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ISRAEL AND JERUSALEM THEN AND NOW: The Historical Dynamics and Challenges

Asher Finkel

Brief History

No country is like the tiny land of Israel which has been the location of the long history of its people, the Jews, who lived there from antiquity. There they built two Temples to God on the Mount of Jerusalem, as their capital city over a millennium before the Christian era. From this land, they were evicted and expelled to be dispersed in various countries of the world. During the last two millennia, they returned to their occupied and ravaged land to live there, as subjects to foreign powers. Only in the last century were the Jews finally free to settle in their homeland under the British mandate. Following World War I, the national right of Jews to the land of Israel was recognized at Versailles, as was originally formulated by Lord Balfour, the Prime Minister of Great Britain. With great efforts, the Jews bought back and rebuilt their land and made it blossom and fruitful, after centuries of neglect and desolation. The Jews of Israel fought bravely with the allies against Nazi invasion and Hitlerian tyranny. Following World War II, when over six million Jews of Europe were brutally murdered by the Nazis only because they were Jews, their brothers and sisters in Israel welcomed the survivors to the homeland. On May 15, 1948 world powers and the United Nations recognized the establishment of the independent state of Israel, as a free Democratic country. The struggle for survival of the Jewish people in Diaspora over eighteen hundred years ended in the rebirth of their ancient homeland. However this rebirth was accompanied by great pain and travails, due to the invasion of Arab nations from the outside and the terrorist attacks of Palestinian Arabs from the inside.

A Threefold Cycle of History

The difficult but miraculous return of the Jews to their homeland was indeed the very promise of their prophets of old, who spoke of destruction and resurrection of their people in the historical land. The prophet of destruction, Jeremiah (31:14-19) compares the land to Mother Rachel, who gives birth to her children and then in tears awaits their return after they are carried away. This captured the eschatological prospect of Messianic pangs for Jewry in exile as they return to rebuild their land; this experience defies the normative trends of history. For any nation evolves from its genesis to its golden peak, then it declines due to moral corruption and decadence to its final fall. A cyclical evolvment of nations and civilizations determines their course of history. However, the Biblical view of Israel is that the Jewish people will face three continuous cyclical developments.

The first emerged from Abraham's entry into the land of Canaan, during the Middle Bronze Age, until the days of David the King of Israel and his wise son Solomon, in the Iron Age. The First Temple was built in Jerusalem by Solomonic efforts on the very mount purchased by David from Arvanah the Jebusite (2 Sam 24:18-25). A Golden Age was reached and then the decline set in, over the first half of the millennium before the Christian era. The prophets describe the sinful deterioration of the people in their land; this period ends with the destruction of the Temple by

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. His foreign policy was to exile the captive Jews to his realm. Seventy years later, as Jeremiah predicted (29:10, compare Dan 9:2), the Jews returned to their land by the invitation of Cyrus, the Median King, and this development initiated the second cyclical evolution of Jewish history in their land.

Isaiah (42:1) designates Cyrus as God's anointed (=messiah), who is instrumental to bring about the revival of the Jewish people in their homeland. Cyrus issued a decree that was found on a stele, and it was thus formulated at the end of the Jewish canon of Biblical Writings (2 Chron 36: 25 and compare Ezra 1:3). "Who among you, from all His people that the Lord God is with him, will go up- -to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem." "To go up" is the Hebrew expression for emigration from the Dispersion and it captures the great prospect for Jewish faith in historical continuity under God. They indeed returned to rebuild a Second Temple during the reign of Darius the Great by his support and recognition of their religio-national right. The land of Israel was renamed the Jewish homeland (Yehud), as the archeological and literary evidence indicates. A democratic theocracy was established, that was challenged by the Greek Seleucid, Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B.C.E. The Hasmonean priests, who were dedicated to the Temple's purity and sanctity, defeated the Greek forces.

A golden peak is attained under the Maccabean rule of one hundred years that enjoyed an alliance with Rome on its rise to power. However, the decline also set in from the days of Pompey in 63 B.C.E., when he invaded Jerusalem by the invitation of the rivaling Jewish party of the Pharisees. Eventually Herod, a son of an Idumean convert, became King of Israel with Augustus' approval. His reign was brutal and dictatorial but it led to the beautiful renovation of the Temple as the eighth wonder of the ancient world. Its impressive walls, pillars and underground chambers can still be seen today. Following Herod's death and the brief rule of his corrupt son Archelaus in Jerusalem, Rome took over the reins of the State. They appointed procurators to oversee the Temple and the affairs of the land. The infamous governor Pilate condemned Jesus to the cross as a Jewish rebel, and a generation later the Temple itself was destroyed in the year 70 C.E. by Titus, the future emperor. The Second Temple period of a half a millennium came to an end.

At this time the Jewish people entered the third cyclical development that began with a desperate dying gasp for freedom and self-determination. The liberal Pharisaic rabbis gathered at Yavneh to consolidate the religious tradition of the past Hasmonean theocratic achievement. Unfortunately before the Destruction, the Golden Age gave rise to varied expressions and interpretations of the Biblical tradition among the leading teachers and their followers. Yavneh gave rise to a unified Hillelitic Judaism of the Mishnah that was canonically accepted by Jewry with its written Bible. In this way the Mishnah guided Israel, showing how to face the challenges of survival as a people in exile.

Yet in the early period of the Mishnaic schools, especially at Lydda under Rabbi Akiva, religio-national support was extended to military action against Rome. In Rabbi Akiva's days Rome had become more oppressive and anti-Jewish. Therefore, he recognized the rebel Simeon Bar Kozeba as a warrior-messiah, whom Rabbi Akiva renamed Bar Kochba (the son of the [promised] star of Num 24:17). Bar Kochba and his religiously inspired army recaptured Jerusalem in the year 132 C.E. Three years later, Emperor Hadrian defeated Bar Kochba and his army and put to death the

entire Jewish population in Judea. He also plowed down the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and he renamed the city Aelia Capitolina after his pagan god. Aelia was still the name of the city known to Arab people in the days of Muhammad. Hadrian clearly adapted a "Judenrein" ("cleansing of Jews") policy and issued anti-Jewish decrees that sought to sever Jerusalem and its Temple Mount from Jewish presence under the penalty of death. This policy was recalled by the Church Father Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History (Book 4, 5-6) in the fourth century. He pointed out how Hadrian's decree eliminated Jewish-Christianity from Jerusalem. Their bishops from the days of James, the brother of Jesus, were all circumcised. Now all circumcised individuals faced the same harsh decree, preventing them from entering Jerusalem, as they were checked by the sentries.

From Hadrian's Religious Persecution to the Holocaust

Hadrian renamed Judea "Palestine" (Land of the Philistines), a name that designated the adversary of Israel from the early days of David. He also enforced restrictions on Jewish resettlement in Judea, and Jerusalem was now occupied by a foreign pagan people. Rabbinic leaders moved to Galilee and there the Hillelite patriarchate issued a binding foreign policy of accommodation and no armed resistance. Jewish people adopted a passive posture in exile, submitting to foreign authority as long as their faith and religious praxis could be preserved. Their yearning and love for the conquered Jerusalem was transformed into the experience of mourning, the passing of the beloved Mother, Zion. Rituals and mnemonic acts were formulated by the Mishnaic rabbis, to be accompanied by prayers, lament, fasting and abstinence, in order to keep the memory of Zion alive for Jewry in Diaspora.

Over the centuries great efforts were made by Jewish travelers, pilgrims and believers to visit Jerusalem and even to live there in extreme conditions of poverty as mourners among the ruins. This is why, although 1700 years have passed since Hadrian, Jerusalem in the 19th century had a Jewish majority of its population under harsh Turkish rule. In grave condition they lived, but with a strong feeling of love as mourners for their beloved Mother Zion. They directed their hearts to the heavenly Father, whose presence dwells on the Holy Mount. This I knew personally from my own mother's family, who lived there from the 19th century and I was fortunate to be born only years before the State was declared independent and free. However, in the days of my great-grandparents, Jerusalem existed only within the walls with a religious Jewish majority. Most of the land remained desolate, as Mark Twain, the known American writer, reports from his voyage to the Holy Land over 100 years ago.

Throughout the long period of exile, Jews among the nations were seen as foreigners whose loyalty was to Jerusalem. This religio-political perception also attested to continuous commitment of Jewry to their land and Jerusalem. This commitment translates into Zionism over many centuries that pre-date the secular movement of Herzlian Zionism of recent times. The Viennese Herzl expressed an urgent need to return to Zion for assimilated and acculturated European Jews. For he witnessed a disgraceful antisemitic ordeal of a fellow assimilated Jew of France, Captain Dreyfus. He was falsely accused as a Jewish spy by the French military establishment in a case with antisemitic overtones. Herzl realized then that the only solution left to Jewry was to return to the homeland. For no matter how many centuries of loyalty and service to the countries of their birth, Jews are still unwelcome as true citizens. They must return

to their own country in order to enjoy their human freedom and dignity. Otherwise, the antisemitic reality will lead to their demise. He was right; half a century later, the Nazis rose to power advocating a final solution for defenseless Jewry. The resultant Holocaust verified Herzl's darkest dream; this produced a living hell for Jews, who were to be eliminated from the continent of Europe. The Christian world now recognized that Jews too deserve a rebirth in their own land, not only promised by the biblical account but also by the League of Nations' resolution. The Jews paid a heavy price for this acknowledged human right to their land, which was recognized eventually by the United Nations after World War II.

Jews in the Islamic World and the Mufti of Jerusalem

In the Islamic centuries, Jews also did not fare well. They were but second class citizens, the Dhimmi. Jews were viewed as the "Children of the Satan" (*walad al shaytan*), just like in Christian Europe and for the same reason. The Jewish people, at the behest of their rabbis, rejected their prophet Muhammad when he came to Yathrib (as recorded in the Koran). Mohammed indeed shared their monotheistic faith and he also adopted their customs, prayers, biblical stories and practice in his own Meccan revelations. However, in Yathrib, following his flight, he took measures to change the Jewish praxis, as the Medina Suras indicate. He also eliminated Jewish clans despite the treaties he had negotiated with them. He confiscated their property and women (of which he took one) and converted the name of the town to the "City" (Medina) of the Prophet. Especially, he now directed his prayers to God toward Mecca (the Qibla) and not to Jerusalem as his custom was originally. He also performed his pilgrimage to Mecca, in contrast to the Jewish practice that always was directed only to Jerusalem. Now all Muslims fulfil their obligation of Hajj in Mecca and direct all their prayers, wherever they are, towards Mecca. However, the very biblical and historical claim of Jewry to Jerusalem and its Temple Mount, to which in their Holy Writings the references are in the thousand, is seen by religio-political Arabs to be false. For the Islamic doctrines of *taharif* does not accept the validity of Biblical testimony among their teachers.

In recent times, the Palestinian Mufti of Jerusalem (who, by the way, was appointed by the British Jewish governor Lord Herbert Samuel) sided with Hitler, encouraging him to solve the Jewish problem for the Muslims as well by the liquidation of the Jews. In this manner, he sought to stop Jewish migration to Palestine, now the homeland promised to the Jews by the British Mandate. Indeed Arab riots at the Mufti's behest forced England to issue a White Paper limiting Jewish immigration, at a most critical time when Hitler was carrying out his final solution. The Mufti's appeal to Hitler also contributed to the death of many Jews who could not escape from their fate to the homeland, which at the same time was now opening its gates to Arab immigration by the British. This is why in the Palestinian Manifesto all Arabs until 1947 are considered true nationals of Palestine, while all Jews are considered nationals only before World War I.

Nazi antisemitic propoganda was adopted by Palestinian and Islamic writers. They cite as truth Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the Tsarist antisemitic work, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They teach these works in their schools and produce anti-Israel and anti-Jewish articles and cartoons for public reading. Deceptions and lies intermingle with actual events; distortions and revisions prevail to advance their cause. Since the final objective is total victory despite setbacks,

negotiations and peaceful gestures are but tactics on the way towards the liquidation of the Zionist entity, as a Jewish State in Palestine.

Jews Fleeing to their Homeland and the Issue of Zionism

The Jews who lived for many centuries in Islamic countries from Morocco to Iran prior to the birth of Israel became targets of hate, vilification and even death. A mass migration of Jewish refugees from North Africa and the Middle East made its way to the tiny partitioned land of Israel. This great Exodus of over a million and half Jewish men and women, children and the elderly (in most cases with only their clothing on their backs) had to be absorbed by the State recently emerging from a vicious invasion of seven Arab nations. The absorption of penniless refugees, who left their wealth and properties in the Arab countries of their birth, placed a heavy burden on the new State. Yet, the miracle of its birth against great odds took place in fulfillment of their prophetic promise that a return of Jewish exile will take place from all corners of the earth. It continued into the millions until the present day from Russia and Siberia, from Ethiopia and Latin America, wherever Jews are still persecuted, but also from Western countries, South Africa and Australia, when the Jewish spirit moves them to return to their roots.

Jewish ingathering in their homeland became real and possible only because this great diversity of people shared a common fate and a common faith, as well as a common bond as people of Israel awaiting the prophetic call to return. Their religious tradition in conformity with the Bible and the Mishnah, their precious legacy of their homeland, kept them as a separate people of God in Diaspora. In their ghettos and synagogal communities they were promoting the Biblical values of freedom, equality and brotherhood, although they were subjugated and oppressed, vilified and despised by their host countries. Upon return to their independent land, they formed the Jewish society there as equals and brothers and as free people with pride. Their diversity of skin color and appearance, of tongues and customs, of mentality and education did not matter when the common bond they shared over the centuries has united them with the land of biblical promise.

The Zionist spirit of Israel offers a great lesson to the enlightened world. It demonstrated the power of commitment and hope of return to the land from which they were forcibly expelled after the center of their religious life, the Temple, was destroyed. Such lessons have the Tibetan people recognized through their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who acknowledged the great will of Israel to survive in exile, awaiting the final return to their native land. Yet, the contemporary attempt by the United Nations, as it is controlled by bloc voting, at the behest of Islamic countries and their allies issued a resolution of a false Palestinian accusation that Zionism is racism.

This political perspective is clearly stated in the Palestinian Manifesto that determines their course of action towards the State of Israel, only by means of armed struggle. It seeks to liquidate the Jewish State. Thereby, the United Nations adopted a biased resolution that puts into question its very charter as well as advancing the legitimization of terrorist actions against the Jewish State. Such a partisan approach also was fortified by the Islamic issuance of a *fatwah* on *jihad* against the Jews. Only in recent years was the above U.N. resolution revoked and a Palestinian assembly in Gaza by a show of hands indicated their cancellation of armed struggle with the Zionist state. Yet, *jihad* is preached and the Palestinian Manifesto was not legally

revoked as it still guides the Palestinian posture against Israel. Now Arafat and Islamic countries claim the sole control of Jerusalem between the walls and its Temple Mount. Such an attitude seeks to uproot the Jewish heart of faith from Israel's commitment to the land.

Usurpation and the Psalmist's View on Antisemitism

It seems then the only way for the Palestinians to cement their argument against the existence of the Zionist entity is to seek to usurp the very history of Israel for their own. For example, Bet-Lehem which is now controlled by the Palestinian Authority was the city of David's birth and the place where Jesus was said to be born. Now their claim is that Jesus was a Palestinian and Bet Lehem itself during the Palestinian control is now mostly "cleansed" of its Christian citizens. Even the archeological evidence becomes mere fabrication. The Temple Mount was never Jewish, as Arafat claims. Most disturbing is the actual attempt of physical erasure of all concrete evidence to the contrary. The very Mount is excavated and cleared out all remnants of the ancient Jewish Temple in order to build in its place a huge underground Mosque of Al Aksa. Many sites sacred to Jews and even to Christians are eliminated. The tomb of Joseph is taken by force and burned. The very land on which the tomb of Rachel stands was bought by the Jewish philanthropist Moses Montifiore but is now hedged in by Muslim graves and daily attacks on the tomb. These are but two examples out of many that clearly reflect the policy aim of "Judenrein" by the Palestinians. Surely no Jew can live in their area and even their friendly visit there can end in death. Such was the very policy entertained by the pagan Hadrian in the second century, who renamed the land of the Jews "Palestine." His war was then with the Jews and so is the current position of the Palestinian leaders, who are at war with Israel. The Psalmist cries out then to the Jews: "As I speak *shalom* (peace), they are at war!" (Ps 120:7). A nation cannot negotiate peace terms, as political conflict resolution seeks with enemies, whose goal is to eliminate it.

The Psalmist (Ps 83:5) determines what typifies much antagonism towards the Jews in their State. There are but two aims: "They say: 'let us eliminate them as people and let not the name of Israel be known any more'." This antisemitic approach to Jewish existence as a historical reality existed in the early period of the second cycle of Jewish history. In the days of Artaxerxes, Haman determined to eliminate the Jewish inhabitants in his Persian Kingdom. This vile intention was revoked by the King at the behest of his Jewish Queen (see the book of Esther). The Jewish people acknowledged this providential sign of care for His covenantal people. In recent years, the Hitlerian slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe was due to Haman-like antisemitic views. Such views are now condemned by the Catholic Church by the late Pope John XXIII and by the present Pope John Paul II (see *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*, Washington, D.C., 1998).

In contrast, Palestinian and Islamic leaders continue to promote a vicious antisemitic attack on Judaism and the State of Israel. Antisemitism does not mean bias against Semitic peoples, as propagandists claim. It was a word coined by Wilhelm Marr, a rabid anti-Jewish writer of the late 19th century, who designated thereby the Biblical Semites as Jews. Similarly in Christian Europe academics and theologians referred to the land where Jesus was born as "Palestine." Thus, Palestinian Arabs on Jewish soil seek to assume this identity of the original native people.

They preach and teach antisemitism, which captures the dual aim noted by the Psalmist, to expunge the name of Israel and to eliminate the Jewish people.

An antisemitic espousal of Palestinian identity as their challenge to the Jewish state is foretold in the Psalmist's view of a historical development that seems to be realized today (Ps 83: 6-8). "They together took counsel (= the Palestinian National Council) cutting a covenant (= the Palestinian Manifesto or Covenant in 1968) concerning you (= the Jewish State of Israel), the tents of Edom and Arabs, Moabites, Hagarites, Jabalites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Palestinians with the inhabitants of Tyre (i.e. in Lebanon, namely the Palestinian people are composed of Arabs from the neighboring countries)." The Psalmist also seems to suggest that is their real aim: "They intend to inherit the very dwelling of God (i.e. the Temple Mount)." God's response becomes: "Let them know that Your name Y-H-W-H alone as the ultimate reality in this world" (83:13, 19). The Psalmist's suggestion indirectly points to the Palestinian claim that only Allah can make his claim on this Mount as Muhammad, the last prophet, experienced his ascent from there to heaven. On this legendary account of the Hadith rests the entire Islamic claim to the Mount, contrary to the historical right of the Jews to this place over a millennium and a half earlier. At no time did the Jews give up their claim to this Mount. On the contrary, it generates their entire hope and prayer life to live in Y-H-W-H's presence.

Jerusalem and the Temple Mount

Jewish reverential pride in the Temple Mount indicates that originally their Lord alone was worshipped there by Israel. Holiness of this Mount means set-apartness, a sanctuary not to be entered by the polluted human creatures unless they enter by the prescribed Levitical rules of purification. Thus, Jews do not step on the Mount but instead worship God as they face the Western Wall below. This is their expression of awe in the presence of the Wholly Other on this Mount above, and as R. Otto in *(The Idea of the Holy)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950) determines, the numinous experience of the worshipper. However, the Muslims who gather above to prayer fall on their face, as act of humility and submission, but with their back to the Holy of Holies under the Golden Dome and their faces directed towards Mecca in the South. Not only do they show disrespect to Y-H-W-H on his Mount but also parade there in state of Levitical impurity. One is forbidden to throw rocks with the intent to kill the Jewish worshipper below, if he truly respects the Lord God who decries bloodshedding and the use of a homicidal instrument on the Holy Mount. Levitical purity is demanded to distance the person from involvement with blood and death. Christians also know that Jesus condemned those who were involved with the shedding of blood in this holy area (Matt 23:25). Christians, however, do not seek to claim this Mount for their worship, since they do not abide by the territorial imperative of Levitical laws of holiness. For the very sanctuary is a spiritual reality of Jesus (John 2:21) and the final Temple will only appear by God's hands (Mark 14:58). Therefore, their faith in the final advent translates the descent of the heavenly Temple as the spiritual reality of Jesus the Lamb (Revelation 21:22). In this manner, the canonical ending of the Christian Bible contrasts with the canonical ending of the Jewish Bible that refers to the physical Temple on the Mount of Jerusalem.

The Jews always revered the Temple Mount, and for centuries were willing to accept the stewardship of Islamic Waqf to guard this place with respect for the Jewish tradition. In no way

did they desire to relinquish the site to them. This is due to the fact that originally the holy site was made known to the Arab Muslims by Jewish converts. The Quran itself never refers to Jerusalem, whereas the Jewish Bible offers over 600 references and the Christian Bible, which was written by Jewish Christians, refers to the city over 150 times. However, the Hadith collection that comes to praise and extol Jerusalem in Islam is "the *Fada'il Bayt al Maqdis*." Note the Arabic designation of the Holy Temple, as in the Hebrew *Beyt Hamiqdash*. The reason is that such a collection demonstrates how Jewish tradition entered Islam by converts. Thus, their tradition was known by Islamic theologians as "*Israiliyyat*." Most significant is the fact that they seem to incorporate traditions of the people of the Book (the Israelites) about the sanctity of Jerusalem. These traditions linked Jerusalem to the Holy Temple and the very city became known in Arabic as *Al Kuds*. Moreover, the very Temple was linked exegetically with various Quranic verses, such as the Al Aksa in Sura 17.

Let us see what happened to this Mount at the time of Umar, who was seeking to build a "Dome over the Rock." We offer the known exchange by a learned Jewish convert and the caliph. The famous convert Ka'b al Ahbar (*Ka'b* is the shortened form of the Hebrew name Akiba; *haber* is the Hebrew word for the rabbi) addressed the Caliph Umar to build the Mosque on the Mount in such a way that Muslims could face both the Rock and Mecca at one and the same time. Umar refused, of course, and claimed that Ka'b's Jewish origin prompted him to make such a suggestion. Clearly, the Muslims maintain Muhammad's reversal of the Qibla, in direction to Mecca and not Jerusalem.

Ka'b, however, offers two significant observations about God and Jerusalem. 1.) "God, may He be praised, looks towards Jerusalem twice daily." This means that the Jews brought two lambs daily as Tamid offerings to God in the Temple, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. For "there Y-H-W-H will meet with the children of Israel and the (place) will be sanctified by My presence" (Exod 29:43). In the Rabbinic view the Mount is holy because God's presence sanctifies the place of the Temple. This place is where the Golden Dome is situated and it bears testimony to the Jewish worship only there, as Ka'b relates it. 2.) "God, may He be praised, says of Jerusalem: 'You are my seat of my lower Kingdom'." This vision is recorded by Isaiah in the Temple (Isa 6:1). "I saw the Lord God sitting on his seat, high and exalted and the train of his garment fills the sanctuary." The physical sanctuary is called the lower Kingdom in Jewish worship, as it corresponds to the upper Kingdom in Heaven (1 Kings 8:13 *Makhon* is read *Mekhuvan*, which reads: "the House of your dwelling corresponds to your eternal abode").

Apparently the sanctity of Jerusalem is derived from biblical testimony and from Jewish experience of the Holy. Great is the challenge to the Jewish State today, as it seeks to determine its own destiny in this tiny land, especially when public opinion and the use of the media are manipulated against this country and the Jews who dwell therein. A revisionist approach to the Holocaust has emerged, that is now accompanied by a revisionist view of the Zionist history and the events that led to the creation of the State, as well as to the wars fought against the Arab countries and the Palestinians. However, the greatest challenge to the Jewish State remains the Islamic resistance to any Jewish claim to the promised land as portrayed in the Bible and its rich history. The multifaceted tradition of Judaism over the centuries and the actual archeological discoveries as well as visible sites, all attest to the Jewish presence in this land. Yet, all this is rejected for political ends.

What can the Future Bring?

Islamic leaders and teachers need instead to recognize the historical reality and need also to acknowledge the Jewish influence on their religious tradition (Quran and Hadith) in order to deepen their understanding of their faith and to gain a greater appreciation of their praxis and values. The way is shown by the Catholic Church after Vatican Council II (1962-65) and how the United States Bishops Guidelines for Higher Education sought to encounter Judaism after the Holocaust. It was not in terms of supersessionary position or myopic vision, but as equal partners in faith, who respect each other's self definition and rich tradition. For the real voice in the Arab world is the voice of Islam, a theistic revealed religion that generates absolute values and a corporate mindset that determine their socio-political life. For Islam, like Judaism, enjoys corporate consciousness and views religion as a determining force in all areas of human relations (the transpersonal, the interpersonal, the subpersonal and the intrapersonal.)

The Jewish return to their homeland, which is located in the Islamic Middle East, should not become a bone in their throat, but rather be a partner in faith. Jerusalem should not be designated, for political correctness, a three-faith city but a Jewish city that God restored to its worshipping people a third time. Then all people of the other two great theistic religions will come there, to acknowledge where the Lord originally sanctified the Mount for the meeting of the people in the true spirit of *shalom* (expressed so beautifully in the fifteen Psalms of pilgrimage ascent, Pss 120-134). Israel had sought and also seeks to share with the world its technology, its agricultural innovations, its scientific and medical knowledge, its computer, economic and mathematical achievements, its educational and legal insight. Now it wishes to extend from Jerusalem spiritual and religious teachings, so humanity can be enriched by the very people who promoted theism to the world. Now they seek to share it with all theistic people. Finally all three proclaim the greatest experience of *shalom*: "How good and how pleasant it is when brothers in spirit dwell together" (Ps 133:1).

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