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# OUTPOST



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## Sabeel's Way

William Mehlman

“There are only two kinds of people in the end,” C.S. Lewis remarks in one of his novels. “Those who say to God ‘Thy will be done’ and those to whom God says ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell have chosen the latter.”

With its customary flair for infernal grace, The World Council of Churches, the Geneva-based umbrella under which 590 million Christians in 350 mainline Protestant and Orthodox denominations are gathered, has once again opted for the supremacy of its collective will over every evidence of God’s will in respect to the existence of Israel and the rights of the Jewish people. The latest airing of this Hell-bent last word in replacement theology was prominently on display at the recently completed WCC “World Week For Peace In Palestine Israel.” Billed as an opportunity to “take peaceful actions together,” the conclave wasted no time defining its theme, “Jerusalem the City of Justice and Peace,” as a call for “advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine.”

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, WCC’s muscular political arm, made it clear, however, that noble as it may be, kicking the Jews out of Judea and Samaria might have to wait on more immediate concerns. Chief among them, reported Giulio Meotti, covering the event for INN (Independent News Network), was the proposed “elimination of Israel’s presence in the ‘Holy Basin’” via “an alliance of the Islamic mosques and the Christian Sepulcher which would exclude the Jews from the Temple Mount.” This write-off of the Jewish people and their state, theologically effectuated in a prayer created for the event which by implication addresses the Israelis as “those who have no value for life,” is rooted in a Christian Liberation Theology that was all the rage in the 1970s and 80s. “A faddy form of Christian Socialism where Replacement Theology met Marxism,” Christian Zionist Shelley Neese notes in a piece for the *Jewish Connection*, it fell on hard times with the defeat of its progenitors, the Marxist revolutionaries in Central America, and the breakup of the Soviet Union from which they drew their material support and ideological mojo.



Rev. Naim Stefan Ateek

Its reemergence three decades later in the combative garb of a “Palestinian Liberation Theology” declaring Judaism’s role in God’s Covenant to be a myth, thus voiding, *pari passu*, all of the land promises justifying Israel’s rebirth, is almost universally recognized as the signal achievement of the Rev. Naim Stefan Ateek, the Palestinian-born, American-educated director of the Jerusalem-based Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. In its 24 years under the stewardship of this former Canon of Jerusalem’s St. George Episcopal Church, Sabeel (“the way” in Arabic) has orchestrated a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel stretching from the rural precincts of Presbyterian America to the far reaches of the World Council of Churches, while serving a dual role in reshaping the liberal conscience of mainline American Protestantism into a battering ram against the Jewish state.

CAMERA’s Christian media analyst Dexter Van Zile credits Sabeel with having “weaponized Christian ideology for the delegitimization of Israel” in the process “turning anti-Zionism into a competing religious practice.”

His own conscience undisturbed by traveling as an Israeli national with an Israeli passport, Ateek has crisscrossed the United States, his power base, establishing FOSNA (Friends of Sabeel North America) chapters wherever he can get a platform, pushing his activists onto mainline church payrolls, recruiting pastors and their flocks for his “Holy Land Witness” tours and zealously promoting a “morally

responsible investment” catechism aimed at church disinvestment in companies doing business with Israel. The religious message never varies: the liberation of God from an Old Testament “Zionist text” that is no longer to be taken literally. “How can the Old Testament be the work of God,” Ateek asks, “in light of the Palestinian Christian experience?” The answer, he replies, is to be found in “the theology that liberates.” Its end-game is Judaism’s repentance, conversion, renunciation of sovereignty and a return to the “vocation in suffering” it abandoned in its quest for political identity.

With its dedication to free speech, there isn’t a whole lot Israel can do about Naim Ateek, except perhaps to step up its sometimes less than robust public endorsement of the tens of millions of Christian Zionists in America and throughout the world ready to go to the barricades for the Jewish state. As its biggest American problem on the ground, Sabeel rarely misses an opportunity to vilify them. It’s hard to think of a better reason for Israel and American Jewish advocates for the Land of Israel to treat them as the incomparable asset they represent.

*William Mehlman represents AFSI in Israel.*

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## **From the Editor**

### **Peace Process Hustle**

As negotiations with the PA, led by the witless Tzipi Livni, continue under wraps, Yasser Abed Rabbo, secretary of the PLO, called Netanyahu's demand that the Palestinian leadership recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people proof Netanyahu was a "racist" and "the number one extremist in Israel." There are two possible outcomes to these "negotiations:" they disintegrate (perhaps in a new intifada) or Israel engages in more unilateral withdrawals on the model of Gaza (with the same consequences), in the worst case recognizing a sovereign Palestinian state.

### **Amazing Israel**

Each month, we hope to cull for you from Michael Ordman's invaluable site ([www.verygoodnewsisrael.blogspot](http://www.verygoodnewsisrael.blogspot)) a few examples of Israeli research and development in medical and scientific technology. Thanks to Ruth King for singling out a few of the most promising achievements reported this month:

Laquinimod reduces brain damage in MS patients. In Phase III trials, Israel’s Teva reported that its Laquinimod oral treatment for multiple sclerosis reduced neuro-degeneration, slowing the progression of locomotor disability. Laquinimod might also help treat Crohn’s disease, lupus nephritis, Huntington’s disease and Alzheimer’s.

Israel’s Elfi Tech monitors your pulse rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure, blood flow and much more, non-invasively with the help of a sensor smaller than a dime. It has just been selected as a finalist of the Nokia Sensing XChallenge. (This one is thanks to NoCamels.com)

Putting the spring back in broken hearts. Tel Aviv University scientists have manufactured cardiac tissue from spring-shaped fibers. The elastic tissue mimics the expanding and contracting heart and is more suitable for transplants than tissue made from straight fibers.

### **Ignore Agreement-Violations at Your Peril**

Now that Egypt has celebrated the 40th anniversary of its 1973 war against Israel, Aaron Lerner of IMRA (Independent Media Review and Analysis) reminds us of what made that war possible: America's refusal to honor its commitment to enforce the 1970 Egypt-Israel ceasefire agreement (and one might add, Israeli acquiescence in that failure). In violation of the agreement Egypt moved anti-

aircraft missiles close to the Suez Canal at the very time the cease-fire went into effect. The U.S. had a spy plane over the area which photographed the violations but when Israel protested the U.S. insisted Israel provide evidence and for several days claimed to be waiting for it. Before the cease fire agreement was signed, the U.S. had promised Israel that if the Egyptians moved up their missiles, the U.S. would insist Egypt pull them back. When the U.S. finally had to face up to the violation, it explained it could not pressure Egypt.

As Lerner says, it was these anti-aircraft missiles that provided invading Egyptian forces protection from the Israeli air force in the Yom Kippur War and without them it is doubtful Egypt would have even attempted the invasion.

Ariel Sharon would later say that the lesson of the Yom Kippur War is that one must always pay attention when agreements are not honored. It is a lesson Israel has consistently ignored, from the violations by Egypt of virtually every provision of its peace treaty with Israel to the wholesale violations of the Oslo agreement.

### **Worse than Al Dura**

In the Al Dura affair, France 2 and its Israel bureau chief Charles Enderlin doggedly defended their false claim that Israeli soldiers on September 30, 2000 shot to death 12 year old Mohammed Al Dura as he cradled next to his father at the Netzarim junction in the Gaza Strip. They sued Phillippe Karsenty for libel when he exposed the fraud.

At least in the Al Dura affair the tribute vice (France 2) paid to virtue (Karsenty) was that the public deserved to be told the true story. Today anti-Israel activists (fringe Israelis, alas, among them) discard even the pretense that truth is of any importance. As Caroline Glick writes in *The Jerusalem Post* (Oct. 14) "those who trounce it are congratulated for being open-minded and fair."

Glick is writing of the dramatization of a Masters thesis by a student named Teddy Katz at the University of Haifa purporting to document a previously unknown massacre of 250 Arab civilians by the IDF in May 1948. It turned out the story was a fabrication and the university cancelled its acceptance of Katz's thesis. But that hasn't prevented an Israeli named Motti Lerner from writing a play based on the thesis and airily dismissing "truth" as an irrelevance. And it hasn't prevented Theater J, funded (shockingly) by the Jewish Federation of Washington, from staging the play. Or the Washington DC Jewish Community Center from defending it and from attacking COPMA (Citizens Opposed to Propaganda Masquerading as Art) for demanding the Jewish Federation defund Theater J (a repeat offender in producing anti-Semitic diatribes disguised as "art.") The DC Jewish Community Center's chief Carole Zawatzky announced: "COPMA would love to see us close down the conversation, and our intention is to open up a conversation."

As Glick puts it: "In other words, a blood libel depicting Israeli soldiers--and the society that supports them--as mass murderers, is not beyond the pale. It is the beginning of an important conversation regarding whether or not Israel is a criminal state born in war crimes....The saga of *The Admission* [the play's title] is the saga of Israel in our upside down world today."

### **Time Magazine, Now--and Then**

The *Algemeiner* published an article "*Time Magazine Lies About Oslo and Slanders Jews*" (Oct. 21) with the subtitle "Karl Vick in *Time* does what he always does."

It could just as well have read "*Time Magazine does what it always does.*" Thirty three years ago this writer wrote an article in *The New Republic* entitled '*Time Against Israel*. Here's the first paragraph: "In the last seven years, and with accelerating tempo after 1977, *Time* has engaged in vigorous adversary journalism against Israel. In doing so *Time* has practiced subversion--literally, 'the turning of a thing upside down or uprooting it from its position.'" Plus ca change...

## The Devil That Never Dies

Rita Kramer



Daniel Goldhagen

The controversy aroused by Daniel Goldhagen's new book *The Devil That Never Dies: The Rise and Threat of Global Antisemitism*, has to do with the extent, not the existence, of Jew hatred--most generally expressed as opposition to Israeli policies--in today's world. Goldhagen maintains that the global spread of technology has led to an explosion of anti-Semitism in recent years to levels not seen since the years leading up to the Holocaust. In a review of Goldhagen's book in *The Wall Street Journal* on September 12, 2013, Anthony Julius takes issue with Goldhagen's argument.

Julius, a distinguished literary and legal figure and the author of *Trials of the Diaspora*, a definitive history of anti-Semitism in England, criticizes Goldhagen's book as a deplorable work, its research unreliable and its conclusions unbalanced.

While author and critic disagree on the extent and intensity of anti-Semitism today, neither of them denies its widespread existence. The disagreement seems to center on questions of scholarship and the nature and uses of data. Which leaves the unarguable fact that anti-Semitism is not dead or even dying and that once again Jews in Europe and indeed in countries throughout the world are being made to feel unwelcome.



Anthony Julius

A look at the bitter past, when it was critical that Jews be admitted to places of refuge, with persecution enforced in Germany and horrors already on the horizon, is a lesson on why Israel matters, a reminder of how the existence of the Jewish State has changed the Jewish fate. Now there is a door open when once doors everywhere were shut in the faces of the helpless threatened.

In the decade leading up to World War II Europe's pervasive anti-Semitism was fastened on by Hitler but had not yet reached the final solution--plans for technological extermination. At the time Germany would seem to have been ready to settle for ridding itself of its Jews. And so the possibility of "resettlement" was proposed to an indifferent world. And how better to postpone action and pass the humanitarian buck than by organizing a conference?

So it was that at the initiative of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, representatives of thirty-two countries, a score of private organizations, and some 200 journalists met in 1938 in the picturesque French resort town of Evian-les-Bains to consider the question of who would make room for the desperate Jewish refugees from the mass arrests and deportations being carried out in Germany and newly annexed Austria. The answer, after eight days of discussion, was no one. No one, that is, except the small Dominican Republic. The United States had an unfulfilled quota for immigrants and there was plenty of room in British mandated Palestine, but neither of the leading exemplars of Western civilized humanistic values could see the way to rescuing the doomed Jews. Anti-Semitism was alive and well among the American population at the time and the State Department held to a nativistic policy carried out by officials like Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long with outspoken views about the undesirability of approving visa applications from Europe's Jews.

The Evian Conference resulted in much oratory, much hypocritical handwringing, and many expressions of moral indignation, as well as the formation of another committee--the Intergovernmental

Committee on Refugees. Little was heard of the ICR afterward and little was done to stop the progress of Hitler's war against the Jews. Chaim Weizmann summed up the situation--there were countries where Jews were not allowed to live and others which they were not allowed to enter. And soon after the delegates had gathered up their papers and gone home the door closed on Europe's Jews forever.

Another exercise in the politics of empty gestures was a conference which took place in Bermuda in April of 1943, just as the Nazis were wiping out the last of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters. Called by the British as a response to increasing public reaction to reports of what was happening to the Jews of Europe, this gathering too saw no result beyond statements by the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office about the impossibility of taking any meaningful action. Proposals for enlisting the aid of neutral countries or of sending food to the starving victims were dismissed out of hand.

Both governments, it later became clear, were apprehensive about the results of the possible release of large numbers of Jewish refugees, even if rescue were possible. The Roosevelt administration was concerned about the effect of being seen as too pro-Jewish in the coming election campaign and the British would not allow discussion of their Palestine immigration policy. The last gasp of the hitherto moribund ICR, the Bermuda conference was held in a remote setting and with little or no publicity. And the slaughter went on, in the face of what David S. Wyman would define as the abandonment of the Jews.

And now again the Jews, major contributors to the culture of a once-great continent, are afraid to appear in public in parts of Europe wearing articles of clothing or insignia that exhibit their faith. But while anti-Semitism persists in all its blind irrationality, there is one difference from the years that led up to the Shoah. It is Israel.

This time there is a haven. And whether or not Daniel Goldhagen is right about the present threat, Jews everywhere in the world should be aware of what it means for Jewish survival--for their survival--that there is a homeland, a place of rescue in time of need that no committee needs to approve.

### **In Memoriam - Charlotte Wahle**

AFSI mourns the death of our beloved volunteer of over twenty years. Charlotte Wahle was an army wrapped in a small body. She lived in Washington Heights from which she commuted to the AFSI offices doggedly in any weather until serious illness felled her. She was an avid reader of *Outpost* and every month sent a handwritten letter of praise or minor criticism. She knew more than anyone about the founding of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra and cherished a portrait of Arturo Toscanini who was its first conductor. She loved symphonic music and insisted that it always sounded better when performed by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Those who knew Charlotte were amazed at her tenacity and devotion to AFSI. She was at every demonstration, wrote letters to the editor, and was a driving force in the AFSI office. In addition, Charlotte was active in her synagogue, in politics, and with her many friends.

At her funeral a devoted group of family and AFSI friends, who made up a large part of her extended family, paid their last respects. An Israeli flag was placed at her grave symbolizing her great passion for Israel.

There is a cliché which is so apposite: "They don't make them like that anymore." Her memory is an inspiration and a blessing.

## A Peres Clone in the Wings?

Rael Jean Isaac

Israel's great buffoon, President Shimon Peres, is getting long in the tooth. Judging from Martin Sherman's recent blistering article in *The Jerusalem Post* (Oct. 10) his replacement is on hand: Israel's Minister of Finance Yair Lapid. Sherman's title gives you an idea of what follows: "Into the Fray: What an Idiot!"



While Sherman surprisingly does not mention Peres, his description of Lapid bears uncanny similarities to Simple Shimon: "a good-looking, charismatic, over-confident fool, an affable ignoramus with no intellectual gravitas, devoid of moral principle, but with the gift of a silver tongue and the unmistakable--and largely undisguised--penchant for demagoguery and dictatorship."

Other characteristics of Lapid that Sherman goes on to cite are also remarkably close to Peres: "without any background in military matters," "whose scholastic achievements do not even include high school matriculation." (Peres, almost alone of able-bodied young men at the time never served in the army and his education consisted of three years of high school followed by graduation from the Ben Shemen agricultural youth village). And then there's Lapid's "pontificating to all and sundry on how the affairs of the nation should be run"--no one surpasses Peres in that regard!

One comment by Sherman concerning Lapid gets to the core of his--and Shimon's--strength: "Lapid has the telegenic presence and charm to make utter nonsense sound almost intelligent, the wildly implausible, almost reasonable--unless you listen to what he has to say." Lapid, says Sherman, issues "with commendable self-assuredness, proclamations that [are] either meaningless, self-contradictory or unfounded."

Supreme self-confidence married to appalling ignorance leads both men to make staggering errors of fact. Sherman cites a few of Lapid's bloopers (exposed in an article by Israeli journalist B. Michael). Note that these are in Lapid's *writings* so he lacks the excuse that his tongue ran away with him. Writing of ancient Greece, Lapid enumerates its great figures: Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Copernicus. Anyone with a rudimentary education knows that Copernicus was a sixteenth century astronomer with no connection to Greece, ancient or modern. Lapid then lists the great Renaissance artists: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Donatello, Giacometti... Oops. Giacometti was a Swiss sculptor who died in 1966. In a long essay on the U.S. Constitution Lapid praises it because it was not written by a committee but one inspired individual, John Adams. Sherman notes that Michael explodes at this one: "Good grief! The U.S. Constitution was composed by a committee comprising dozens of people. John Adams was not even in America at the time."

Getting closer to home, Lapid's knowledge of the basics of the Bible is no more impressive: he speaks of the "four patriarchs." Michael says caustically he has no idea who the fourth might be--"perhaps Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and...Copernicus!"

Shimon has been at it longer so his egregious errors are legion. Following are just a tiny sample (readers interested in reams of his pronouncements are referred to *What Shimon Says* compiled by Roger A. Gerber and this writer and published by Americans for a Safe Israel). In *Battling for Peace*

Peres writes: "Men like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, the shapers of the Constitution, were the men who molded the new reality, unprecedented in human history, that is America." On the plus side, at least Lincoln is not as removed in time from Jefferson as Copernicus from Plato.

Shimon is as badly in need of a course on American history as Lapid. For example (also from *Battling for Peace*): "In almost every foreign war, it [the U.S.] has conquered territory. But in none of them has it even attempted to retain either territories or resources, or to rule over another nation." In his sublime ignorance, Shimon has apparently no clue that the U.S. retained West Florida (including parts of today's Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi) after the War of 1812; East Florida, ceded by Spain in the aftermath of the Seminole War; Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah after wars with Mexico in the 1840s. If these were not "foreign" enough for Shimon, how about Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines after the war with Spain in 1898?

As for the Bible, Peres outdoes Lapid's four patriarchs. Here's Shimon addressing the U.N. General Assembly in September 1993: "As a Jew may I say that the essence of our history since the times of Abraham and the commandments of Moses have [sic] been an uncompromising opposition to any form of occupation, of domination, of discrimination." Shimon was apparently too immersed in reading Marx (according to his own account, he even courted his wife Sonia by reading to her "sometimes by the light of the moon, selected passages from Marx's *Das Kapital*") to bother with the Bible. If he had read it, he'd have come upon Genesis 15:18: To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates: the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Prizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites. And Deut. 2:24 Up! Set out across the river Arnon! See, I give into your power Sihon the Amorite, King of Heshbon, and his land. Begin the occupation: engage him in battle. Or Deut 11:24 "Every spot on which your foot treads shall be yours: your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the Euphrates, to the Western Sea.

Lapid's cavalier attitude toward Arab denial of Israel's legitimacy is so similar to that of Peres that the words of one could easily have been pronounced by the other. For example Lapid has no patience for the demand that Palestinian leaders recognize Israel as a Jewish state. "We recognize Israel as a Jewish state. We don't need authorization from anyone else." Compare to Peres: "I don't think we should judge the [Oslo] process by the performance of Yasir Arafat. We're not negotiating with Yasir Arafat. We're negotiating with ourselves." And his response when a journalist pointed to Arafat's exhortation of an Arab audience to *jihad* and his praise of suicide bombers: "What counts is not the intentions of the Palestinians."

Sherman notes that, incredibly, Lapid seems to believe the Palestinians have already relinquished the right of return, basing this on a single sentence made by Abbas on Israeli TV in which he said he did not expect to return to his former home in Safed. Abbas himself quickly explained this "did not mean giving up the right of return" and the day after the interview, his spokesman declared the purpose of the remark had been "to influence Israeli public opinion." Compare this to Peres's fantasy about Arafat (quoted by the *New York Times*, April 25, 1996): "He fights terror, he changed the covenant exactly as he pledged. Both the fighting of terror and the changing of the covenant is a new development in the last hundred years." It need hardly be said that Arafat did not change the covenant and promoted terror until he died.

Sherman is amazed that more journalists have not picked up on Lapid's absurdities and that even his political rivals have not used them to their advantage. The same can be said--and indeed has been said--of Peres. This is from our introduction to *What Shimon Says*: "Although Peres is a satirist's goldmine...neither TV nor other media exploit the rich Peres mine. Every time Peres produced his trite epigrams and played word games that denigrated his high office (and thus his country), Israeli humorists should have been taking notes in the wings. In doing so, they would have performed a vital public

service. Had they made Peres a figure of fun, a wise man of Chelm, he would have been unable to damage Israel to the degree he has done--and still does."

For this is the heart of the matter: stupid people in key political positions are dangerous people. Sherman notes that in an interview on Charlie Rose, Lapid declared: "I am saying what we need to do is-- something." Peres also felt the need to do "something," and he "did" Oslo, negotiated behind Rabin's back and then handed to him as a fait accompli. The terrible results of Oslo are still being played out, with dangers every bit as great to Israel's survival as Iran's bomb.

Sherman says the phenomenon of Yair Lapid's rise to political prominence epitomizes "the grave malaise afflicting Israeli politics" illustrating "the dysfunctional superficiality that has come to dominate it." That a man like Peres could have risen to the position of Foreign Minister, Prime Minister and President of Israel and according to all the polls, be the most revered figure in Israel, shows the malaise goes deeper. The public's lack of basic political intelligence threatens to undo all Israel's military, economic and scientific achievements. Could the smooth talking Lapid, in addition to taking on Peres's role as chief fool, rise to the same positions of power as Peres?

The prospect is terrifying.

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## Why I Live in Hebron

David Wilder

A few days ago, speaking to a group of young adults, one of the people asked me what's my motivation to live in Hebron. My answer contained a few elements.

Usually my first stop on tours is Tel Rumeida, a great place to start. Because this neighborhood is actually ancient Tel Hebron. If Ma'arat HaMachpela is where the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are buried, this is where they lived. Two walls, one 4,500 years old, dated to the era of Noah, and another, 3,700 years old, from the times of Abraham and Sarah, ensconce a stairwell, over 4,000 years old. We are almost 100% sure that our Forefathers walked these stairs.

Today, the stairs reach the only road accessing this neighborhood. Archeologists have explained to us that under that road, at the end of the stone stairs, are probably the Gates to the ancient city of Hebron.

This site is, for me, probably one of the most important places, not only in Hebron, but in all of Israel, and in the world. Why? Tomorrow, together with literally tens of thousands here in Hebron and Kiryat Arba, we will read in the Torah how Abraham, almost 4,000 years ago, purchased the Caves of Machpela for us, his children. The Torah states twice, specifically, exactly where this transaction occurred, when he paid 400 silver shekels (today valued at \$700,000) to Efron the Hittite. That place is, the gates to the city.

Standing with groups, looking at this spot, I tell them that it is very possible, even likely, that this is where Abraham purchased Machpela. And what I always find amazing isn't so much that Abraham was there then, but that we are still here today. How many people can say, after 4,000 years, this is where they began, and where they continue to live today?

This is our roots, the roots of Judaism, the roots of Monotheism. Any person, any group of people, any religion that professes a belief in one G-d, this is where it all began. Quite literally, this is the beginning of humanity as we know it today, the beginning of the end of human sacrifice, of a belief in the one and only Creator of the Universe, our G-d. It is difficult to get closer to our roots than at this very place.

Later we visit the actual site of those caves, known as Ma'arat HaMachpela. Here groups hear the stories, legends, Biblical and Rabbinic accounts of this place's sanctity.



Tomb of the Patriarchs

Here, so it is written, our souls ascend to the world above, after they depart our physical body.

Not the seventh wonder of the world, rather the first wonder of the world.

But perhaps, the most incredible part of the story, again, isn't then, but today. For this singular place was inaccessible to Jews and Christians for hundreds of years, seven centuries. For seven hundred years no one, not of Moslem faith, was allowed inside the 2,000 year old Herodian monument built on top of the caves.

Only in 1967, following the six-day war and our return home, home to Hebron,

were we once again able to visit, pray, identify with our holy relatives, at this very exceptional site.

How many peoples of the world remember what they lost, centuries ago? How many peoples strive, pray, and even die, to return to their roots, their holy sites, the core of their essence? And how many succeed?

But it doesn't end there. Not too many years ago, January, 1997, most of Hebron was taken from us, abandoned to our enemy. During negotiations, leading to the signing and implementation of the Hebron accords, the Arabs demanded control of Machpela. They have stated, time and again, that should they retain power here, it will again be off-limits to anyone not of the Islamic faith.

True, we had then, and still do, have many disagreements with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. But when it came to Machpela, he said no. The holy place remained under Israeli control. That is why some 800,000 people of all religions, from around the world, can visit here annually.

Again, such talks are underway. But again, a few days ago, Netanyahu issued a special 'blessing,' leading up to 'A night to honor Hebron' in the Knesset and this Shabbat: "It is no coincidence that the government of Israel included the Cave of Machpela in its list of National Heritage Sites. Hebron, like Jerusalem, has the power to unite Israel...My wish for you is that 'Shabbat Hebron,' with its thousands of participants, will deepen our affinity to the City of our Forefathers, to our Land and to our heritage."

Those Jews who worship three times a day recite a special blessing, speaking of the resurrection of the dead. Today's Jewish community, living at Tel Rumeida-Tel Hebron, Beit Hadassah, Beit Romano, the Avraham Avinu neighborhood, worshipping at Ma'arat HaMachpela, the close to one million people who visit Hebron every year, are all living examples of rebirth, resuscitation of the dead.

Who was here? What was here? Who could have possibly imagined that we would ever really come back, and *live* here again? Who could have dreamt of a night to honor Hebron, in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset? A dream, a dream come true.

We are here: for all of those who lived here and died here, for all those who dreamed but could only dream, and for our grandchildren's grandchildren, so that they too will be able to be here.

We are but links in a chain, the beginning of which started 4,000 years ago, and the end of which is eternity. This is what will be going through my head tomorrow, celebrating Shabbat Chayei Sarah in Hebron, with tens of thousands from Israel and around the world.

We are here. To stay. Forever.

If that's not motivation, I don't know what is.

*David Wilder is spokesman for the Hebron Jewish community.*

## Response To: "Evangelicals and Israel"

Gertrude Himmelfarb

*Editor's note: Readers who want to learn more of the bond between evangelicals and Israel should go to David Isaac's Zionism 101 site, [www.zionism101.org](http://www.zionism101.org), which tells the history of Zionism through videos. It includes six units on Christian Zionism. The first unit is entitled "The Jews' Society" and the second is entitled "Lord Shaftesbury"--these two units explore the subjects of Himmelfarb's essay below.*

The following comments are a historical footnote to Robert Nicholson's splendid essay, "Evangelicals and Israel." Addressing himself to American Jews, he rebukes them for being distrustful of the millions of evangelical Christians who have been staunch supporters of the Jewish state and the Jewish people. But he also rebukes the growing minority of evangelicals who have recently withdrawn that support and are now actively hostile to Israel and Jews.

Two years ago, I was provoked to write *The People of the Book: Philosemitism in England from Cromwell to Churchill*, in a similarly critical mode, reproaching the present-day English (not English Jews) for betraying their own evangelical tradition, which was so respectful of the Jewish religion and people and so enthusiastic in favor of a Jewish state, and for succumbing to an anti-Israel fervor very nearly indistinguishable from anti-Semitism.



Lord Ashley

Evangelicalism was at its height in England in the early 19th century, with Lord Ashley (later the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury) its most prominent and vigorous champion. "An Evangelical of the Evangelicals," he described himself. It was evangelicalism that prompted both his zeal as a social reformer (of factories, education, and child-labor practices) and as a "missionary," as he saw it, to and from the Jews. "Who will be the Cyrus of Modern Times," he inquired in his diary in 1826, "the second Chosen to restore God's people?" (Cyrus, king of ancient Persia, permitted the exiled Jews to return from Babylonia to the land of Israel.)

Ashley was all of twenty-five and a newly elected member of Parliament when he took upon himself that role. A decade later, he helped organize the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (the Jews' Society, as it was known), one of whose aims, and soon its principal aim, was "encouraging the physical restoration of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel—the Land of Israel." Two years later, he persuaded Lord Palmerston, then the foreign secretary, to appoint a British vice-consul to Jerusalem. "What a wonderful event it is!" he exulted. "The ancient city of the people of God is about to resume a place among the nations."

Three years later, over the strong objections of William Gladstone and other Anglicans, Ashley prevailed upon Robert Peel, the new prime minister, to support a bill creating a bishopric in Jerusalem. The first bishop appointed to that post was Michael Solomon Alexander, a converted Jew, the son of a rabbi and himself a former rabbi. Ashley, who had been involved in the choice of Alexander, was delighted, he confided to his diary, "to see a native Hebrew appointed by the Church of England to carry back to the Holy City the truths and blessings which Gentiles had received from it." For the rest of his life he wore the ring the bishop had given him before leaving for Jerusalem. It was inscribed with a quotation from the Psalms, "Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."

In 1854, with the outbreak of the Crimean war, Ashley, now Lord Shaftesbury, urged Lord Clarendon, the foreign minister, to persuade Turkey to cede some land to the Jews. In his diary, again citing the decree of Cyrus, he argued that this was the time for another, “analogous” action:

“All the East is stirred; the Turkish empire is in rapid decay; every nation is restless; all hearts expect some great thing. . . . The territory must be assigned to someone or other; can it be given to any European potentate? to any American colony? to any Asiatic sovereign or tribe? . . . No, no, no! There is *a country without a nation*; and God now, in His wisdom and mercy, directs us to *a nation without a country*. His own once loved, nay, still loved people, the sons of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.”

Those italicized phrases—“country without a nation” and “nation without a country”—have since become memorable, echoed in the famous Zionist slogan, “A land without a people for a people without a land.” It was later charged that this slogan willfully and wrongly implied that there were no “people” in Palestine. But Shaftesbury, like the later Zionists, clearly meant by “people” a recognizable people, a nation. A dozen years later he established the Palestine Exploration Fund to prepare the country for “the return of its ancient possessors.” This “great event,” he felt assured, was not far off. “A nation must have a country. The old land, the old people. This is not an artificial experiment; it is nature, it is history.”

“And yet,” Nicholson pauses midway in his essay as he introduces the disturbing subject of those American evangelicals who have begun propounding a new evangelical anti-Zionism. The historian of Victorian England must register a different “and yet.”

In 1847, Lionel Rothschild had been elected to Parliament but was not seated because he refused to take the required oath “upon the true faith of a Christian.” A Jewish Disability Bill, introduced the following year, was meant to remove this last “civil disability” suffered by English Jews: they could vote, but as Jews they could not serve in Parliament. After a memorable debate, in which some supported the bill on the grounds of liberty and justice, others for reasons of expediency and consistency (Catholics and Dissenters having already been admitted to Parliament), it passed the Commons with a comfortable majority but was defeated in the House of Lords.

Ashley (as he then still was), well-known as an admirer of Jews and Jewish causes, might have been expected to speak in favor of this so-called “Jew Bill.” Yet he was among its most vigorous opponents. Unmoved by Disraeli, who reminded his Christian colleagues that Jews should be admitted because they were “the authors of your religion,” and unpersuaded by the prime minister, Lord Russell, who argued that Christianity should “prevail in private life” but not in public, Ashley insisted that it was precisely in public that Christianity must prevail, else Christianity itself was “altogether needless.” To admit Jews would violate the essential, unalterable Christian character of the state.

It was a passionate speech, and it concluded on an equally passionate note—a tribute to the very Jews whom Ashley was disqualifying from Parliament. He hoped he had not given offense, he said, to “the Hebrew people . . . , the most remarkable nation that had ever yet appeared on the face of the earth . . . , a people of very powerful intellect, of cultivated minds . . . , their literature extended in an unbroken chain from the days of our Lord down to the present time . . . , embracing every subject of science and learning, of secular and religious knowledge . . . ”

And so on for a discourse on their honorable and distinguished history from antiquity to modernity. Ashley was prepared to make every effort to contribute to “their honor and comfort,” but he could not in good conscience eliminate the vital oath testifying to the Christian nature of the English state.

A decade later, a similar bill was introduced and accepted by both Houses. Rothschild took his seat, wearing a hat and swearing the oath “So help me Jehovah” on a large Hebrew Bible. He served for fifteen years without making a single speech.

To compound this series of “and yet,” Shaftesbury voted for that second bill, explaining in his diary that he did so because he could no longer resist, “pertinaciously and hopelessly,” the will of the

Commons. Ten years later, recalling this event, he urged Gladstone, then the prime minister, to show regard for “God’s ancient people” by giving a peerage to Sir Moses Montefiore, “a noble member of the House of Israel.” “It would be a glorious day for the House of Lords when that grand old Hebrew was enrolled on the lists of the hereditary legislators of England.” (Gladstone did not act on that suggestion; Montefiore remained the Sir he had been since his knighthood in 1837.) It is ironic that Shaftesbury should propose to seat Montefiore in the House of Lords, having once denied Rothschild a seat in Commons; but perhaps not altogether ironic—the lords being, at least rhetorically, more exalted, more lordly, than mere commoners.

It may also be ironic if this long-ago episode should confirm today’s Jews in their distrust of evangelicals, preferring instead to see their civil rights defended on the more prosaic, secular grounds of equity and tolerance. Suspecting the motives of evangelical Zionists for whom Israel is allegedly merely a prelude to the Second Coming and the conversion of the Jews, many Jews may also prefer to see Israel defended in terms of the American national interest rather than religious zeal.

Yet secularism itself has its perils, as I think Nicholson would agree, lending itself all too readily to anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. The dismissal or disparagement of religion as an inspiring force, on the part of Jews or Christians, also has the unfortunate and perhaps unintended effect of impoverishing, diminishing, even trivializing the very idea of Jews, Judaism, and the Jewish state.

*This appeared in mosaicmagazine.com in October 2013. Gertrude Himmelfarb is the eminent historian of Victorian thought and culture. She is currently preparing a volume of essays on Jews and Judaism by her late husband, Irving Kristol.*

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## **Straightening the Dog's Tail**

Ali Salim

This is the season for pilgrimages to Mecca and the Feast of the Sacrifice (Eid al-Adha), but the Arab world is occupied instead with internecine murder and bloodletting. As the Arab states come apart at the seams, gangs with no respect for human life flock in -- among them the Muslim Brotherhood, the Al-Nusra Front, Hamas and Al-Qaeda -- blowing up markets and mosques. Their advent is surreal: waving green and black flags they shoot everything that moves; and rape, slaughter and loot, all in the name of Allah (S.W.A.T.).

The situation in the Arab world is like the Shi'ite Islamic vision of the Yaom al-Kiama, the End of Days, with the sinners following the False Messiah, Al-Masih ad-Dajjal. It is ironic that the rulers and citizens of states that provide a safe haven for terrorists -- sending their death teams to attack innocent civilians in the West -- during the Feast of the Sacrifice now find themselves the victims of the same murderers they so willingly armed.

The Arab and Muslim incitement to massacre -- and the provision of arms and ideological support for most of the Islamist and Palestinian terrorist organizations -- have almost completely disappeared while the Arabs are now busy destroying themselves. The world stands by and watches as millions of Arab and Muslim refugees are expelled, murdered, raped and robbed. Millions of people who fled their homes live in cardboard boxes with plastic sheeting to keep out the rain and cold; and masses of hungry African refugees drown in the sea in a desperate attempt to reach a safe haven in the West. In Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, civilians are murdered or flee with nothing; while Egypt is in the midst of a civil war, and millions of homeless refugees have scattered throughout the Middle East.

Despite all this need and chaos, the UN and the various NGOs are insistent on providing a political, economic and moral lifeline to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original 1948 Palestinian refugees, not only prolonging their inherited status, but also making them eternally dependent. The status of "refugees" does not generally pass from one generation to the next, so it is even more unfortunate that the enlightened Western world supports them at the expense of the millions of genuinely needy new refugees. By providing these descendants a commodity to trade in, the UN is also ensuring that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians will never be resolved.

If an accounting were ever given of the billions of dollars the UN has poured into the Palestinian coffers over the years, enough money would be found to house each of them in villas with swimming pools across the entire Middle East. If the Arab-Muslim countries really wished to help the Palestinians, they would transfer to them the immense wealth and property left behind by the Jewish refugees, who were expelled in the late 1940s and fled to Israel. The UN, however, is suspiciously insistent on not providing the same -- or even similar -- care for any other group of refugees.

UN agencies (such as UNRWA) themselves benefit from the disabling aid structures they put in place, theoretically to help people in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and abroad, who are able to work and have so many other ways of receiving help; while in Syria, people are dying of hunger, and Muslim clerics in the collapsing Arab states have issued fatwas [Muslim religious opinions] for the Feast of the Sacrifice permitting the consumption of dogs, cats and donkeys.



Syrian refugee camp

Given that Europe is bankrupt, both morally and financially, the United States alone bears the burden of supporting over 22% of the malfunctioning UN and its often-corrupt agencies. Instead, the U.S. should demand that the oil-rich Arab states give citizenship, with attendant rights and privileges, to their Palestinian residents, to enable the UN to focus on rehabilitating the millions of new Arab and Muslim refugees created by the catastrophic Arab Spring. Even as we witness the artificial Arab states, created in 1916 by the Sykes-Picot Agreement, disintegrate, the United States and the West seem to insist on creating a new artificial Arab state called "Palestine," which will soon be a hotbed of extremism, terrorism and bloodshed, exactly like the others.

The "Palestinian people," we recall, are not a group at all, but rather Arab immigrants, many of whom settled in the late 19th-early 20th century in what was part of the Ottoman Empire, and who fled in 1947, when Israel was attacked, then after the war asked to return. The Arabs who did not flee still live in Israel and, whatever one thinks of Israel, are at least freely able to enter all leading professions, including the parliament and the highest court.

Of those calling themselves Palestinians, some have splintered into Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Islamist Groups such as the terrorist organization Hamas; others are in the West Bank, both inside and outside Fatah; still others find themselves overseas or in Arab lands. If they were integrated into the existing Arab states, it would serve the quest for world peace. Any new state in the Middle East, such as a Palestine, will be taken down by jihadis before its flag is up.

Although the United States has a full quiver of advisors for Islamic and Arab affairs, the decisions made by its leadership seem to keep repeating the same inexplicable mistakes. It is like the old Arab saying, "The dog has a crooked tail, and if you put it in a cast for forty days, it will still be crooked." It is painful to watch the United States as its well-intended misconceptions of the Middle East cause it to fail: its limp-wristed negotiations with Iran, its weakness in the case of Syria, its helplessness in its dealings

with Russia and China, and the fatal mistakes it is making in the sanctions it is imposing on Egypt after the stone-age rule of the Muslim Brotherhood was overthrown.

The most current example of American failure to understand the Middle East occurred when Chuck Hagel, the American Secretary of Defense, suggested to General Sisi that he resign or turn into another Mubarak (who was betrayed by the Americans). In an act of condescension, insult and hypocrisy, he gave Sisi a book about George Washington, and pointed out a chapter in which Washington walked away from power. By treating the Mansour-Sisi interim government in Egypt in such a demeaning fashion, America displays its lack of respect, lack of determination and lack of confidence, all of which will seriously boomerang.

It would be brilliant if the Americans were being deliberately devious when they spoke against the interim government in Egypt, and were secretly working as hard as they could to support it. That is how situations should be manipulated in the Middle East, where hatred of the United States is endemic and passionate. If that were what was occurring, the U.S. would triumph. What is much more likely, however, is that America is hedging its bets, flip-flopping to strengthen the Muslim Brotherhood in case it recaptures power.

The situation is the same of the other crooked dog's tail: Iran's duplicity and the way it deceives the West regarding its nuclear intentions are obvious to those of us living in the Middle East. The U.S. is in danger of making the Gulf States feel betrayed, especially as they watch their national security deteriorate. The regional arms race will increase and tensions will mount -- one of the reasons Saudi Arabia declined a seat on the UN Security Council. Here in the Middle East, America is seen as threatening allies and abandoning friends -- bringing on just what they hoped to avert -- and setting up new victims for the murderers they so willingly armed.

*This appeared on October 25 at [www.gatestoneinstitute.org](http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org). Ali Salim is a scholar based in the Middle East.*

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## **Destination Israel**

Ruth King

One could be forgiven for thinking that there are billions of Jews in the world. A day hardly passes without headlines involving Jews, and, of course, the requisite criticism of Israel. There are Broadway plays about old Jews telling jokes, bad Jews arguing, the current Nobel prizes, and even a delightful PBS film (Broadway Musicals-A Jewish Legacy) about the outsize number of Jewish composers, lyricists, producers, directors and performers.

Now, even travel sections of newspapers and magazines tout vacations in Israel and the new hot city is "cool" Tel-Aviv. The October issue of *Travel and Leisure* calls it a "...coastal city, an electrifying mix of stylish hotels and high design landmarks--all along miles of white sand beaches" and goes on to describe restaurants, shops, museums, tours, great Bauhaus architecture, markets and the "buzz" of the street in glowing terms in a six page spread.

On October 23, 2013 the pop singer Rihanna, ignoring boycotts, performed in Tel Aviv to a standing room only crowd. After two songs she said: "Thank you Tel Aviv! It's been too long since I've been here, and you guys had to wait longer than usual and for that I apologize."

My first thought was "you've come a long way Tel Aviv" since you started as a settlement in "disputed territory" in 1909, almost a decade before the Balfour Declaration.

In fact, Israel abounds with lovely and historic and “cool” cities founded in the 1800s. One of the most charming is Zichron Yaakov with its ancient cobblestones which line the main car-free street and square. Baron Edmond James de Rothschild,(1845-1934), a member of the Rothschild banking family and an early, passionate supporter of Jewish settlement in Palestine, was a founding patron of Zichron Yaakov (named after his father Jacob) in 1882, and was laid to rest there 20 years after his death.

The Baron encouraged piety, Torah, learning Hebrew, self-reliance and agriculture. Today Zichron Yaakov is famous for its wine vineyards and for its views, its beauty, its nearby artist colony, and its walking tours. In its historic cemetery a visitor is made acutely aware of the hardships the early settlers endured by the number of graves of young people and children.

One home is particularly relevant to members of AFSI -- the stately stone Aaronsohn home with its beautiful gardens. Shmuel Katz wrote a biography of this remarkable family *The Aaronsohn Saga* published in 2007. The wealthy senior Aaronsohns were among Zichron Yaakov’s founding families who came with elegant furniture, crystal and porcelains, still on display. Their children Aaron and Sarah are legends in Israel’s history.



Sarah Aaronsohn

After studies in France, Aaron became a world famous botanical expert and agronomist. Baron Rothschild employed him and during his explorations of the flora of Israel he discovered a species of unknown wild wheat which made him famous and led to an invitation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 1909.

In 1915 Aaronsohn and Avshalom Feinberg organized NILI, a secret espionage group to help the British in the forthcoming battle for Palestine. NILI was an acronym for a biblical verse from the Book of Samuel, "Nezah Yisrael Lo Yeshakker," or "The Glory of Israel will not Lie" (1 Samuel 15:29). Aaron moved to Cairo and provided British forces with intelligence and strategic advice. He also traveled to London to circulate memos and maps to implement Jewish statehood.

Sarah Aaronsohn returned to Zichron Yaakov from Turkey where she lived during her short and unhappy marriage. She joined NILI’s efforts as courier and spy. The group used carrier pigeons to relay information to the British, but in 1917, while Sarah was on a mission to Cairo, one landed in the home of the Turkish Governor, whose forces quickly surrounded Zichron Yaakov and arrested known members of NILI. Sarah who had returned in spite of warnings, was brutally tortured for days but did not divulge any secrets. Her screams could be heard throughout the village. When she was to be hanged, she asked to return to her home one last time and shot herself.

Aaron was killed in an airplane crash in 1919. Feinberg’s remains were found in 1967 in the Sinai Peninsula and returned to Israel for a state funeral.

The story is one of determination, espionage, Ottoman/Moslem cruelty, and heroism in the service of Zionism. Seth Lipsky, then editor of *The Forward* engaged Hillel Halkin to write Aaronsohn's story in a series named “The Liar” which ran for about a year in the 1990s but was not completed. Halkin, who lives in Zichron Yaakov, wrote an engaging book *A Strange Death* about the Aaronsohns and NILI. Together with Shmuel Katz's book, it provides the basis for a great movie.

Incidentally, Seth Lipsky, always a friend of AFSI, hung a portrait of Sarah Aaronsohn in the editorial offices of the *New York Sun*.

Zichron Yakkov, like Tel-Aviv and so many other thriving towns in Israel, is lovely to visit and read about. It is one of those settlements in pre 1922 “disputed territory” that paved the way for Israel’s rebirth and are now thriving, bustling cities that make touring Israel really “cool.”

Before you go, be sure to read: *The Aaronsohn Saga* by Shmuel Katz (2007) (available on Amazon).

## **Outpost**

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