Blessed is 'יה, the Eternal and Holy One
Interfaith Liberation Theology

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יִירִי תָּשׁוּעַא
This is the symbol of Hamas which seems to be the greatest obstacle to “Shalom” in the Holy Land. After all, they clearly say in their charter: “[The Holy Land] is an Islamic Endowment for all generations of Muslims until the Day of Resurrection which no one may renounce.”
As a whole after looking at the recent revolutions throughout Islamic countries all over the Middle East, it seems that the majority of Muslims in the Land of Israel, feel quite endowed with freedom, the freedom to be homosexual, the freedom to be a woman, the freedom to be…

Is there a contradiction between a Jewish State and an Islamic Endowment?
What Does Classical Islamic Scholarship say about the Holy Land?

• Sheikh Dr. Muhammad al-Husseini, a British Imam who teaches a course on the Quran as part of interfaith studies at the Leo Baeck College says that the Quran recognises the special link between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

• “You will find very clearly that the traditional commentators from the 8th-9th century onwards have uniformly interpreted the Quran to say explicitly that the Land of Israel has been given by Allah to the [Jewish] people as a perpetual covenant. There is no Islamic counterclaim to the Land anywhere in the traditional corpus of commentary.”
Quran 5:21

“O’ my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allah has decreed for you, and do not turn back on your heels otherwise you will be overturned as losers.”
Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari – “The Islamic Rashi” (838-923)

• Al-Tabari, the greatest classical commentator of the Quran says the remark is “a narrative from Allah… concerning the saying of Moses… to his community from among the children of Israel and his order to them according to the order of Allah to him, ordering them to enter the Holy Land.”

• Al-Tabari was the founder of tafsir, “the science of exegesis” – the Arabic word is similar to פשט, Hebrew for interpretation. One of the key rules Islamic exegesis by which Islamic scholarship is bound is that the authority to interpret lies in the hands of the Prophet and of the Prophets’ Companions alone. Nobody can go to the text and just freely interpret the text for their own purposes.

• Just as you find in the Talmud that one Rabbi quotes a saying in the name of one of his teachers, so al-Tabari will cite the interpretations of earlier, oral commentators in a chain going back to one of the Prophet Muhammad’s companions, the ultimate source of authority for that interpretation.
Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari – “The Islamic Rashi” (838-923)

- Al-Tabari’s commentary also notes that the word, “decreed” – *kataba* in Arabic, related to קתב, “written”, in Hebrew – has the connotations of “ordered”: in other words, *settling the Holy Land was regarded as a mitzvah for the Children of Israel.*

- Al-Tabari also observes that the decree is confirmed in *al-lawh al-mahfuz,* the eternally preserved tablet – a reference to the Islamic idea that in heaven exists a sacred blueprint from which the Muslim, Christian and Jewish scriptures emanate, hence the covenant with the Jewish people over Israel is everlasting.
Jerusalem in Quranic Sources

• The Arabic word for “The Holy Land” *al-ard al-muqaddasa*, is close to the Hebrew, אֶרֶץ קֹדֶשׁ, that refers to this piece of land rather than other sites sacred to Muslims.

• During the life of the Prophet, there was an enormous territorial ambition to get Mecca back from the Meccans, there was no territorial ambition to claim Jerusalem or the Holy Land.

• What happens during the lifetime of the Islamic prophet is what Allah wants to happen for the Muslim community. His prophecy and his objective was the reclamation of the Islamic Holy Site which is Mecca. If Allah had decreed that His Prophet should have Jerusalem, then Muhammed would have been preoccupied with this during his lifetime while he conquered the whole of the Arabian peninsula.
So what is the problem? Why doesn’t the Islamic World recognize the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel?

• The Quran recognizes that the Holy Land of Israel belongs to *Banu Israil*.

• They do not believe that:

  \[ \text{al-Yahud} \neq \text{Banu Israil} \]

• We as Jews take it for granted that we are the Sons / Nation of Israel.

**Time for Discussion**
Khosrow Golesgrichi

The Iranian Che’
Khosrow Golesorichi, a poet and journalist was arrested and then executed for a plot to kidnap the Shah’s son to reeducate him into becoming a social revolutionary.

Before he was executed, he spoke with stirring eloquence on behalf of the peasant’s laboring under the Shah’s “land reform” [sic.], comparing their struggles to those of another great martyr Imam Hussein himself and detailing the Shah’s crimes against humanity. Golesorkhi refused to defend himself; he would defend only the people.
“On your breast lay
the deep scar of your enemy
But, you standing Cypress did not fall
It is your way to die.”

*Baradar Che’ Golesorkhi*
Ali Shariati
Islamic Scholar, sociologist and critic of the Shah and the Mullahs in Iran
• Ali Shariati was the founder of Islamic Liberation Theology.

• Shariati reinterpreted Islam through the lens of sociology, reviving its original principle of social responsibility (אחריות).
We must decry both the Institutionalization of religion which replaces scholarship with “can’t” (sic.), and our economic system which encourages a human Being (בצלם אלוהים), to be a mere consumer, an economic animal whose only duty is to graze.
There must be an original type of religious leader, one who will model themselves (א) after Moses, Yeshua and Mohammad, one who earned his leadership not by tricking people politically, but by inspiring the best in them. Both the Holy Torah and the Holy Quran proclaims that the Eternal and His People are One. (cf. Deut. 6-
שמע ישראל ה אלהינו ה אחד.

Thus to know the Eternal’s Will, the leader must look to the deepest longings of the people.
Necessity for a Dynamic Religious Leadership

Prophets and great religious leaders were transformational figures. They were not conservatives (those who preserve the status quo), they were social radicals. What does it mean to be an interfaith social radical?
• Deeper than the Arab-Israeli conflict being just a political dispute, it is implacably a religious one, not only between Jews and Muslims, but even more so between a *traditional moral model of living* and a liberal democratic separation between church of state, a fundamentalist ideal cherished by the West.

• The question we are faced with is whether or not this is a contradiction.

• To even begin to answer this question we need to take responsibility (אחריות) for the question (קשיא).

• This entails us expanding the boundaries of acceptable discourse and challenging our assumptions.
What is Israel?

Goal: Breaking down a text together to derive meaning
ITS Chumash II

Gen. 32:29

כִּי נִאָמֵר אֶלְיוֹן, מַה-שֵּׁמֶן; נִיאָמֵר יְעַקֹּב
כִּי נִיאָמֵר, לָא נִעָקֹב, יָמֵר: עָדָּשׁ שֵׁמֶן; בַּיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר בִּירָבְא: בַּיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר-אֵלָהָים בָּאָם יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבַיָּמִים יִשְׂרָאֵל

Word List:

שָׁרָה vb. persist, exert oneself, persevere -- Qal persevere.

יַבָּעַל, יָבָל vb. be able, have power, prevail, endure -- Qal
ישראל

אֵל

“God”

In Arabic, “Allah”

_root_ is: שֵׁרָה

Root means “to struggle”
יהושע

"God"

In Arabic,

"Allah"

Root is:

Root means

“to struggle”
ישראל

Jahada (J’H’D’) “To Strive or Struggle” = JIHAD

Translation into Arabic:

جَاهَدَتْ مَعَ اللَّهِ

“God”

In Arabic, “Allah”

Root means “to struggle”
The word “Israel” means “Jihad for Allah” in Arabic – Just as the struggle is a blessing for Israel, Jihad is meant to be as well. How do we help a transformation of this highly charged word?
Does this offend you?

Is it because Obama is dressed up like a Muslim? Well, what if I told you that this is how Abraham your forefather looked. Do you think that President Barak Hussein Obama would feel offended that he is being represented as one of our Patriarchs? Deepen your thinking process and see past the hate.

כולם בצלם אלוהים
The Rambam, a.k.a. Maimonides (1135-1204)

Moshe ben Maimon

“From Moses to Moses there has been none like Moses.”
Interfaith education is the only solution to helping bring social justice (צדק) to the inhabitants of the Holy Land.
A true Zionism is one that is part of a redemptive evolutionary process. We must recognize that this is a long term process, an evolution that encompasses all of humanity made in the image of Elohim, our Creator. We will have to transcend the restrictions of Nationalist Democracy so that we can learn how to live in Shalom with others and with the Nature. We must take responsibility for those inhabitants of the Land of Israel.
“Jewish Responsibility”
Responsibility over one’s Self

$\chi = 1$

in the Higher and Lower Self
If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when? (Avot 1:14)
Responsibility over one’s brother (אחים)
Responsibility over the 'other' (אחר)
Knowing when to say ‘after me’ (אחרי),
When to lead
Knowing when to say ‘after him’ (אחריו),
When to follow
This is the fullness of Jewish Responsibility from א to ל
Ducare

• Latin verb, root of the word educate, means “to lead”

• Leadership is thus at the head of the educational process

• The success of a leader is determined not by the individual but by the success of his team. And while leadership may involve powers, power is not leadership
### Boss vs. Leader

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boss</th>
<th>Leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relies on authority</td>
<td>Relies on cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Says, “I”</td>
<td>Says, “We”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates fear</td>
<td>Creates confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates resentment</td>
<td>Breeds enthusiasm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how</td>
<td>Shows how</td>
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<td>Fixes blame</td>
<td>Fixes mistakes</td>
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<td>Makes work drudgery</td>
<td>Makes work interesting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drives</td>
<td>Leads</td>
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“Where there is no vision, the people perish”
Proverbs 29:18
What if I were to tell you that she is from the Syrian Foreign Intelligence. How would you feel about her? Why?
What if I were to tell you that she actually works for Israeli security. How would you feel about her? Why? What changed? Your perception? What is her perception? Why should you care? How does it affect you?
The difference between:

PAX - “peace and prosperity” as a western concept married to democracy...

AND


Peace and Prosperity
Should ‘Peace’ / PAX be worshiped?

PAX ("peace") is the personified Roman goddess of peace, corresponding with the Greek Eirene. Under the rule of Augustus, she was recognized as a goddess proper. She had a minor sanctuary, the Ara Pacis, on the Campus Martius, and a temple on the Forum Pacis. A festival in her honor was celebrated on January 3. Her attributes are the olive branch, a cornucopia, and a scepter.
If you heard a people being called “Those Who Rob with Violence”, you probably wouldn’t like them much, would you?
What is the difference?

Why are these political leaders meeting with the religious leaders that represent much of their constituents?

vs.
"We Arabs... look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. Our deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted yesterday by the Zionist Organization to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, in so far as we are concerned, to help them through; we will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home... I look forward, and my people with me look forward, to a future in which we will help you and you will help us, so that the countries in which we are mutually interested may once again take their places in the community of the civilized peoples of the world.” Emir Feisal (1919)
The Quran explicitly refers to the return of the Nation of Israel to the Land of Israel before the Last Judgment when it says in the Surah of the Children of Israel, verse 104

“And thereafter Allah said to the Children of Israel: ‘Dwell securely in the Promised Land. And when the last warning will come to pass, we will gather you together in a mingled crowd.’”

Therefore, from an Islamic point of view, Israel is the legitimate owner of the Land Allah deeded to her. Imam al-Qurtubi explains in al-Jami that the last promise concerning the return of the Jewish people “together in a mingled crowd” after the destruction of the Second Temple will be a sign that precedes the coming of the Messiah.
Essential Questions Moving Forward

• How will we teach the next generation of Muslim inhabitants in the Land of Israel to be true students of Tafsir interpretation loyal to the Zionist tradition in their own texts?
• Many Muslims are unfamiliar with al-Tabari’s work because it is mostly not translated and accessible only to an educated elite who have access to and understand how to read traditional Arabic texts.
• By contrast, the teachings of 20th century radicals (Salafi) linked to political groups (al-Saud) such as the Muslim Brotherhood are often widely available in English.
• Since the militants cannot contradict the Quranic precedent for Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel, they adopt another tactic. They argue that Jews are not Banu Israil and are actually a wicked people who must be punished – hence the spread of antisemitism within the Muslim world.
• No fundamentalist, no matter how hard they try can overrule the existing tradition to say there is, in fact, an Islamic counterclaim to Eretz Israel.
What can we do

• It is our obligation over the אחר, the “other” to support contemporary Zionist Muslim scholars who support this tradition.
• We must create institutes in Israel of Quranic Zionist Learning (this has begun with the Islam-Israel Fellowship run by Sheikh Palazzi)
• The State of Israel then needs to host conferences from various Islamic countries to develop a theory of how Jews can exist as a nation state in Shalom / Salaam within dar-al Islaam
• Jerusalem can exist as a model for interreligious and interracial relations
• This will inspire the Jewish state to aspire towards becoming Dar al-Islam and there need not be any contradiction.