

# Twisting Jewish Values to Promote False Peace

by [Matthew Hausman](#) (January 2014)

*The following is the text of remarks delivered on December 8, 2013 at Ahavath Torah Congregation in Stoughton, Massachusetts.*

Have you heard the one about the old Jewish lady from Brooklyn who wants to visit a Hindu holy man in Nepal? Her friends tell her she's crazy, but she saves her money, flies to Nepal and makes the arduous trip up the mountain anyway. When she arrives she's told by a disciple that her audience will last only a minute and that she must limit her conversation to six words. Not easily intimidated, she insists on seeing the great master immediately. After being ushered into his chamber, she looks him straight in the eye and says the six words that most accurately convey her thoughts.

"Sheldon, it's your mother. Come home!"

Unfortunately, there are many "Sheldons" in the Jewish world today – those who discard traditional values for non-Jewish belief systems they consider more relevant. Such are those who believe that forcing Israel to accept any "peace" is a Jewish imperative, even if that peace discounts Jewish nationhood, lends credence to a Palestinian national myth that has no historical foundation, and compromises her security and integrity as a Jewish Nation.

## The Oslo Process

In meeting with Palestinian terrorists in violation of Israeli law twenty years ago, Oslo's architects validated an apocryphal national myth that is fundamentally anti-Semitic and contemptuous of Jewish history, and in so doing cast off traditional values in the pursuit of a progressive pipedream.

Israelis on the left were instrumental in formulating the Oslo process, which began in secret without the knowledge of the Knesset. Their Palestinian counterparts were terrorists governed by a charter that called for Israel's destruction then and still does today, although it was supposed to have been amended under the resulting accords.

Since that time, Oslo has come to dictate the quest for Arab-Israeli peace, even though it

constitutes a profound threat to Israeli sovereignty and Jewish hegemony. Focused on validating Palestinian peoplehood, Oslo came to control the dialogue as if it had been the paradigm from the beginning. But at the time of its inception, Oslo was only the latest in a succession of resolutorial frameworks after San Remo, the League of Nations Mandate, and U.N. Resolution 242, all of which had presumed the historicity of Jewish claims, not the ascendancy of a Palestinian nationalism that did not yet exist.

Indeed, until the mid-1960s, the Arab-Muslim world had refused to impute separate national character to Arabs who resided in Mandate lands before 1948, the majority of whom were immigrants or the progeny of immigrants with no ancient connection to the land. Palestinian nationality was invented later as a propaganda weapon for repudiating Jewish historical claims.

The Palestinian Arabs have never seriously sought lasting peace with Israel, and their push in 2012 for upgraded U.N. status served only to illustrate their cynical contempt for both concept and process.

Article 31 of the Oslo Accords specifically states: "Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations." The Palestinian Authority's U.N. initiative violated this provision and arguably abrogated the accords. Although this breach was glaring, it was by no means the Palestinians' first substantive violation. The PA has consistently failed to honor its obligations under Oslo, minimal though they have been compared to the demands placed on Israel.

In contrast, Israel has honored her commitments, even when doing so has threatened her security and national integrity.

Israel granted Palestinian Arab autonomy in much of Judea and Samaria, permitted the PA to arm itself despite its continued involvement with terrorism, unfroze and transferred funds to the PA, and fueled a territorial economy that provides the highest standard of living in the Arab-Muslim world. She has also continued to service the utility needs of the area. As a recent concession to induce the Palestinians back to the table, Israel released a gaggle of jihadists and terrorists responsible for the deaths of many men, women and children – people with blood on their hands.

In contrast, the PA has failed to renounce terrorism, foreswear anti-Semitic incitement, or truly amend the language of its charter calling for Israel's destruction. It has also stated repeatedly that it will never recognize a Jewish state.

Ever since the signing of the Interim Agreement of 1995 ("Oslo II"), the PA has been in perpetual breach of Article XVII (1a), which prohibits it from operating in Jerusalem and deciding "issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations: Jerusalem, settlements, specified military locations, Palestinian refugees, borders, foreign relations and Israelis."

The PA breaches this provision daily by operating ministries and institutions throughout Jerusalem. These unlawful organizations include: the Palestinian Ministry of Education, which disseminates anti-Semitic and anti-Western educational materials; the Ministry for Jerusalem Affairs, which organizes and sponsors protests against Israel; the Ministry of Information/WAFA, an official Palestinian news agency that routinely publishes anti-Semitic material; and the Office of the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, which prohibits land sales to Jews, denies the historical Jewish connection to the Temple Mount, rejects Israel's right to exist, and sponsors sermons at the Al-Aksa Mosque calling for jihad and genocide.

The same hypocrites who accuse Israel of obstructing peace ignore the PA's blanket disregard for a treaty that it officially endorsed. They denounce Israel for violating the accords, although she is the only signatory to have upheld her obligations.

The refusal of the Obama Administration and the European Union to condemn PA violations, and their willingness instead to reward the Palestinians for continuing acts of incitement, violence and terror, only reinforce the need for Israel to reject outside pressure in favor of alternatives that make better historical and strategic sense.

#### The Faulty Premise of the Two-State Solution

The land-for-peace formula is flawed because it presumes that the conflict is about geography and can be resolved by the creation of yet another independent Arab-Muslim state. However, the refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist and the doctrinal prohibition against permanent peace with a subjugated people expose the concept as an exercise in *taqiyya* – religiously mandated dissimulation for the purpose of deceiving "infidels" and furthering the aims of jihad.

Many today believe that creating an independent state of Palestine will resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and bring peace to the Mideast. But this belief presumes that the Palestinian Arabs – not the Jews – were indigenous to the Land of Israel for thousands of years until their displacement in 1948, that the Jews are colonial occupiers, and that the conflict is driven by Palestinian Arab dislocation.

However, it is the Palestinians who are historical latecomers to the Land of Israel. There never was a country called Palestine or an ancestral, native culture known as "Palestinian." Culturally, Palestinians are indistinct from Arabs in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. Only the Jews have had a continuous presence in and connection to the land since antiquity.

No amount of pretending that Palestinians are ancestrally indigenous can change the fact that they have no written history, traditional institutions, or archeological record in support of their claims. And yet many liberal and left-wing Jews persist in doing just that.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is not a dispute over the rights of Palestinians. If it were, Jordan and Egypt would have created a Palestinian state when they occupied Judea, Samaria and Gaza from 1948 to 1967. However, there was no outcry for the establishment of a Palestinian state – either from the world community or from the Palestinians themselves – during the nearly twenty years of illegal occupation by Egypt and Jordan.

The inconvenient truth is that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not about repatriating Palestinian Arabs to a land they never owned in the first place, but about destroying the Jewish State. Establishing a Palestinian state will not facilitate true peace because the ultimate objective of the conflict is the extermination of Israel and her people. The two-state paradigm is merely a stealth strategy in a continuing war of annihilation being waged against Israel by the entire Arab-Muslim world, and the creation of a Palestinian state is intended only as the first step towards achieving this malevolent goal.

The goal of destroying Israel has never changed, only the method for achieving it. Those who believe the PA has ever acted in good faith should review its charter, which refuses to recognize a Jewish State, or examine its officially sanctioned educational materials, which teach genocidal anti-Semitism and revisionist history to impressionable school children.

Israel cannot survive as a secure Jewish nation by participating in a process imposed by outside powers that respect neither her sovereignty nor her historical validity, regardless of whether that process is being peddled by the Obama Administration, the European Union or the Saudi royal family.

If Israel continues to proceed under a framework that elevates the revisionist Palestinian narrative over Jewish history, she will compromise her security, sovereign integrity and continuity as the Jewish national homeland.

Those Jews who continue to support Oslo are either misguided (like many mainstream liberals and secular conservatives), or openly hostile to Israel as a Jewish state (like those in the

progressive “pro-peace” movement). But regardless of motivation, one cannot honestly justify a Palestinian narrative that denies Jewish history unless one rejects or ignores that history, or Jewish values, or both.

The Palestinian narrative does not claim that Arabs coexisted or shared the land with indigenous Jewish people, but rather that all Jews are foreign to the Land of Israel and that the Temple never stood in Jerusalem. Thus, it is based on rejectionism.

Those who support such a narrative and yet claim to be guided by traditional values are either acting out of ignorance or self-denial.

### The Erosion of Traditional Values

While the political left in Israel has been fairly marginalized as terrorism and rejectionism have flourished under Oslo, progressives and liberals in America continue to push it as the only valid resolutional paradigm.

The sad reality is that many on the left would prefer that Israel not be a Jewish State at all; and they will tell you that in supporting such nonsense they are giving voice to authentic Jewish values. However, they are so divorced from Jewish tradition that they have no idea what truly constitutes authentic values.

Many secular liberals believe that Jewish values are synonymous with the progressive political agenda. However, this perception ignores the disparity between traditional Judaism and many central tenets of the progressive canon.

Although Jews are free to support whatever political causes their consciences may dictate, they cannot claim that tradition requires them to endorse programs that conflict with Jewish law. Regarding marriage, sexual relationships, and personal status, for example, traditional Judaism is not liberal at all; and despite claims that progressive ideals are consistent with Jewish values, many elements of the progressive agenda actually conflict with the corpus of Jewish law from which these values arise.

An entire political agenda – whether liberal, conservative or libertarian – is not rendered consistent with Jewish tradition simply because some Jews support it. That would be the same as saying that violations of *Halacha* are consistent with tradition because many Jews commit those violations or support others who do.

Protecting the right to eat non-kosher food, for example, isn’t a Jewish value simply because many secular Jews don’t observe the dietary laws. Pork is still *treyfe* (nonkosher) regardless

of how many Jews may eat it.

Likewise, one cannot say that a political program represents Jewish values simply because secular Jews support it. Jews as individuals can support or oppose any of the hot-button issues upon which liberals and conservatives disagree, including gun control, same-sex marriage or abortion rights; but they cannot claim the approval of tradition where Jewish law conflicts with those issues or takes no position on them.

#### Traditional Jewish Concepts of Justice and Compromise

The Torah portion of *Shoftim* in the book of *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) deals with the appointment of judges in ancient Israel and, therefore, is associated with the concept of justice. Indeed, its most famous dictum is “*tzedek, tzedek, tirdoph,*” (“justice, justice shall you pursue”), which today is used to rationalize just about any outlandish demand made on Israel in the putative name of peace.

Secular progressives often claim that this maxim justifies any demands placed on Israel – no matter how onerous, unfair or unrequited. As with anything taken out of context, however, selected words may not reflect the whole truth.

If progressives who cleave to this verse had basic knowledge of rabbinic text, they’d certainly know that the Jerusalem Talmud (Taanit, 4:2) states: “The three are one and the same: if the law is upheld, there is truth and there is peace.”

But what is the Jewish concept of justice? Does it require peace negotiations with sworn enemies? Does it demand unilateral capitulation without assurances or the sacrifice of one’s needs in favor of those of one’s enemy? The answers to these questions are often influenced by material facts and circumstances and inconvenient political realities.

The repetitive phrase “justice, justice shall you pursue” is not merely a literary device. According to Rav Ashi (Sanhedrin 32b), the repetition of “*tzedek*” implies two kinds of justice: one based on the strict application of the law and the other on compromise and common sense. And according to Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa, this verse implies that the process of obtaining justice must itself be just.

That is, the ends don’t always justify the means, and the results should not be sullied by the methods.

These parallel constructions hearken back to the text of the Torah itself. The concept of “an eye for an eye” found in the Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), for example, was never literally

applied, but instead formed the basis for requiring restitution by one who injures another. If one caused another to lose an eye, an ox or a sum of money, he was required to compensate the injured party for the value of his loss. It was this legal framework that took the concept of "justice" beyond a purely punitive and primitive application. What justice was there in blinding or crippling a person who injured another? Torah and Rabbinic law found greater justice in a system that provided compensation for the injured rather than the literal exchange of an eye for an eye.

The law also understood that individual results were often dictated by peculiar facts and circumstances. That's why, according to Rabbenu Nissim, the kings in ancient Israel had authority to impose sentences outside the parameters of the law in order to preserve its spirit. After the monarchy was abolished, the courts reserved the authority to craft sentences accordingly if they determined that justice would not be properly served otherwise.

Clearly, the Rabbis acknowledged the value of common sense in seeking justice.

Nevertheless, these concepts are frequently misapplied to the peace process. Whether achieved through strict application of the law or through compromise and common sense, justice neither condones nor requires unilateral concessions to the detriment of one party. Moreover, the law forbids engaging in acts that will be injurious to human life.

Supposed friends of Israel often argue that she should give up land, acquiesce to a dubious Arab "right of return," and retreat to indefensible borders – all in the spirit of compromise as articulated in the Talmud. Incredibly, many left-wing Jews envision a two-state solution or a bi-national state stripped of its Jewish character. But such "solutions" are not sustainable under any formulation of justice, particularly when Israel receives no mutual concessions and the result would likely sacrifice Israeli lives.

Furthermore, any solution that sacrifices Israel's Jewish character is by definition inconsistent with Jewish values.

If Israel were to agree to a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, she would be left with a narrowed geographic waistline and a hostile population on either side that could launch attacks from opposing fronts. Israel has been the target of aggression since before her rebirth in 1948. More recently, she has witnessed the ascendancy of Hamas and suffered an unending storm of missiles since disengaging from Gaza.

Hamas refuses to renounce terrorism or recognize Israel's right to exist, while the PA publicly refuses to acknowledge that Israel is a Jewish state – even after reengaging in

negotiations forced upon her by the Obama Administration. Genuine peace – lasting peace – is not possible if Israel’s “negotiating partners” refuse to concede the legitimacy of Jewish historical claims.

In agreeing to a two-state solution, Israel would be acquiescing to the creation of a hostile state where none had ever existed before, and would receive no reliable assurances in return. Such a resolution would only serve to weaken her, increase the risk of continued hostilities, and facilitate the ability to inflict Israeli casualties. This would not serve the cause of justice, but rather would trample certain aspects of Jewish law that are supposed to be inviolate.

Although the Rabbis taught that most commandments could be set aside in order to preserve life (“*pekuach nefesh*”), there are three that can never be suspended. Specifically, Jews are never permitted to engage in sexual immorality, bow to idols or commit murder (which necessarily includes suicide). Any plan that increases the likelihood of loss of life is incompatible with justice because it would necessarily transgress one of these inviolate prohibitions.

Also, inherent in justice by compromise is the need for all parties to give some ground to achieve a fair resolution.

Unfortunately, the proposed two-state solution requires only Israel to concede anything of value (*i.e.*, land) for the creation of a state that never existed and a diminution in size that threatens her continued existence. So far, the Arab nations have refused to concede their ludicrous demand for a “right of return,” which is intended to destroy Israel as a Jewish state by displacing Jewish citizens with Arab “returnees.”

The two-state solution is actually seen in the Arab world as a *two-phased* solution. The first phase is the creation of a Palestinian state, while the second is the demographic annihilation of Israel through an influx of Arab immigration. The only thing Israel would receive would be the empty promise of “normalization” to be bestowed only after she has compromised her viability. But what good is the promise of normalization when coupled with a resolute refusal to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish state? It is in practice something less than real recognition.

Verbal promises of even limited recognition must be measured against the Muslim concept of *taqiyya*, which mandates the use of artifice to deceive “infidels” into lowering their defenses in order to facilitate their ultimate defeat. In the absence of any sort of theological or intellectual reformation, such verbal promises are tantamount to no assurances at all. Because the proposed two-state solution would leave Israel with neither bargain nor benefit, it could



not be considered just under any interpretation of the law.

In addition, the issue of Arab "refugees" and their "right of return" to Israel is not a matter of justice, but of subterfuge. Poll after poll shows that most Palestinians refuse to recognize Israel as a Jewish State, and this refusal is often reiterated by Mahmoud Abbas. They simply will not acknowledge the Jews' history or their unbroken connection to their land, and thus won't recognize the historical or legal underpinnings of the Jewish State. Instead, they demand acknowledgment that they occupied the land for hundreds generations, though this claim is demonstrably false.

If they can't say it, they can't do it.

Unfortunately, the world community helps to perpetrate this fraud. The United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), for example, defines Palestinian "refugees" as those who lived in the land for a minimum of only two years preceding the outbreak of hostilities in 1948 and who reside in areas where UNRWA services are available.

In other words, refugee status was initially based on an ephemeral residency requirement that is inconsistent with the Palestinians' claim that their ancestors inhabited the land for hundreds of generations. By defining refugee status thus while denying verifiable Jewish claims, Israel's enemies show that they are not truly interested in justice by compromise. Their transparent goals are to obtain concessions without real consideration and to suppress any history that undercuts their creation myth. This dynamic does not bode well for true justice.

The Obama Administration seeks to enforce a two-state solution based on the Saudi initiative, and some left-wing Jewish organizations are complicit in advancing the charade. The Jewish concept of justice, however, does not condone threats to the safety of Israel's citizens, the surrender of Jewish autonomy, or the risk of national suicide.

Justice does not require unilateral concessions without mutual exchanges. Those who claim that Torah justice and Jewish values are conducive to such nonsense either don't know what justice is, or simply don't care.

One could make a case for bold compromise only if all parties would agree to concessions that would put them on equal footing. But the Administration's vision requires sacrifices only by Israel, and insists on linking the Arab-Israeli conflict to unrelated issues, such as the Iran nuclear program.

Under pressure from the Clinton Administration, Israel offered to give up most of Judea and Samaria, but her offer was rebuffed with an intifada. She then ceded all of Gaza, only to see it become a terrorist haven. Given the long history of Arab-Muslim intransigence, justice does not require Israel to make any further compromises. Instead, it demands meaningful concessions from the other side of the table, which have never been forthcoming.

The Jerusalem Talmud (Taanit 4:2) states that "... if the law is upheld, there is truth and there is peace." However, any attempt to force an unjust solution on Israel based on a false narrative will provide neither truth nor genuine, lasting peace.

This applies to the recent interim agreement regarding Iran's nuclear program. Though AIPAC may have pronounced that the deal with Iran merely represents "a difference of approach" to curbing Iran's nuclear desires and that Israel's relationship with the U.S. is as strong as ever, such assurances belie an ignorance of history, traditional values and realities on the ground. They also ignore this administration's disrespectful and duplicitous treatment of Israel over the last five years.

A genuine and lasting peace seems as unlikely today as in 1967, when the Arab world declared in Khartoum that there would be "no recognition, no negotiations and no peace." Thus, if Israel is to survive into the future, she must not lose sight of the historical justification for her existence or the values that make her both a Jewish state and a vital democracy.

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Matthew M. Hausman is a trial attorney and writer. As an attorney he represents the interests of individuals, business entities and nonprofit organizations in state and federal courts. His work has appeared in numerous publications and venues, including *Israpundit*, *Israel National News/Arutz Sheva*, *The American Thinker*, *Canada Free Press*, *Hamodia*, *Connecticut Lawyer*, and *The New English Review*. He is active in Jewish communal affairs, and has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations and committees.

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