map in Israel: settlers oblivious to the most basic rights of the people whose land we have expropriated; religious fanatics claiming exclusive propriety over religious truth and sacred sites; people for whom Jefferson and Emerson are as foreign as Aphrodite and Aristotle were to Judah Maccabee. Many of the Jews who have come here from America in the past few decades have brought their own brand of self-ghettoization that stretches from day schools in New York to Efrata in the West Bank. The most benign expression of this self-ghettoization is the widespread movement for "*hafrada*" or unilateral "separation" from the Palestinians. The most pernicious expression is the settlements with their barbed wire, their dogs, their unabashed calls for ethnic cleansing in the territories, and their draining of the moral and physical resources of what used to be the Israeli "defense" forces.

I know that Steve would not object to most of the above analysis. My quibble with him is not meant to refute the main point of his essay, which is that there are deep connections between September 28, 2000, and September 11, 2001, between the outbreak of the "Al Aqsa Intifada" in Jerusalem and the attack on the icons of commercial and military culture in America, and that American Jews have an authentic role to play in defining those connections. Rather, my quibble has to do with levels of responsibility that come not only from the comfort of our being God-fearing in the presence of a demonic enemy, but from recognizing *our own responsibility as Jews* in helping to create the disastrous situation in the Middle East. It is a moral and not merely a syntactic glitch that makes me feel left out of Steve's plurality of selves.

Many Jews from America have brought their own brand of self-ghettoization that stretches from day schools in New York to Efrata in the West Bank.

No, it is not the center and the periphery that have changed places in our time, but what we might call the life-force and the death-force. Some of us have dedicated our adult lives to fighting in both places for justice and equality within and beyond our own community; others have created ghettos that foster a sense of chosenness and inimical relations with our neighbors. In Israel the stakes are simply higher and the consequences more immediate. All Jews who have been touched by Abraham Lincoln and Abraham Joshua Heschel, by Emanuel Levinas and Ahad Ha-am, do not need the al-Qaeda to help us define who "we" are.

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, a founder along with Stephen P. Cohen of the Boston Jewish student newspaper Genesis II, *is Professor of Comparative Jewish Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has written widely on representations of the Holocaust in American, European, and Israeli literature and has recently published a book on Jerusalem as the magnet of Jewish culture*: Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination. *She has lived in Israel for nearly forty years and was active in one of the first dialogue groups between Israelis and Palestinians.*

Hard Choices Ahead

Warren Bass

As usual, Stephen P. Cohen has given us much food for thought. But I wonder whether the identity, you should forgive the phrase, that he sees between American Jews' various roles as Americans and as Jews remains quite as neat in the hard world of policy choices. Do America and Israel face the same enemy? Yes and no. Yes, al-Qaeda detests both America and Israel; no, Osama bin Laden is not Yasser Arafat. Yes, nationalist terrorism and religious terrorism are both morally offensive; no, they are not quite the same phenomenon. Yes, terrorism is vile; no, settlements are not a shrewd counter-terrorism tactic. Cohen does not blur these sorts of distinctions, but I wonder whether some of his readers will.

Moreover, for any student of Middle East history, it is, at the very least, awkward to see the inclusion of Ariel Sharon in a coalition built around the principle of noncombatant immunity. Now, coalitions are all about varying degrees of inconvenience, and there are stranger bedfellows to be had; just consider the House of Saud (whose discontents made up fifteen of the nineteen hijackers on September 11), or the rehabilitated dictator of Pakistan (whose security services backed the Taliban and the Jaish-e-Muhammad group whose members are charged with the murder of Daniel Pearl). Even so, the current Intifada, in all its ugliness, provides a real problem for a Bush administration bent on ripping up al-Qaeda, ousting Saddam Hussein, and, one hopes, tackling the underlying problems of Arab politics that give bin Ladenism operating space.

Getting all this right is critically important. It is not just Israeli lives on the line from terrorism now; in an era of catastrophic terrorism, there are worst-case scenarios out there scary enough for a nightmare and big enough for a superpower. As Cohen hints, grappling with such excruciating policy questions will require more of American Jews, as patriots and as pluralists, than the old 1980s evocations of communal unity.

Similarly, the usual knee-jerk accusations of media bias are no substitute for the serious discussions of foreign policy incumbent on any American willing to bear the burden of responsible citizenship. There are hard choices ahead. That mandates hard thinking.

Warren Bass is Director of the Special Projects/Terrorism Program at the Council on Foreign Relations and a Fellow in U.S. foreign policy studies at the Council. He is the author of a forthcoming book on the Kennedy administration's Middle East policies.

Straight Talking from Israel

Steven M. Cohen

Stephen P. Cohen issues a cogent, challenging, and eloquent call for American Jews to speak clearly, morally, and wisely both to Americans and to Israelis. He urges American Jews to "be Americans to the Israelis and Jews to Americans." As an American-Israeli Jew living in Israel, but spending much time in Jewish America, I read his words as bidding me, as well, to draw upon my multiple Jewish identities and experiences in addressing American Jews. And so, I take this opportunity to do so.

With respect to the "security situation" (Israel's equivalent of "the troubles" in Northern Ireland), Israelis have developed three major approaches, with their accompanying narratives: Victory through Strength, Land for Peace, and Unilateral Separation.

Victory through Strength advocates regard the Palestinians as implacably and unalterably opposed to Israel's very existence as a Jewish state in the Arab Middle East. The Palestinians will never be satisfied with 22 percent of pre-1948 Palestine and are only emboldened by offers of concessions, territorial or otherwise. This conflict will never be settled in the foreseeable future and can only be managed, not resolved. Expanding settlements in Judea and Samaria are not only legitimate for national, historical, and religious reasons but they also project Israeli strength

into Arab-populated areas and demonstrate that time is working against the Palestinians: the longer they wait to reach an agreement with us, the less they can expect in return. National Jewish unity coupled with tough military action will serve to lower the demands and expectations to reasonable levels and to deter Palestinian-initiated terrorism.

The Land for Peace advocates regard Palestinians as consisting of both moderates and extremists. Strengthening prospects for realization of reasonable national aspirations can strengthen the moderates and allow them to take action against the extremists. More generally, our actions can influence their level of active antagonism toward us. Expanding settlements only serves to further delegitimate forces for moderation among Palestinian leadership and bring, the Israeli army and settlers into even more direct conflict with the local Palestinian population. The occupation serves to destroy Israel's moral character, humiliate and embitter the Palestinians, weaken Israel's international standing, and generate more terrorist activity against Israel.

Unilateral Separation advocates largely despair of the Palestinians agreeing to a reasonable end-of-conflict solution in the foreseeable future. Moreover, no military response can substantially reduce terrorism, especially as the terrorists become more daring, cunning, and sophisticated. The only way to substantially reduce threat and damage is to pull back thousands of exposed settlers, move them to blocs (Ariel, Maalei Adumim, Gush Etzion) or to Israel proper, and construct a very nonporous border around Gaza and more or less along the old pre-1967 border plus the bulk of Jerusalem (admittedly, the thorniest issue in this approach). The evacuation of numerous small and scattered settlements would generate international support and put pressure on the Palestinians to moderate their positions. Should they fail to do so, at least Israel will be faced with more compact borders, with fewer settlers requiring constant military protection, and with more soldiers available to protect Israel from terrorist attack.

Out of necessity, most literate Israelis can conduct a reasonably informed conversation around the issues touched upon above. Unfortunately, most American Jews, even most American Jewish activists and leaders, are incapable of entering into this conversation or, if informed, are unwilling to do so. Even the most engaged pro-Israeli activists are singularly focused upon providing moral justification and political support for current Israeli policy, right or wrong, wise or not. In addition, the most sympathetic American Jews generally resist expressing their views on Israeli policies out of some overblown moral deference: If I'm not there, if my kids aren't serving in the army, what right do I have to engage in this conversation, let alone offer any advice?

We desperately need the engagement of American Jewish leaders and activists on these issues. Their advice, expressed in every conceivable way, is welcome.

In point of fact, we desperately need the engagement of American Jewish leaders and activists on these issues. Their advice, expressed in every conceivable way, is welcome. Jewish leaders today seem so much less *au courant* with security issues than (I think) were their counterparts in the 1980s. True or not, leaders need to inform themselves more thoroughly: habitually read *Ha'aretz* online and bring Israeli advocates of various perspectives to speak in Jewish communal contexts. American Jews need to engage in the global Jewish conversation on Israel's most critical decisions, and even to pitch in with those Israelis who come closest to reflecting their particular worldview. Failure to do so deprives us of your passion, your distinctive perspective, and your wisdom. In the end, the voters of Israel and our leaders will make the fateful decisions that will bring us more security, or more death and destruction. But these decisions must not be taken in isolation, without the benefit and solidarity of the world Jewish family, engaged, arguing, and struggling as it has for thousands of years.

Steven M. Cohen teaches at the Melton Centre for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University. His most recent book, with Arnold Eisen, is entitled The Jew Within: Self, Family and Community in America.

A Need for Leadership

Brian Lurie

While Stephen P. Cohen's call to action for American Jewry is important, on the macro-level, it will fall on deaf ears. American Jewry is not well enough organized to take on this leadership role. As individual Jews, we may play a role as we have in the past (e.g. Senator Dianne Feinstein, who spearheaded a recent resolution sent to President Bush to support Israel) as American Jewry, however, we continue to lag behind.

I recently met with a cross-section of young Israeli leaders. They were only too willing to look beyond the narrow confines of Israel to find comfort in an involvement with the Diaspora. One can hardly blame them. Thus, if American Jewry were willing to take on Cohen's challenge, the stage is set and I would be personally thrilled.

Could we rise to the occasion? Where would we start? Conceptually, we have to understand that as Israel goes, so goes the Western world. If terrorism wins in Israel — suicide bombers triumphing over a strong nation-state — we, the United States and Europe, are going to fall victim to the same sort of terrorism. September 11 was just a beginning. The terrorist demands might be different but the quality of our lives will suffer the same fate as our counterparts in Israel — clearly the front line for all Western societies. This is the role we can play in fighting against terror.

Just as America needs to rebuild Afghanistan, so too American Jews must find a way to reach out and help our Moslem brothers and sisters. The Israeli-Arab population is an obvious place to begin. Twenty percent of Israeli citizens are Israeli Arab Palestinians. They are considered a major security concern by all the security agencies in Israel. The number of Israeli Jews who think that "transfer" is a viable option has grown from what was once considered an extremist fringe to 45 percent. Ultimately, Israel's acceptance in the Middle East might well be measured by how successfully it integrates Israeli Arabs into Jewish Israeli society.

American Jewish institutions can play a major role in helping this integration. First, they can advocate on behalf of the Israeli Arab to the government of Israel. In its Declaration of Independence, Israel spoke of equality for all its citizens. This must not be expressed only in words but in deeds — equal education, health services, infrastructure, and jobs are areas where Israeli Arab communities are under-funded and vastly inferior compared to the resources allocated to Israeli Jews. More national Jewish organizations — like the Joint Distribution Committee, the San Francisco Jewish Federation, the New Israel Fund, and the Abraham Fund — could support projects that help raise the quality of life for Israeli Arabs. Second, American Jewry should provide greater material and human assistance to aid the integration and quality-of-life improvement of Israeli Arab communities. Many Israeli Jews agree that integrating Israeli Arabs into the culture of Israel is imperative, and they will become our partners in this endeavor.

By and large the American Jewish community is frightened and dispirited like most Americans at this time. Israel is truly at a crossroads, facing its most difficult challenge since its creation. Cohen is right that we must provide leadership to break out of this morass. This includes individual Jews sharing their ideas in the public and Jewish press, as well as the organized Jewish community taking real measures to galvanize, guide, and implement the "war of ideas" that Cohen raises.

Rabbi Brian Lurie, former Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of San Francisco and CEO of the United Jewish Appeal, is currently working on Arab-Israeli issues and building a Jewish identity center for Israeli youth.

Fighting for Clarity in an Unclear World

Daniela Gerson

If, as Stephen P. Cohen suggests, American Jews are indeed at a crossroads, perched to take the stage in a new dramatic role in Jewish history, why then are Jewish student activists not acting as beacons of change? Young Jewish activists are at the forefront of secular causes, such as the anti-war and anti-

globalization movements. But the voice of young American Jews is barely audible concerning Jewish issues.

As a young Jew recently out of college, I believe we have been too long on the sidelines. But to become players we need to have something to contribute. If I had sensed the opportunity to shape history by being Jewishly active on campus, maybe I would have given Jewish activity on campus a chance.

I moved to New York a month before September 11, after spending close to a year in Israel during the second Intifada. Personal experience has taught me how to live under the threat of terrorism, but I don't think I have gleaned any intellectual clarity on how to win a war against it. Certain critical truths that Cohen asserts are important: limits to violence, empathy for Islam, rejection of imperial ambitions. Other than that, we really don't know how to win the war, neither as Jews nor as Americans.

Still, American Jews can shape the dialogue in the war against terrorism. Our greatest insights grow from the challenges we have faced in the past. And our role for the future is best served by nurturing debate in the Jewish community, engaging each other, and most of all showing young people that playing an important role in creating a vibrant Jewish community begins by articulating the values we treasure, and then striving to apply them. Not having the answer is no reason not to seek the answer; perhaps that is the ultimate Jewish value: fighting for clarity in an unclear world.

Daniela Gerson is Development Director of the Jewish Student Press Service and Associate Editor of New Voices. *She graduated from Brown University with a dual concentration in the History of Modern Latin America and International Relations in May 2000.*

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Israel Singer on a Jewish People's Fund
Responses by Berel Lang, Eva Fogelman, Vanya Heller, and Michael Nutkewicz.
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Renewing the Zionist Vision

Donna Robinson Divine

The tragic violence meted out on American soil on September 11 may have changed the world for the foreseeable future but it has not permanently welded together American and Israeli political interests and aims. While the United States and Israel have important political and cultural affinities that together strengthen their common cause against terrorist violence, the two nations are waging wars with dramatically different trajectories.

For that reason, American policymakers continually urge Palestinians to cease their fire and end the carnage, but they also periodically issue calls for Israel's government to refrain from excessive military reprisals and to stop the construction of new homes in Jewish settlements located in territories conquered in the 1967 War. Both Palestinians and Israelis have been encouraged to compromise their nationalist ambitions and forge a common agenda for peaceful coexistence. But because the dynamics of this conflict have gone well beyond the clash of opposing nationalisms, the differences between Israeli and American objectives have been muted.

Zionism is more relevant than ever for Jews.

The past eighteen months of fighting have been accompanied by a highly charged nationalist rhetoric, but the fighting has not been directed toward securing the creation of two states for two peoples. The violence against Israel has been increasingly fueled by organizations receiving either material or logistical support from Iran, Syria, Egypt, and even Saudi Arabia. The second Intifada is not simply a nationalist uprising; it is a war for regional dominance fought by sovereign states and by a growing number of their subordinate clients.

The outcome of this fighting will not only determine the boundaries of Palestinian and Jewish states, also shape how this region is ruled and, most important, how it interacts with the international community. Because the land of Israel has increasingly become a staging ground for battles over regional dominance, Israel's military actions partly service America's own war against terrorism. To the extent that Israel's confrontation with the Palestinians combats the expansion of Iranian influence or weakens internationally financed Moslem extremist organizations, it overlaps with American foreign policy objectives. But many members of Israel's governing coalition believe deeply in the right to hold territories that rightfully belong to the Palestinians according to U.S. policy. At some point, Israel and America will have to address these differences and the possibility that Israel's actions may be viewed as an impediment to the achievement of America's own strategic objectives.

In the midst of the carnage, it is difficult to consider or prepare for anything but violence. But precisely at a time when the price for living in Israel is so high, it is important to remember why the very idea of a Jewish nation-state resonated for so many as a path to liberation and freedom. Zionism was born in the context of crisis and catastrophe and sustained by its very commitment to the idea of creating a just society both as refuge for the Jewish people and a model for the world. That vision set the course for the nation and, though its power has not always flowed in channels commensurate with its principles, its values always sustained the struggle in good and bad times.

Young generations of American Jews and Israelis need to be reminded how often the Zionist mission turned ordinary deeds into extraordinary acts of courage, solidarity, and humanity. Zionism is more relevant than ever for Jews — not for the sake of forging an uncompromising militancy but rather for its dream of redemption. In the very midst of this savagery, we need to focus on the humanistic impulses that drove the Zionist movement from its very beginnings. Precisely because terrorism concentrates attention on the urgency of the moment, Jews must look to the future and undertake the arduous task of thinking about what Israel can become and can achieve — as affirmed by its own history — simply by persistent and dedicated human actions.

Donna Robinson Divine is Professor of Government at Smith College. She teaches and writes on various aspects of Middle East politics and history.

Detering Suicide Killers

Nathan Lewin

The terrorists have a new indispensable weapon — created by Yasser Arafat and refined by Osama bin Laden — in their war against Israel and the United States. It is the walking bomb — the suicide killer. Weighty ethical issues affect how a civilized society can deter the murderer who is ready to sacrifice his or her own life.

Organized societies deter criminals by imposing punishments that demonstrate to potential offenders that crime does not pay. In theory, capital punishment should prevent all crime by those who calculate the consequences if they are caught. The death penalty is so drastic that its mere availability should deter a potential offender, even if it is rarely implemented. The Torah prescribes capital punishment for a wide range of offenses, but a Sanhedrin that executed once in seven years (or in seventy) was called "destructive." *Mishna Makkot* 1:10

In the United States, we go through extreme contortions before we carry out an execution. For several years, the Supreme Court blocked all capital punishment, and even now it gives extra-careful treatment to cases that involve the death penalty. It is better, we are told, to avoid executing one innocent person than to kill one hundred cold-blooded murderers.

That calculus works so long as death is a true deterrent. Terrorism, as practiced by Arafat's thugs and by bin Laden's acolytes, has thrown that assumption to the wind. Drastic rethinking of the theory of deterrence is needed when terrorists successfully recruit young men and women to commit suicide while killing dozens or thousands of innocent civilians.

Terrorism will not be shut down until the *individual* terrorist is effectively deterred. Israel's campaign of "targeted assassinations" has tried to prevent suicide bombings by swift nonjudicial execution of known organizers of such deadly attacks. Experience has shown, however, that others take the place of those executed, and the supply of those willing to give up their lives has not dwindled. And Israel's policy of retaliating against political targets — i.e., Arafat's headquarters or Palestinian arms caches — has been a total failure.

What threat will effectively deter the individual

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A Stronger Moral Force

Arthur Green

Although I am not as pious as Nathan Lewin, I still have some pretty old-fashioned Jewish instincts. My first desire on reading Lewin's essay was to *rayz kri'ah*, tear my garments, as a sign of mourning on hearing the desecration of God's name. Can we really have come to this? A well-respected spokesman for law, ethics, and Jewish tradition proposes that we (the government of Israel, that is, the one he would like to see operating on Torah-based principles) execute the families of suicide bombers. Devoting all of six words to the struggle of conscience ("This is no easy ethical question..."), he goes on to justify his proposal by reference to the Torah's command to eradicate Amalek and the Canaanite peoples. I only wonder how long it will take him, by the force of this proof-text, to go all the way and suggest that the Palestinian nation as a whole has earned the fate of Amalek. After all, "when there is no other deterrent...."

One of the several tragic by-products of the Israeli/Palestinian struggle of recent years has been the conversion of ultra-Orthodoxy to support the most rightwing and aggressive stream within Israeli politics. Long lukewarm in their acceptance of Zionism and totally opposed to the messianic language of the National Religious Party's settler element, these Jews have now joined their Sephardic counterparts in imposing the old Diaspora vision onto Middle East politics. The Arabs are simply the *goyim*. They will hate us forever, for this is the essential nature of Ishmael, Esau, and their descendants. Somehow these come to be identified with Amalek as well. There is no view more dangerous than this to the possibility of peace, except perhaps the one recently published in a Saudi newspaper, claiming that the Jews require Muslim blood to bake their *hamantaschen*.

Israel is by far the stronger party in the present conflict. It must be the stronger moral force as well. Indeed it must stop the suicide bombings, and I can muster little moral outrage at targeted assassinations of those planning and directing such operations. Since a few terrible incidents early in the Intifada, Israel has been remarkably good at not targeting civilians, although there have been more "collateral damage" killings than can be justified. We all once

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who is prepared to die so long as he can take many Jews (or, since September 11, many Americans) with him? Studies of Palestinian suicide bombers and of those who, knowing their death was imminent, carried out the September 11 horror indicate that most were closely knit to their families — to parents, brothers, and sisters. Indeed, these family members routinely give press briefings extolling the suicide killers, and they are the recipients of financial bounties from supportive Moslem charities and governmental organizations.

What if Israel and the United States announced that henceforth the perpetrators of all suicide attacks would be treated as if they had brought their parents and brothers and sisters with them to the site of the explosion? Suicide killers should know that they will take the lives of not only themselves and the many people they don't know (but nonetheless hate) in the crowd that surrounds them when they squeeze the button that detonates their bomb, but also the lives of their parents, brothers, and sisters. The nation whose civilians are killed or maimed should, by "targeted assassinations" or other means, be free promptly to execute the immediate relatives of the suicide bombers. This consequence would, I believe, deter most suicide killers — many of whom now anticipate that not only will they be rewarded in a world-to-come, but that their immediate families will be honored and granted lavish benefits on this earth.

I hear anguished screams from an array of civil-libertarians. How can a civilized society — and particularly a people following the ethical principles of the Torah — justify killing innocent family members because their relative has gone on a demented mission? World opinion will surely condemn any such policy, even if — as I believe is absolutely essential — it is implemented only after full and repeated warnings in advance to prospective suicide bombers. Critics will cite the obscene Nazi policy of executing families and entire communities in retaliation for individual acts of resistance. How would the elimination of a suicide killer's family differ from this indefensible Hitlerian practice?

This is no easy ethical question, but it is not as one-sided as may initially appear. Weigh the relative "innocence" of these family members against the "innocence" of the Israeli adolescents and youngsters killed by suicide bombers at discotheques and cafes or against the "innocence" of those who happened to be on high floors of the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. If executing some suicide-bomber families saves the lives of even an equal number of potential civilian victims, the exchange is, I believe, ethically permissible. It is a policy born of necessity — the need to find a true deterrent when capital punishment is demonstrably ineffective.

How does it differ from Nazi retaliation against families of those Hitler classified as criminals? The Nazis punished the families of resisters who attacked evil Nazi generals or other governmental functionaries, not the innocent mothers, children, and teenagers whom the suicide killers target. And the Nazis did not claim, as Israel and the United States plainly can, that punishing the perpetrator for his own "crime" would not prevent its repetition.

And how "innocent," in fact, are the families of the suicide killers? An "escape hatch" might enable them to avoid the consequences if, promptly after their son's or brother's suicide mission, they surrender to the authorities, publicly condemn the crime, and reject any financial or other benefit from it. The policy of family retaliation would also encourage family members to dissuade brothers, sisters, or children who appear to be gravitating toward suicide missions.

Finally, can Jewish law and tradition accept this seeming punishment of innocents? The Torah commanded the total eradication — including women and children — of certain nations (Amalek being a singular illustration) because of the continuing threat its members presented to the survival of Israel. When there is no other deterrent, self-defense entitles one to take measures that are ordinarily unacceptable.

The extremely modest proposals that some people are now willing to accept — national identity cards and roving eavesdrops (and even the "automatic" destruction of Palestinian villages that Alan Dershowitz proposed in *The Jerusalem Post* of March 11, 2002) — are the proverbial use of aspirin to treat brain cancer. They may occasionally disrupt terrorist plans but will have no major impact on the terrorist threat. Effective prevention will come only with effective individual deterrence of potential suicide killers.

Nathan Lewin is a Washington, D.C. attorney who frequently appears before the U.S. Supreme Court. He is a member of the Adjunct Faculties of George Washington Law School (Jewish Civil Law) and Columbia Law School (Supreme Court Litigation).

Mashiah — Not Now, Not Ever

David Lazar

I remember exactly where I was and what I was looking at twenty years ago as a settler in the Gaza Strip when I said to myself, "*Baruch Hashem* that we believe in *mashiah*, the messiah." I was parked at the bus stop outside of the settlement that I had helped found, waiting for my wife, when a crowd of teenagers from the nearby refugee camp walked by. Sitting in my brand new Ford Escort, I could see the hate in their eyes. I saw in their eyes the reflection of what they saw — new cars and tractors, state of the art hothouses, large comfortable homes, plentiful water and supplies — all for these Jews who, even if born in Israel, originally had come from other lands. They, on the other hand, whose ancestors had inhabited this part of the Middle East for centuries, traveled by foot, maybe in donkey-drawn carts, and less frequently in ancient Peugeot station wagons. They lived in crumbling and crowded refugee camps, and looked toward a life of poverty — either working for the Jews in their fields, hotels, and garages, or scratching a meager existence out of the overworked, under-irrigated fields close to home. While I remember feeling uncomfortable, even guilty, confronted with that hate, I knew that we had a God-given right to live and work that land. It was clear to me then that, since we were unable to solve this problem on our own, we were in need of a flesh-and-blood king who would lead us to victory over our Arab neighbors. That was what I had been taught in the *yeshiva* and that was the belief I hung onto in trying to deal with this dilemma. It was just a question of holding on long enough and making ourselves worthy of his coming.

It took me years — the critical study of Judaism, serving in Ramalah and Hevron during the first Intifada, and just plain growing up — to peel away the layers of naiveté that had surrounded me during my teen and early adult years in religious Zionist circles. But I finally realized that the messiah concept was, at the end of the 20th century, a dangerous form of fascism wielding control over Israeli politics.

There is, of course, no excuse for suicide bombers, mortar attacks, or sniper fire. There is much evil and antisemitism at work in motivating those Palestinians who are responsible for much of what has happened over the past eighteen months. But there is little doubt in my mind that, as Israelis, we brought much of this upon ourselves. We neglected to really look into their eyes and try to see how they see us. We failed to perceive their tears of poverty and pain and create contemporary solutions for a contemporary challenge. At best, we shrugged our shoulders and resigned ourselves, as we had for centuries, to wait for the messiah to solve our problems.

I finally realized that the messiah concept is a dangerous form of fascism wielding control over Israeli politics.

I realize that wanting the messiah was essential for the survival of Jews throughout the ages, providing hope for a persecuted people that, until the 20th century, possessed little or no political power. But we do have political power today. We don't need a flesh-and-blood king to lead us into battle — we have the military edge of a viable modern-day democratic state. It is in this liberated state that we are strong enough to internalize the message of *yetziat mitzraim* at Pesach and help our Palestinian neighbors find their own freedom. It is in this enlightened state that we are bold enough to utilize the message of ongoing revelation at Shavuot and move beyond antiquated and dangerous biblical concepts. And it is in this not indestructible state that we must take seriously the lessons of wandering in the desert at Sukkot — guarding against our own hubris.

I am not suggesting, as do some post-Zionists, that we give up on the idea of a Jewish State. There is, in the end, yet one place on this earth where all Jews can find refuge, where Hebrew culture can be renewed and thrive, and where the great experiment can be held in which Judaism and democracy serve as the basis for a just and compassionate society.

But we would do well in the 21st century to look less toward the horizon for the messiah, and more into the eyes of those around us, here and now.

Rabbi David Lazar lives and teaches in Jerusalem. He is Director of RIKMA: Spiritual Community Leadership Training and serves as chaplain for the Israel AIDS Task Force. He was a founding member of Moshav Gan-Or.

"The air over Jerusalem is saturated with prayers and dreams like the air over industrial cities. It's hard to breath."
—Ecology of Jerusalem, Yehudah Amichai

Jerusalem is ill. It suffers from an overdose of metaphor. A real city, it has concrete homes, traffic jams, and ordinary people trying to salvage real lives from the conflagration. History whirls around us, igniting an inferno that steals our oxygen.

We will overcome the firestorm because we embrace the history that overwhelms us. We will survive because this is our home, because we love this city, and love the depth of its metaphoric meaning. Yet, something wistful and apprehensive whispers in our ears.... How to avoid the fate of Pompeii, full of preserved buildings and ancient dead bodies? A perfect metaphor.

"Do you see that arch over there from the Roman period? It doesn't matter, but near it, a little to the left and then down a bit, there's a man who has just bought fruit and vegetables for his family."
— Tourists, Yehudah Amichai

Rabbi Edward Rettig is Associate Director of the American Jewish Committee Office in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is suggestive of the human heart.

Rebbe Nachman of Bratzlav, Likkute Moharan, Tinyana 1:4

In this simple statement, Rebbe Nachman captures a core intuition of the Jewish religious and political imagination — that Jerusalem is at once a concrete place and a rich metaphor. What is found in the human heart may be found in Jerusalem, and what is found in Jerusalem may be found in the human heart. Both Jerusalem and the human heart contain immense powers of love and awareness of God on the one hand, and bottomless reservoirs of hate and godlessness on the other. There are ten portions of beauty and wisdom in the world, says a rabbinic text; "nine are in Jerusalem, and one in the rest of the world." But there are also ten portions of suffering and dishonesty, and sure enough, "nine are in Jerusalem, one in the rest of the world." *(Avot DeRabbi Natan B, 48)*

Who better understands the complexities and contradictions of the human heart than one who dwells in Jerusalem? And who grieves more deeply over the sufferings of Jerusalem than one who has faced the stubborn intractability of the human heart?

No matter how great the temptation, Jews are forbidden to despair. Even amidst confusion, heartbreak, and outrage, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And we pray for the human heart: May it, like the city that is its most powerful evocation, yet ascend from "the valley of tears in which it has dwelled too long."

Rabbi Shai Held is Conservative Rabbinic Advisor at Harvard Hillel.

We are living through the darkest period of our history since the Holocaust. Rebbe Nachman's wise counsel has nourished us before: "The whole world is a very narrow bridge," and "To rejoice constantly is a great mitzvah." Rebbe Nachman tells us not to despair. But an Israeli song heard often on the radio these days says, "Good night, hope." Personal and family celebrations, Shabbat and holidays, seem to take on greater meaning and depth. The constant fear and the pain of loss, coupled with the moral murkiness of our situation, are enervating.

We need to muster all human and Jewish resources to cope with these seemingly insurmountable challenges. I pray we will be worthy of our two-fold task: on the one hand, as a people, to help the injured, bury our dead, comfort our mourners, continue the heroic routine of everyday life. On the other hand, to sharpen our sensitivity to the suffering of the other side, and remember our religious obligation to seek peace and pursue it.

Dr. Deborah Weissman has lived for almost thirty years in Jerusalem, where she is Director of the Kerem Institute for Teacher Training for Humanistic-Jewish Education.

Like the ancient Greek ritual centers, Jerusalem is an *omphalos* of the universe, considered sacred in all the Abrahamic traditions. This cluster of houses, alleyways, churches, synagogues, mosques, madrasas, shrines, ramparts, and walls is subject to the most compelling and dangerous of human impulses: the translation of physical space into spiritual symbol, the apotheosis of place.

The prophet Ezekiel started it in Babylon in the early 6th century B.C.E. when God showed him a vision of an orderly theocracy with Jerusalem as tent-stake; it is no accident that this vision came to one who had been forcibly expelled from the city. At the same time, Ezekiel's prophecy represented the possibility of worshiping Yahweh far from the traditional sacred center, and in that sense contains the kernel of a model image of the city.

To create an orderly map of human space is not dangerous in itself. Just as narrative orders time, maps order what would otherwise be a meaningless conglomeration of topographic features. This is true of ancient and medieval maps, whose representation of space were subjective and hierarchical, and of modern maps, which use a rationalized spatial grid to grind religious and royal topography down to a single scale.

But strange things happen when human beings attempt to map symbols onto real space. In the intensified atmosphere of the holy, religious and political differences become magnified and symbols are endowed with more importance than human lives. Jerusalem has swallowed countless victims, this cursed city, because both its rulers and inhabitants have mistaken the secondary for primary: human beings made the city sacred by imposing transcendental values upon it; those values, now unbound from their original human moorings, have been mobilized to supplant human lives.

Marina Rustow is a doctoral candidate in medieval Jewish history at Columbia University.

**NiSh'ma* is the Hebrew word for "let us hear."

Creating a Conversation

Racheli Merhav and Ellan I. Kahn

Racheli Merhav was born in 1957 in an Orthodox kibbutz (Kvutzat-Yavne. For nine years she was chief landscape architect of the National Parks Service. The past three years she has volunteered in the social and environmental fields, and studies Jewish social values. She lives with her three teenagers in Tel Aviv. Ellan I. Kahn is a San Francisco attorney and a Wexner Heritage Foundation alumna. Ellan and Racheli met in 2000 at a dialogue sponsored by the Wexner Heritage Foundation for twenty Israelis and twenty Americans from San Francisco.

Dear Racheli,

Stephen Cohen says that American Jewry is no longer on the periphery of Jewish life. I think you and I came to this conclusion before he did. Until we met, I did not understand what American Jewry had to offer Israelis. You helped me understand that we have much to offer. When we were in California together, you chanted from the Torah for the first time in your life. It was an extraordinary, life changing moment for you. You grew up in a traditional world where this could never have been possible. When you left that world, you never imagined the possibility of coming so close to a Torah.

Having been involved in American Jewish communal life since I was a teenager, I always believed I was building an authentic and vital Jewish life in America. I had no idea, though, if Israelis would resonate with what we do. It fascinated you — the breadth and scope of our Jewish lives here, and our deep commitment to Israel. I think you would like some of what American Jewish life has to offer, and I think it could have a major enriching impact on Israeli Jewish life.

But in the meantime, our lives have new urgency. The situation in Israel is precarious; from day to day we do not know what will happen. And since September 11, all our lives have changed. After September 11, I had trouble crossing the Golden Gate Bridge to drive to work. I don't know how you cope with the madness of terrorism so close to your home. You are constantly in my thoughts and my heart.

Stephen Cohen talks in his essay about the fundamentals of democracy and the need for leadership in these difficult times. I am convinced that we — Israelis and American Jews — are partners in the history of our people and in the history of the world.

With love, Ellan

Dear Ellan,

It has taken me too long to get back to you because I feel so weak and empty these days. I am saddened to say, the events of the last couple of weeks were expected; but they were so devastating that for the first time I feel speechless and hopeless. This situation just shut me down. I'm sorry.

Yes, I support what Stephen Cohen says about the need for you — American Jews — to take the center stage. It is clear to me that while attending to building a safe state, we lost important people in the picture — those who were here before we came (the Palestinians) and those who chose not to come to Israel (Jews in the Diaspora). We also lost some of our Jewish values, tradition, and spirit.

We have forgotten what it is like to be a minority. How frustrating it must be to be stateless, without power or hope for the future! While we mustn't lose our historical perspective, remembering our powerlessness needn't translate into embracing "victimhood." But maybe it could help us to reflect on how we use that power.

I want to learn from your experiences — how you create dialogue between the various streams in Judaism and collaborate in spite of differences. Perhaps you can guide us in exploring ways to incorporate this dialogue with other religions, such as Islam and Christianity.

If we were to learn Arabic, if we were to learn Palestinian history, perhaps we would gain new ways to communicate — new possibilities to solve this conflict would be available to us. How can we expect understanding between two different cultures when, for example, in the high school where my daughter graduated last summer, only six students took Arabic as their major?

When we met, I felt for the first time that we, the Israelis, were not only *interesting*, but *interested*. In the past, being on center stage gave us permission to ignore others: Israeli-Arabs, Diaspora Jews, the Palestinians, and even Jews in Israel who do not belong to the center stage we created (ultra-Orthodox, for example). We need American Jews to train us how to be interested, engaged with "others.' We need you to teach us how to collaborate.

I pray for better days for us all.

Much love, Racheli

...this dialogue continues on www.shma.com

Arthur Green continued

took pride in Israel's tradition of "purity of arms," the careful and responsible use of firepower. Today, with the fear generated by violent Palestinian resistance, there are too many nervous and vengeful fingers on the trigger, at all levels. Israel is the creation of the entire Jewish people, and has to stand for something, not just survive by becoming a barbaric Middle Eastern superstate. The Jewish tradition's most essential moral teaching, that every human being is the image of God, must not fall victim to the bleak times through which we are living.

Suicide bombings must be stopped. This will not happen through obscene suggestions that we stoop to their level, executing the parents and siblings of perpetrators. Such a horrid policy would only call forth new troops of suicide bombers, recruited throughout the Muslim world. Suicide bombings will be stopped when we address the root cause of such desperate actions: the degradation and humiliation of the Palestinian people. Israeli society has failed terribly at respecting the Arabs who are destined to forever be its neighbors. This is true both within the country and in the occupied territories. Military policy, especially in its local application, is often needlessly violent and degrading. Endless checkpoint delays, bulldozing of homes, uprooting of trees, disrespecting of elders, and lots more have been the daily lot of Palestinians for thirty-five years. These constant humiliations are the immediate source of the rage that motivates suicide bombers, most of whom come from the very respect-based culture of traditional Arab villages.

On the larger scale, we need to restore hope. No wonder Palestinians have no faith in the peace process. We continue to build settlements, expropriate land, and deny them the right to build homes on their own land while we build whole towns for newcomers. How can we expect them not to be frustrated and angry? If we want to end suicide bombings, we need to demonstrate clearly (by our actions, not just by words, as we keep saying to Arafat) that we are willing to end the occupation. Yes, a two-state solution is a gamble. But it's the only one we've got.

Arthur Green is the Phillip Lown Professor of Jewish Thought at Brandeis University.

Irreconciliable Differences? The Waning of the American Jewish Love Affair with Israel

(Steven T. Rosenthal; University Press of New England, 2001, 231pp.)

Gil Troy reviews this book on www.shma.com

American Jews and Israelis are supposed to be close. All the "We Are One" talk suggests that we are friends, cousins, siblings. Unfortunately, all too often, the relationship between American Jews and Israelis is most reminiscent of a bad date, one that keeps on happening again and again, as in the movie "Ground Hog Day." Each side approaches every encounter with unrealistic expectations, an exaggerated sense of its own importance, and a distorted sense of the other side's desperation. Disappointment and anger inevitably follow.

Steven T. Rosenthal's *Irreconciliable Differences? The Waning of the American Jewish Love Affair with Israel* offers a depressing overview of this dysfunctional relationship...

(continues on www.shma.com)

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