

# OPINION and ANALYSIS

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A selection of some of the more challenging and thought-provoking  
local and international writings on the Middle East

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**(1) Douglas Murray** How can a man as brilliant as Stephen Hawking boycott Israel when it makes the microchip that enables him to talk?  
*Mail Online, 9 May 2013*

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**(2) Maha El-Kady** New spotlight on Egyptian Jews, *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, 9 May 2013

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**(3) Rita Rubin** 'Jews a race' genetic theory comes under fierce attack by DNA expert, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 7 May 2013

Scientists usually don't call each other "liars" and "frauds." But that's how Johns Hopkins University post-doctoral researcher Eran Elhaik describes a group of widely respected geneticists, including Harry Ostrer, professor of pathology and genetics at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine and author of the 2012 book "Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People."

**(4) Elhanan Miller** Israel strikes a blow to conventional Arab thinking, *The Times of Israel*, 6 May 2013

No official Syrian movement would openly praise for its strike against Assad's military – but views on the ground are different.

**(5) Alexander Yakobson What does Israel's Arab minority really think?, *Fathom*, 26 April 2013**

There is a huge gap between the responses of Arab Israelis and the typical discourse of the Arab elite in the country: between opinion at the base and rhetoric among the political leadership of this community.

**(6) Eve Garrard The pleasures of antisemitism, *Fathom*, 26 April 2013**

Antisemitism is fun, there's no doubt about it. It attracts by providing the deep emotional satisfactions of hatred, tradition and moral purity.

**(7) Nonie Darwish Why Muslims must hate Jews, *The American Thinker*, August 2012**

It is at the heart of Islamic theology that world peace will be established only when all the Jews are wiped from the earth. But few people in Western media are alarmed by this kind of rhetoric or care to expose this dreadful dark side of Islam's obsession with Jew-hatred. One does not have to be an authority on human behaviour or group thinking to find out the obvious pathology in Islamic Jew-hatred. It is time for all of us to uncover and expose this atrocity against the Jewish people. We owe that to humanity and the truth.

**How can a man as brilliant as Stephen Hawking boycott Israel when it makes the microchip that enables him to talk?**

***Douglas Murray, Mail Online, 9 May 2013***

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2322228/How-Stephen-Hawking-boycott-Israel-makes-microchip-enables-talk-By-DOUGLAS-MURRAY.html>

Stephen Hawking is someone we all admire. His research and writings have changed the way we understand our universe. And all his adult life he has had to cope with the devastating motor neurone disease, which has consigned him to a wheelchair and deprives him of even the use of his own voice.

Professor Hawking's determination to overcome this as well as his unquestioned scientific brilliance make him admirable beyond words. But as though to show that even the brightest people can make fools of themselves, he has now done something which is beyond stupid.

In June, the President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, will host his annual President's Conference. This year's conference is called Facing Tomorrow and will address the future of world politics, economics, environment, education and much more.

It will be attended by Tony Blair, former U.S. president Bill Clinton, former Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev and, among other celebrities, Barbra Streisand.

Professor Hawking, too, was invited. But he has decided to boycott the conference over Israel's occupation of Palestine.

Perhaps for fear of a backlash against this overtly political decision, Cambridge University — where Professor Hawking held a chair in mathematics — claimed initially that the 71-year-old scientist was not attending on 'health grounds'.

It was a classic cover-up. For a letter has now come to light in which Professor Hawking wrote to the office of the Israeli President, saying he decided not to attend 'based on advice from Palestinian academics that he should respect the boycott'.

Let us be clear. Such a boycott is an on-going attempt to demonise, delegitimise and ultimately destroy the world's only Jewish state and our closest cultural and security ally in the region. That Hawking should add his name to the boycott is shameful.

It is an effort to persecute all Israelis, including Arab Israelis, whatever their political persuasion.

The fact is that, increasingly, British academia is at the forefront of this movement.

Last year, the guest lecturer at a conference on conflict resolution, organised by the Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, had his invitation withdrawn. Moty Cristal is a leading expert in negotiation theory and mediation, but he was deemed unacceptable because he is an Israeli.

In 2002, two highly respected scholars, Dr Miriam Schlesinger and Professor Gideon Toury, were sacked by a professor who works at the world-renowned University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST). The reason? They're Jewish.

The woman who dismissed them, Mona Baker, professor of translation studies at UMIST, stated: 'I deplore the Israeli state. Miriam (Dr Schlesinger) knew that was how I felt and that they'd have to go because of the current situation.'

That 'situation' was another flare-up between Palestinians and Israelis involving deaths from fanatical suicide bombers on the one hand and shells and rockets on the other.

Earlier that year, Tom Paulin, an English lecturer at Oxford, was reported as comparing American-Jewish settlers in Palestinian territories to Nazis. Yet the university took no action against him.

Perhaps there are those who fondly imagine that our universities are places for the open exchange of ideas. But this litany of examples suggests the complete opposite.

It suggests the pursuit of knowledge ends at national borders. The academic boycott of Israel is Stalinist in its approach, threatening freedom of thought and making it politically incorrect to express sympathy, let alone support, for Israel.

But then British universities over the years have become increasingly close-minded centres of radical Leftist political group-think. What is saddest is when — as is probably the case in the Hawking affair — such wicked types persuade decent-minded people to go along with them.

After all, to persuade such a brilliant, world-renowned academic to back out of a high-profile conference is, for them, a considerable coup.

I acknowledge that there are those who are concerned about Israel's approach to the Palestinians, but if these academics think a boycott is the right way to address those concerns they are profoundly mistaken.

The truth is that their zealotry overrides the objectivity that is so paramount in academic study, and this means their idea of morality is entirely selective.

They ignore the fact that Israel is an open democracy. They never criticise suicide bombers and those who brainwash them.

They ignore the fact that totalitarian states abound in the Middle East and elsewhere throughout the world with appalling human rights records, involving torture, beheadings and grotesque corruption.

Yes, the border dispute with the Palestinians needs solving but it is, in fact, one of the least bloody conflicts in the world today.

When these people claim that their attack on the Jewish state is not in any way bigoted or anti-Semitic, you have to start asking them questions. When was the last time Israel beheaded or crucified criminals? Any time recently? No, of course not. Saudi Arabia did so only last month.

These academics of the Left like to claim they are in favour of minority rights. Yet Israel is home to the only open and thriving gay community in the Middle East, while in Iran gays are hanged from cranes.

Boycott: The speech device which enables Hawking to communicate with the world is a computer Intel Core i7-based communication system. Which runs on a chip designed by Israel

All Israeli women have the same rights as women in any Western country. In each neighbouring country they are second-class citizens and in a number of them can be stoned for alleged 'adultery'.

But where are the academic boycotts of Saudi, Iran, Yemen, Egypt, Syria and everywhere else?

But apart from all this, academic boycotts are utterly self-defeating.

Israeli research institutions lead the world in breakthrough technologies. They benefit all of us who rely on computers and mobile phone technology.

They also lead the world in medical advances, and have more scientists per capita than any other state in the world. Every patient who has benefited from the latest surgery techniques — or hopes to benefit from the cutting-edge research into Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and many more diseases — will rely on discoveries made in Israeli research facilities.

Universities and research institutions in particular shouldn't be boycotting Israel. They should be thanking the country, for they rely on it.

If these academics want to make a truly principled boycott, they should tear out their Israeli-developed pacemakers and smash up their computers and mobile phones which will, invariably, have Israeli technology in them.

They should forbid their family members from getting access to Israeli-created vaccines for countless viruses and make sure their children and elderly relatives never benefit from the technologies created in Israel to relieve and heal some of the most terrible conditions mankind faces.

But they won't. Just as Professor Hawking won't give up the Israeli technology he relies on.

For with supreme irony, the speech device which enables Hawking to communicate with the world and relate his fascinating thoughts to us is a computer Intel Core i7-based communication system. Which runs on a chip designed by Israel.

Perhaps Professor Hawking should reflect on what it would mean if he truly committed himself to a boycott of Israel.

The conference will be the poorer for his absence. But in the meantime those of us who admired this man and cherish the true principles of freedom are left speechless ourselves — at the extent of his naivete.

### **New spotlight on Egyptian Jews**

***Maha El-Kady, The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, 9 May 2013***

<http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=350>

On April 13, the head of the Jewish community in Cairo, Carmen Weinstein, passed away at the age of eighty-four. One day before her death, she was checking the renovation of a synagogue in the suburb of Maadi, as part of her efforts to preserve the fifteen Jewish synagogues and a cemetery in Cairo. Just a community of around forty people today, Weinstein was trying to prove that some Egyptians are Jews who deserve same rights as their Muslim and Christian counterparts.

In September 2012, the Session Film production *Jews of Egypt* premiered in the 5<sup>th</sup> Panorama of European Films in Cairo. The film was scheduled to hit theaters in March 2013. But only a few days before the screening, Egypt's censorship bureau banned the documentary without giving a reason, despite having previously granted approval for the film's production and for it to be shown at the international festival. Director Amir Ramsis described the prohibition as a violation of freedom of expression as laid out in the Egyptian constitution and launched a campaign to overturn ban. In March, the censorship bureau called Ramsis and informed him the ban was lifted (again, without explanation), and the film is currently screening in three theaters across Cairo and Alexandria. The ordeal of the *Jews of Egypt* raised many concerns about freedom of expression in Egypt and also revived a debate about the rights of Egyptian Jews.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many migrants came to Egypt from all over the Mediterranean Basin to benefit from its expanding economy, and the cosmopolitan social life. But the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a state-led mass expulsion of the Egyptian Jewish community, as President Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime claimed that many Jews belonged to Israeli spy networks. *Jews of Egypt* presents the stories of those who were forced to flee. Joyce Blau, a leftist activist featured in the film, said that intelligence agents detained and interrogated her for days before she was deported to France. Andre Hazzan was tortured in prison as he refused to leave Egypt. He was finally carried into a ship that took him to France. Some Egyptian Jews remained in Egypt, such as Albert Aryeh who converted to Islam in order to marry a Muslim woman. Yet, the regime never let him and his family live in peace.

Although Egypt's conflict with Israel was a trigger for the community's expulsion, most Egyptian Jews did not flee to Israel. "They already had an easy and good life," explained Khaled Fahmy, chair of the history

department at the American University in Cairo. “For them, leaving Egypt to go to Palestine made no sense. Many left their money in the custody of Muslim neighbors with the understanding that they will come back and reclaim it.”

Some Jews continued to support anti-colonialism in the Middle East, most notably Henri Curiel, founder of the Communist Democratic Movement for National Liberation, who offered Tharwat Okasha (then Egyptian ambassador to Rome) important intelligence in advance of 1956 Suez Crisis—the invasion of Egypt by Israel, Britain and France. Yet, Nasser ignored Okasha’s counsel to re-instate Curiel’s Egyptian citizenship, and authorities continued to expel the Jewish community. The backlash over the 1956 war was worse than the establishment of the State of Israel’s in 1948. The backlash can be explained by nationalist fervor as well as by anti-Semitism. “What Nasser did only seem to be a result of 1956. But it also comes in the heels of Egyptianization, nationalism, anti-colonialism, etc.,” said Fahmy.

In December 2012, Essam El-Erian, vice chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), stirred controversy in Egypt by calling on Egyptian Jews to return to Egypt and for Palestinians to be allowed to return to their homeland as well. He stated that Egyptian Jews were unjustly expelled, deprived of their homes, had their properties confiscated, and thus should be compensated. President Mohammed Morsi’s office distanced itself from El-Erian’s statements; the furor is believed to be a reason that El-Erian later resigned his position as presidential advisor.

The fate of Egyptian Jews is a subject of hot debate among rights activists and intellectuals, not so much the question of providing them justice but how Egypt became an intolerant society. Could such a tragedy, some Egyptians are asking, be repeated with the community of Coptic Christians. To some, the answer is yes.

“What Abdel Nasser did to Jews of Egypt will happen to the Christians of Egypt,” said an audience member after watching *Jews of Egypt*. “We turned into a discriminatory society. People don’t even clap for the film because it’s about the Jews.” Director Amir Ramsis explained that the film is not only about the Jewish community, but also the absence of tolerance in democratic Egypt. “Let’s be realistic, the first generation of Egyptian Jews is almost disappearing,” he said. “Returning them or their descendants to Egypt can hardly be seen as practical steps. We just need to read history in order to avoid similar tragedies in our future.”

Yet Fahmy said that the challenges facing the Coptic community are not comparable to what happened to Egyptian Jews. “It’s a much larger percentage who can’t be expelled except by a huge amount of blood, and I don’t think anyone in Egypt is ready for that,” he said. “The bigger fear is not about the targeting of a specific group but rather the sharp increase of tension along religious lines.”

In 1945, the prominent Egyptian comedian Naguib El-Rehany presented the play “Hassan, Marcos, and Cohen,” about three business partners—a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew. The story was adapted into movie in 1954, and yet another play in 1960. During those moments of history, the cast mirrored Egypt’s diverse society. But in the 2008 remake of the film, “Cohen” was no longer a character in the story. Egypt was left with the tension between Hassan and Marcos. Some Egyptians sarcastically say that the film’s next remake will only feature Hassan.

Can post-revolution Egypt restore the diverse, cosmopolitan society of the early twentieth century? The new leader of the Coptic Church, Pope Tawadros II, says that he’s optimistic about Egypt’s future and believes that moderation is the only way to build the Egyptian society. “The Nile passes exactly in the middle of the Egyptian territory, and that teaches us to be moderate,” he said.

**'Jews a race' genetic theory comes under fierce attack by DNA expert**  
**Rita Rubin, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 7 May 2013**

<http://forward.com/articles/175912/jews-a-race-genetic-theory-comes-under-fierce-atta/>

Scientists usually don't call each other "liars" and "frauds."

But that's how Johns Hopkins University post-doctoral researcher Eran Elhaik describes a group of widely respected geneticists, including Harry Ostrer, professor of pathology and genetics at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine and author of the 2012 book "Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People."

For years now, the findings of Ostrer and several other scientists have stood virtually unchallenged on the genetics of Jews and the story they tell of the common Middle East origins shared by many Jewish populations worldwide. Jews — and Ashkenazim in particular — are indeed one people, Ostrer's research finds.

It's a theory that more or less affirms the understanding that many Jews themselves hold of who they are in the world: a people who, though scattered, share an ethnic-racial bond rooted in their common ancestral descent from the indigenous Jews of ancient Judea or Palestine, as the Romans called it after they conquered the Jewish homeland.

But now, Elhaik, an Israeli molecular geneticist, has published research that he says debunks this claim. And that has set off a predictable clash.

"He's just wrong," said Marcus Feldman of Stanford University, a leading researcher in Jewish genetics, referring to Elhaik.

The sometimes strong emotions generated by this scientific dispute stem from a politically loaded question that scientists and others have pondered for decades: Where in the world did Ashkenazi Jews come from?

The debate touches upon such sensitive issues as whether the Jewish people is a race or a religion, and whether Jews or Palestinians are descended from the original inhabitants of what is now the State of Israel.

Ostrer's theory is sometimes marshaled to lend the authority of science to the Zionist narrative, which views the migration of modern-day Jews to what is now Israel, and their rule over that land, as a simple act of repossession by the descendants of the land's original residents. Ostrer declined to be interviewed for this story. But in his writings, Ostrer points out the dangers of such reductionism; some of the same genetic markers common among Jews, he finds, can be found in Palestinians, as well.

By using sophisticated molecular tools, Feldman, Ostrer and most other scientists in the field have found that Jews are genetically homogeneous. No matter where they live, these scientists say, Jews are genetically more similar to each other than to their non-Jewish neighbors, and they have a shared Middle Eastern ancestry.

The geneticists' research backs up what is known as the Rhineland Hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, Ashkenazi Jews descended from Jews who fled Palestine after the Muslim conquest in the seventh century and settled in Southern Europe. In the late Middle Ages they moved into eastern Europe from Germany, or the Rhineland.

"Nonsense," said Elhaik, a 33-year-old Israeli Jew from Beersheba who earned a doctorate in molecular evolution from the University of Houston. The son of an Italian man and Iranian woman who met in Israel, Elhaik, a dark-haired, compact man, sat down recently for an interview in his bare, narrow cubicle of an office at Hopkins, where he's worked for four years.

In "The Missing Link of Jewish European Ancestry: Contrasting the Rhineland and the Khazarian Hypotheses," published in December in the online journal *Genome Biology and Evolution*, Elhaik says he has proved that Ashkenazi Jews' roots lie in the Caucasus — a region at the border of Europe and Asia that lies between the Black and Caspian seas — not in the Middle East. They are descendants, he argues, of the Khazars, a Turkic people who lived in one of the largest medieval states in Eurasia and then migrated to Eastern Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries. Ashkenazi genes, Elhaik added, are far more heterogeneous than Ostrer and other proponents of the Rhineland Hypothesis believe. Elhaik did find a Middle Eastern genetic marker in DNA from Jews, but, he says, it could be from Iran, not ancient Judea.

Elhaik writes that the Khazars converted to Judaism in the eighth century, although many historians believe that only royalty and some members of the aristocracy converted. But widespread conversion by the Khazars is the only way to explain the ballooning of the European Jewish population to 8 million at the beginning of the 20th century from its tiny base in the Middle Ages, Elhaik says.

Elhaik bases his conclusion on an analysis of genetic data published by a team of researchers led by Doron Behar, a population geneticist and senior physician at Israel's Rambam Medical Center, in Haifa. Using the same data, Behar's team published in 2010 a paper concluding that most contemporary Jews around the world and some non-Jewish populations from the Levant, or Eastern Mediterranean, are closely related.

Elhaik used some of the same statistical tests as Behar and others, but he chose different comparisons. Elhaik compared "genetic signatures" found in Jewish populations with those of modern-day Armenians and Georgians, which he uses as a stand-in for the long-extinct Khazarians because they live in the same area as the medieval state.

"It's an unrealistic premise," said University of Arizona geneticist Michael Hammer, one of Behar's co-authors, of Elhaik's paper. Hammer notes that Armenians have Middle Eastern roots, which, he says, is why they appeared to be genetically related to Ashkenazi Jews in Elhaik's study.

Hammer, who also co-wrote the first paper that showed modern-day Kohanim are descended from a single male ancestor, calls Elhaik and other Khazarian Hypothesis proponents "outlier folks... who have a minority view that's not supported scientifically. I think the arguments they make are pretty weak and stretching what we know."

Feldman, director of Stanford's Morrison Institute for Population and Resource Studies, echoes Hammer. "If you take all of the careful genetic population analysis that has been done over the last 15 years... there's no doubt about the common Middle Eastern origin," he said. He added that Elhaik's paper "is sort of a one-off."

Elhaik's statistical analysis would not pass muster with most contemporary scholars, Feldman said: "He appears to be applying the statistics in a way that gives him different results from what everybody else has obtained from essentially similar data."

Elhaik, who doesn't believe that Moses, Aaron or the 12 Tribes of Israel ever existed, shrugs off such criticism.

"That's a circular argument," he said of the notion that Jews' and Armenians' genetic similarities stem from common ancestors in the Middle East and not from Khazaria, the area where the Armenians live. If you believe that, he says, then other non-Jewish populations, such as Georgian, that are genetically similar to Armenians should be considered genetically related to Jews, too, "and so on and so forth."

Dan Graur, Elhaik's doctoral supervisor at U.H. and a member of the editorial board of the journal that published his paper, calls his former student "very ambitious, very independent. That's what I like." Graur, a Romanian-born Jew who served on the faculty of Tel Aviv University for 22 years before moving 10 years ago to the Houston school, said Elhaik "writes more provocatively than may be needed, but it's his style." Graur calls Elhaik's conclusion that Ashkenazi Jews originated to the east of Germany "a very honest estimate."

In a news article that accompanied Elhaik's journal paper, Shlomo Sand, history professor at Tel Aviv University and author of the controversial 2009 book "The Invention of the Jewish People," said the study vindicated his long-held ideas.

"It's so obvious for me," Sand told the journal. "Some people, historians and even scientists, turn a blind eye to the truth. Once, to say Jews were a race was anti-Semitic, now to say they're not a race is anti-Semitic. It's crazy how history plays with us."

The paper has received little coverage in mainstream American media, but it has attracted the attention of anti-Zionists and "anti-Semitic white supremacists," Elhaik said.

Interestingly, while anti-Zionist bloggers have applauded Elhaik's work, saying it proves that contemporary Jews have no legitimate claim to Israel, some white supremacists have attacked it.

David Duke, for example, is disturbed by the assertion that Jews are not a race. "The disruptive and conflict-ridden behavior which has marked out Jewish Supremacist activities through the millennia strongly suggests that Jews have remained more or less genetically uniform and have... developed a group evolutionary survival strategy based on a common biological unity — something which strongly militates against the Khazar theory," wrote the former Ku Klux Klansman and former Louisiana state assemblyman on his blog in February.

"I'm not communicating with them," Elhaik said of the white supremacists. He says it also bothers him, a veteran of seven years in the Israeli army, that anti-Zionists have capitalized on his research; not least because "they're not going to be proven wrong anytime soon."

But proponents of the Rhineland Hypothesis also have a political agenda, he said, claiming they "were motivated to justify the Zionist narrative."

To illustrate his point, Elhaik swivels his chair around to face his computer and calls up a 2010 email exchange with Ostrer.

"It was a great pleasure reading your group's recent paper, 'Abraham's Children in the Genome Era,' that illuminate[s] the history of our people," Elhaik wrote to Ostrer. "Is it possible to see the data used for the study?"

Ostrer replied that the data are not publicly available. "It is possible to collaborate with the team by writing a brief proposal that outlines what you plan to do," he wrote. "Criteria for reviewing include novelty and strength of the proposal, non-overlap with current or planned activities, and non-defamatory nature toward the Jewish people." That last requirement, Elhaik argues, reveals the bias of Ostrer and his collaborators.

Allowing scientists access to data only if their research will not defame Jews is “peculiar,” said Catherine DeAngelis, who edited the Journal of the American Medical Association for a decade. “What he does is set himself up for criticism: Wait a minute. What’s this guy trying to hide?”

Despite what his critics claim, Elhaik says, he was not out to prove that contemporary Jews have no connection to the Jewish people of the Bible. His primary research focus is the genetics of mental illness, which, he explains, led him to question the assumption that Ashkenazi Jews are a useful population to study because they’re so homogeneous.

Elhaik says he first read about the Khazarian Hypothesis a decade ago in a 1976 book by the late Hungarian-British author Arthur Koestler, “The Thirteenth Tribe,” written before scientists had the tools to compare genomes. Koestler, who was Jewish by birth, said his aim in writing the book was to eliminate the racist underpinnings of anti-Semitism in Europe. “Should this theory be confirmed, the term ‘anti-Semitism’ would become void of meaning,” the book jacket reads. Although Koestler’s book was generally well reviewed, some skeptics questioned the author’s grasp of the history of Khazaria.

Graur is not surprised that Elhaik has stood up against the “clique” of scientists who believe that Jews are genetically homogeneous. “He enjoys being combative,” Graur said. “That’s what science is.”

#### **Israel strikes a blow to conventional Arab thinking**

***Elhanan Miller, The Times of Israel, 6 May 2013***

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-strikes-a-blow-to-conventional-arab-thinking/>

The alleged Israeli strikes on Iranian missiles en route to Hezbollah in Syria over the weekend have left Arab observers conflicted; for while many have been hoping — secretly or publicly — for a decisive military strike against President Bashar Assad, few expected or indeed wished for it to come from Israel.

Until early Sunday’s strikes on military targets near Damascus, conventional wisdom within the Syrian opposition was that Israel secretly supported Assad and was preventing his ouster. A Syrian Muslim Brotherhood official told The Times of Israel last year that Israel was pressuring the US and Russia to prop up Assad. A refugee from Daraa living in Jordan argued that Israel wanted Assad in power, because losing him would mean losing the Golan Heights, captured in 1967, and destabilizing Israel’s quietest border.

Reports to the contrary did little to change this impression. It was Israel which is said to have struck Assad’s nuclear facility under construction near the northeastern city of Deir Ezzor in 2007 and, more recently, Israel reportedly killed an Iranian general en route to Lebanon on Syrian soil. Israel never officially claimed responsibility for those strikes, but former Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak told CNN as early as May 2012 that Assad’s fall would help Israel by weakening Iran and Hezbollah. Such facts never seem to confuse the skeptics, however.

As the quintessential enemy of the Arab and Islamic world, Israel must be aligned with Assad, went the logic of many domestic Assad opponents. Now, though, Israel’s apparently brazen confrontation with the Assad regime — while many Arab leaders have spent the last two years merely verbally endorsing (or secretly dreaming) of such a move — has created something of a cognitive dissonance for these oppositionists.

'[Israel] retaliated against the massacres in Baydha and Baniyas immediately. Where is your retaliation, Arabs?'

Different observers have dealt with this conundrum in different ways. Die-hard Israel critics like Abdel Bari Atwan, editor-in-chief of leading Arab daily Al-Quds Al-Arabi, pounced at the opportunity to condemn Israel for its most recent "provocative" attack.

"If the Israeli missile strikes against Syria are not a declaration of war, flagrant aggression, and a violation of state sovereignty ... what is war, then?" wrote Atwan in an op-ed Monday, echoing the reaction of Syria's deputy foreign minister, Faisal Mekdad.

"The aggression against Syria is aggression against Syria and its people, not against the regime," wrote Palestinian activist Abir Kopty on her Twitter page. "Even if it were aggression against the regime, it should not [come from] Israel, America or their Arab collaborators!"

But on the ground in Syria, attitudes may be changing.

"I don't like Israel, there's no question about that," wrote one Damascus-based Twitter commentator who defines himself as "a devoted yogi, pianist, dancer and optimist. But right now, all I do is fight for a free Syria."

"It is still my enemy, no argument. But when an enemy does a neat job, I admit it."

A blogger from Homs who goes by the name of Kendeeel reported that his friend from Baniyas — a coastal city that experienced a regime-led massacre over the weekend — jokingly told him that Israel has more honor than Arab states ([Arabic-language link](#)).

"[Israel] retaliated against the massacres in Baydha and Baniyas immediately. Where is your retaliation, Arabs?" wrote Kendeeel on May 5, in a comment that was retweeted 107 times.

Yasser Al-Zaiat, a Damascus native studying sociology in Beirut, shared his inner distress following the Israeli strike.

"I'm sorry, but I can't make up my mind between the Syrian army and the Israeli. The latter never harmed me, but the Arab inside me hates it; whereas everything inside me hates the former," Al-Zaiat tweeted ([Arabic-language link](#)).

No official Syrian movement would openly praise Israel for its strike against Assad's military targets on Monday. The more prevalent attitude was to challenge the government to retaliate against the Zionist state, mocking the ineptitude of a regime that prides itself on standing at the forefront of Arab resistance to Israel.

Benedetta Berti, an expert on Syria at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Strategic Studies, said that, politically speaking, Israeli attacks on Syria are more of a liability than an asset for the anti-Assad opposition.

"This is very tricky for the opposition, since it clearly gives the Assad regime political ammunition to claim the rebels are collaborating with Israel," Berti said in an interview. "The best they can do is stand back and condemn the attacks as a violation of Syrian sovereignty."

But that may change too. Some pro-opposition organizations said foreign intervention at this stage was imperative, irrespective of its source.

"I think we all wish the conflict would have remained contained within Syria without becoming more of an international threat necessitating military intervention," wrote Dan Layman of the Syrian Support Group, a US-based pro-opposition organization, in an email correspondence.

"But unfortunately the reality on the ground has not afforded us that luxury. So we're of course thankful that those particular threats were neutralized."

### **What does Israel's Arab minority really think?**

**Alexander Yakobson, Fathom, 26 April 2013**

<http://www.fathomjournal.org/policy-politics/what-does-israels-arab-minority-really-think/>

The Israel Democracy Institute's 'Israeli Democracy Index 2012' – an annual comprehensive survey of the mood of Israeli society, widely considered one of the most authoritative in the field – provides some fascinating data about attitudes among Arab-Israelis regarding Israeli democracy and the state itself. The findings (not significantly different to previous years) certainly reflect a critical attitude towards the Israeli reality and government policies. But they also reflect something else: a huge gap between the responses of Arab-Israelis and the typical discourse of the Arab elite in the country; between opinion at the base and rhetoric amongst the political leadership of this community.

### **Findings**

Before setting out the findings, we must ask how reliable they are. It is sometimes suggested that the relatively positive results of these kinds of surveys reflect the reluctance of Arab participants to express their views with full candor and their desire to appease the establishment or the Jewish majority. But one of the survey's most interesting findings is the negative answer given by the great majority of Arab respondents to the question, 'Do you think that the Knesset Members from Arab parties are more radical than the general Arab public?' Only 24.4 per cent think so; almost half of the rest say the Arab MK's are actually more moderate than the Arab public at large. This is obviously a very disappointing answer from the viewpoint of the Jewish majority. Those who gave it were clearly not afraid of anybody and not trying to please anybody. Precisely for this reason, it can be regarded as strengthening the credibility of the other answers in the survey: after having expressed support for their political leadership, the Arab citizens proceeded to give, on many important points, answers that are hugely different from what the leadership is saying.

There is a huge difference between the responses of ordinary Israeli Arabs and the typical discourse of the Arab elite.

The picture is thus complicated, and the fundamental attitude of the Arab minority towards the State appears to be deeply ambivalent. But given the prolonged national conflict, with no end in sight at this point, this ambivalence should be regarded as good news. The Arab parties express the negative aspect of this ambivalence well enough; but anyone reading the survey will notice that the other aspect exists as well, and it is not at all negligible.

*Proud to be Israeli.* Some 44.5 per cent of Arab citizens (compared with 89 per cent of Jewish Israelis) answered affirmatively when asked whether they are 'proud to be Israeli' (14.1 per cent 'very proud', 30.4 per cent 'quite proud', 20.4 per cent 'not so proud' and 29.3 per cent 'not at all proud'). This reflects a decline from last year, when 52.8 per cent of Arabs responded positively, but it is still within the normal fluctuations over the last decade (between more than 40 and more than 50 per cent). Some argue that a state that defines itself as Jewish cannot, by definition, inspire feelings of patriotism among its Arab citizens – these findings tell a different story. It

should be noted that the expression the survey uses is not 'Israeli citizen' but 'Israeli'. In theory this should be the same thing, but in fact, everyone living in Israel knows that both Jews and Arabs often use the term 'Israeli' as a synonym for an 'Israeli Jew'.

To my knowledge, none of the leaders of the Arab public would adopt the label 'Israeli', and many reject this term explicitly. The Arab leadership also rejects the term 'Israeli Arab' because it sounds too Israeli. The acceptable alternative is not 'Palestinian Israeli' or 'Israeli Palestinian' but 'Arab Palestinian citizen of Israel,' or '(Arab) Palestinian in Israel'. Under these conditions, the willingness of slightly less and sometimes slightly more than a half of the Arab public to adopt the label 'Israeli' and express pride in it is of great significance. A few years ago I spoke with a group of British journalists who questioned me about the situation of Arab citizens of Israel. After dealing with various specific points, I asked them: do you suppose that 45 per cent of Catholics in Northern Ireland would be prepared to say 'I am proud to be British'? One of them replied, 'I don't believe there are 45 Catholics in Northern Ireland who are willing to say I am proud to be British, never mind 45 per cent.' Of course, he may have been exaggerating.

*Israeli democracy.* In relation to Israeli democracy, 44 per cent of Arab respondents say Israel's democracy is at the 'appropriate level', 7.8 per cent say Israel is 'too democratic', 37.2 per cent said it is 'not democratic enough' and only 11 per cent that it is 'not democratic enough by far'. The last answer corresponds to what is routinely said by virtually the entire Arab leadership. In fact, the 'vision documents' of the Arab leadership claim that Israel is not a democracy at all. That is not the opinion of the Arab public.

With regard to political institutions, 51.3 per cent of the Arab population have confidence in the Knesset and 51.8 per cent in the president, while only 39.3 per cent have confidence in the government (the cabinet). This signifies, presumably, not political support for the present government, but rather confidence in the government *as an institution*.

Nearly 82 per cent of the Arab respondents 'definitely agree' that under no circumstances should violence be used to achieve political goals. The percentage of Jews that answered that way to the question is 75.5 per cent.

*Equality.* Asked whether Arab citizens are discriminated against ('disadvantaged', as the survey puts it) compared with the Jewish population, a large majority of respondents answered 'yes'. One should not make light of this finding. But here also there are marked differences between the message from the public and the message of the leadership. Some 46.6 per cent 'strongly agree' with this claim, while 28.3 per cent 'somewhat agree' and 22.5 per cent 'disagree' or 'do not agree so much.'

*National security and state institutions.* 16.8 per cent of Israeli Arabs say they would increase Israel's defence budget, while 40.8 per cent would leave it unchanged. In 2011, when the question was asked in a different way, 45 per cent responded that it was 'important' or 'very important' to enhance Israel's military capability. Some 42.4 per cent of Arabs say they have confidence in the IDF and a further 18.8 per cent have confidence 'to a small extent'. Only 32.5 per cent have 'no confidence at all'. It seems that even among those who do not have great confidence in the IDF, more than a few are of the opinion that there are other forces in the Middle East that inspire even less confidence.

Some 62.3 per cent of Arab respondents say they have confidence in the police (25.1 per cent 'a lot of confidence' and 37.2 per cent 'some confidence') – a significant increase from the previous survey and slightly more, remarkably, than the percentage of Jews who say so. The editors of the survey comment that this may be due to increased recent police efforts to fight crime in the Arab sector. If indeed one year of relatively good work is enough to garner the police of the Zionist state an expression of confidence by a large majority of the Arab public, this indicates that the

real relationship between the state and its Arab citizens is very different, and much more complex, than is commonly thought.

If so, there is an important lesson here for other parts of the Israeli establishment: a concrete action – even if not particularly dramatic – by official institutions, for the benefit of the Arab public, as part of the country's citizenry, can certainly lead to increased confidence by the Arab citizens in these institutions.

Some 78 per cent of Arabs say they have confidence in the Supreme Court (compared with 72 per cent of Jews). Certainly, the Supreme Court is the most liberal branch of the Jewish state, which has done a lot to protect the civil rights of the Arab minority. But it is still unmistakably a branch of the Jewish state. Not many radical critics of the Jewish state, within the country or abroad, are willing to give credit to its Supreme Court.

*Israel's future.* When asked about their assessment of Israel's outlook for the next fifteen years, a large majority of the Arab respondents estimated that the country will be able to defend itself militarily (62.8 per cent), and that it will not lose its Jewish character (68.1). Some 49.7 per cent think Israel will become much more religious, and 55.5 per cent believe its international isolation will grow. But the assessment that enjoys the highest majority is that Israel will retain its status as a high-tech leader (75.9 per cent). Some 60.2 per cent of Arabs (compared to 75.6 per cent of the Jewish population) say they are 'optimistic about the future of Israel'. Just over half of those are 'very optimistic', the rest 'quite optimistic'.

## **Conclusions**

Of course, one may question the methodology and significance of any poll, but consistent findings in a series of authoritative polls are not something that can be easily dismissed. Anyone who studies the data closely, and factors in the difficult prevailing circumstances, must be impressed by the extent of optimism among Israel's Arab minority. The findings should, I think, inspire some cautious optimism in the reader as well. After all, the data was collected after a period in which the Yisrael Beiteinu party and parts of the Likud questioned the loyalty of the Arab minority in Israel in a highly inflammatory manner. The shameful public call by a group of municipal rabbis not to sell or rent apartments to Arab citizens, met only fairly mild disapproval from government leaders, and no official measures were taken against these rabbis, despite the fact that they are public servants paid by the state. Back in 2006, some Arab Knesset members publicly praised the Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah whilst his missiles fell on Haifa and (the Arab-Israeli town of) Nazareth; this did not help the relations between Jewish and Arab citizens either. Indeed, anyone listening to the nationalist rhetoric on both sides could easily imagine that the relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel were about to explode.

However, these and similar findings indicate that Jewish-Arab relations in Israel are actually much better – or less bad, if one prefers to put it this way – than the nationalist rhetoric would suggest. Clearly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict casts a large shadow over these relations. But even absent a solution to this conflict (which would of course be highly desirable in many respects), there is much that can and should be done to improve the civic status of Arabs in Israel and the relations between the majority and the minority. The claim that the Arab citizens of Israel are essentially and fundamentally alienated from the state is plain wrong.

## **The pleasures of antisemitism**

***Eve Garrard, , Fathom, 26 April 2013***

<http://www.fathomjournal.org/policy-politics/the-pleasures-of-antisemitism/>

Antisemitism is much more than a cognitive error. It attracts by providing the deep emotional

satisfactions of hatred, tradition, and moral purity. (A shorter version of this article appeared in Fathom Summer 2013, Issue 3.)

There is something strangely ineffective about many of our attempts to combat anti-Semitism. We treat it as involving various cognitive errors – false beliefs about Jews or about Israel, the application of double standards to the assessment of Jewish activities, the one-sided focus on things which can be criticised and the neglect of things which might be praiseworthy. We try to combat these cognitive failures (of which there certainly are plenty) by pointing out the errors involved, listing the relevant facts which correct those errors, and revealing the logical inconsistencies involved in, for example, the use of double standards. And when these attempts prove to be totally fruitless, as they so often do, we're puzzled and dismayed. Don't people want truths which would enable them to abandon their hostilities to various aspects of Jewish existence?

The answer, of course, is very often that no, they really don't want these truths. They prefer the errors, with all their dramatic fears and hatreds, and the excitement of conspiracy stories, to the unremarkable truth that Jews are on the whole just like everyone else, a mixture of good and bad, strong and weak, but with a history which has very real and terrible implications for the present. Why is this? We can't explain it just in terms of cognitive error, since part of what we want to know is why the cognitive errors are so immune to alteration, why they appear and reappear so very persistently. We have to look outside the cognitive domain to the realm of the emotions, and ask: what are the pleasures, what are the emotional rewards which anti-Semitism has to offer to its adherents?

Anti-Semitism is fun, there's no doubt about it. You can't miss the relish with which some people compare Jews to the Nazis, or the fake sorrow, imperfectly masking deep satisfaction, with which they bemoan the supposed fact that Jews have brought hatred on themselves, especially by the actions of Israel and its Zionist supporters, and that they have inexplicably failed to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. (The Holocaust was not, of course, an educational exercise; and if there are lessons to be learned from it, we might think that the weakest pupils are those who once again wish to single out Jews above all others for hostile attention.) Like other forms of racism, anti-Semitism provides a variety of satisfactions for those who endorse it, and it's worth trying to analyse these pleasures, so that we may better understand and combat the whole phenomenon. In what follows I will be mentioning and briefly describing various anti-Semitic attitudes, all of which I believe to be deeply and often culpably misguided. But I won't be discussing their errors, nor will I be distinguishing the circumstances in which criticism of Jews and Israel is legitimate and accurate, and circumstances in which it is not. Much has been written on just those topics; here I will simply take it for granted that some such criticisms are accurate, but that others, often many others, are false, and constitute a form of racist discrimination against Jews – in short, anti-Semitism. My concern here is not with the falsity of anti-Semitic discourse, but with the pleasures which it offers to those who engage in it.

There are (at least) three principal sources of pleasure which anti-Semitism provides: first, the pleasure of hatred; second, the pleasure of tradition, and third, the pleasure of displaying moral purity. Each of these is an independent source of satisfaction, but the three interact in various ways, which often strengthens their effects. No doubt the different sources of pleasure appeal to different individuals and groups, so that the appeal of tradition may resonate most strongly with those who are politically on the Right, and the attraction of displaying moral purity may be most strongly felt by those on the political Left, but both varieties can be detected in most political groupings, and the pleasures of hatred are well-nigh universal.

### **The pleasures of hatred**

The satisfactions which hatred has to offer us are regrettably familiar to most people. Most of us know only too well the surge of self-righteousness, the thrill of condemning others, the intense bonding with a like-minded hater, which we feel when a good jolt of vicious hostility has risen within us. Of course there

are some situations in which hatred is justified – there are some actions and attitudes to which hatred is the proper response, and anyone who is broadminded and tolerant at the building of an Auschwitz needs to clean up his moral compass. But the pleasures which hatred provides are just as available when the hatred is entirely unjustified, as most of us also know, at least in retrospect. Hatred and its cognates – contempt, rancour, and detestation – offer the seductive satisfaction of feeling our own superiority to the hated object, and feeling also a sense of deep justification and indeed righteousness in taking steps to punish or otherwise hurt him (or her, or them). Hurting others is also fun, for more people than we would normally like to believe (see for example the notorious Zimbardo experiments, and the evidence from those involved in the genocidal killing in Rwanda; but also the ubiquitous phenomenon of playground bullying, and its various adult analogues such as workplace bullying and the kind of political hostilities that sometimes break out in small ideologically overheated groups). So where anti-Semitism takes the form of Jew-hatred, it's not hard to understand that it offers psychological rewards which are nothing to do with the truth or falsehood of people's beliefs about Jews. Nor is it hard to see that people would prefer not to be deprived of these pleasures, especially if, as is often the case with those who are formally committed to anti-racism, they don't recognise themselves to be anti-Semitic, and hence pay no inner price in damage to their own self-esteem.

### **The pleasures of tradition**

Since the pleasures of hatred are universal, why, we must ask, do they get realised in Jew-hating in particular, here and now? At this point we can turn to the second main source of the pleasures of anti-Semitism: tradition. There is a Jew-shaped space in Western culture, and the shape is not a pleasant one. Long centuries of tradition have constructed the Jew as a being who is both contemptible and dangerous, the purveyor and transmitter of evil; and various tropes have been deployed to flesh out this picture – in particular the blood libel, according to which Jews use the blood of Christian children for their terrible ceremonies of machination and control, but also tropes about uncanny power, in which Jews are depicted as the puppet-masters of the rest of the helpless non-Jewish world. (There's a version of this trope in which tentacles, rather than puppet-strings, figure most prominently. Being classified as killer octopi rather than as puppet masters isn't noticeably an improvement for the Jews.)

As has often been pointed out, the tradition of anti-Semitism is very flexible, and it generally gets expressed in terms of the preoccupations of the period: so mediaeval Jew-hatred was religiously based; 19<sup>th</sup> and, even more 20<sup>th</sup>, century hostility was given a scientific top-dressing in terms of the now discredited theories of 'race science'; and late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century prejudice is generally cast in terms of human rights violations. (I speak here primarily of anti-Semitism in the West. Anti-Semitism in other parts of the world, while undoubtedly deriving large parts of its force from Western examples, is an even more complicated matter.) Although an anti-Semitism which was proud to speak its name became unfashionable on the liberal left after the Second World War, for reasons which are too obvious to mention, it's a remarkable feature of the persistence of anti-Semitic tropes that they have survived relatively unaltered through these cultural changes. Recent cartoons expressing profound hostility to the Jewish state, on the grounds of supposedly outstanding human rights-violations, reproduce fantasies of sinister control and bloodthirstiness which earlier anti-Semites would have recognised without difficulty.

The weight of tradition, which makes it feel comfortable, perhaps even natural, to fit living Jews into the space created for them by so many centuries of hostility, may help to explain one of the many failures of logic infecting contemporary anti-Semitic discourse: where the Jewish state does bad things, these are taken to reveal its true inner nature; where it does good things, these are interpreted as deceitful, as mere propaganda designed to cover up its vile motives and actions. (The relative freedom which is afforded to gay and bisexual people in Israel, as witnessed by the Gay Pride marches there, has been described as 'pinkwashing' – that is, as a mendacious attempt to persuade people that Israel is a tolerant respecter of human rights, instead of the colonial imperialist baby-killing oppressor which many anti-

Zionists declare her to be. It will be interesting to see whether the selection of a very beautiful black woman of Ethiopian descent to be Miss Israel gets described as 'black-washing'.) The suggestion by the Lib Dem peer, Baroness Jenny Tonge, that Israeli medical aid to Haiti was a cover for organ-stealing by Israeli medics was perhaps the crudest and most egregious of such examples, though people trying to defend Israel against such criticisms have become accustomed to being told again and again that they only mount these defences as a way of covering up Israel's crimes.

Why are people so ready to make these hostile moves, in a way which they wouldn't tolerate with respect to other forms of racism? Anyone who announced that the political and economic troubles of African countries were the result of low intelligence in black Africans, or who drew a cartoon of President Obama as an ape, would be committing social and political suicide among those members of the bien-pensant classes who so often display the forms of prejudice against Jews and the Jewish state with which we're here concerned. The availability of the traditional picture of the Jew as sinister and controlling and duplicitous may make these moves against living Jews, right now, seem comfortably familiar, and perhaps even freshly revealing of an age-old wisdom. There has been a distinctive tradition on the Left, going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, of what might be called rich-Jew anti-Semitism, where the basis of the objection to Jews was that they were rich, and hence exploitative and oppressive. It is easy to see how that can be picked up today. To that we might add the consideration that Jews have intermittently been treated appallingly, and sometimes genocidally, in the West; and as Tolstoy and others have noticed, we often hate people in proportion to the injustices which we have done them. It's very hard for Europe to forgive the Jews for the Holocaust, and seeing Jews as hateful makes life easier – people needn't worry about whether they're treating Jews quite fairly if they believe them to be lying, bloodthirsty and oppressive. But the main difference between resurgent hostility to Jews on the part of sections of the Left, and the absence of any such resurgence towards people of colour, is probably the result of the rise of anti-imperialism as the political hate object of the post-Marxist Left. Israel can be cast, though only at the expense of an enormous distortion of historical facts, into the role of imperial coloniser, and hence hostility towards Israel and the Jews who support her existence can be legitimised as part, sometimes a leading part, of the global fight against imperialism. This construal of Israel's geo-political position permits those people who are hostile to her to see themselves as warriors against the great evil of colonialism, a role which many on the Left find very gratifying to contemplate themselves as occupying.

### **The pleasures of moral purity**

This takes us to the third source of satisfaction which anti-Semitism provides: the desire for moral purity, especially a purity which is readily visible to others, and can count as a ticket of entry to socially and politically desirable circles. This source of satisfaction is in many ways the most interesting of them all, partly because it seems to be the motive du jour of anti-Semitism coming from sections of the Left, which might have been expected to be hostile to all forms of racism and sadly isn't; and partly because it's so supple and flexible, it can accommodate and explain away a very wide range of facts which tell against it. (I say that these things are interesting to contemplate and analyse, which indeed they are. But in no way do I want to underestimate the extent to which meeting them in the flesh, so to speak, is primarily disgusting, and also in many cases exhausting and sometimes frightening.)

Moral goodness and purity is of course genuinely desirable and admirable – it's good if people have deep moral insight, and the ability to judge correctly what's the right thing to do in complicated circumstances, and the strength of character and will to carry out their decisions, and the understanding and factual knowledge and courage and kindness and sympathy to judge others fairly, and to fight for justice where need be. But one look at that list is enough to remind us of how hard it is to be good, and how much easier it is to pursue the appearance rather than the reality. Israel as the Jewish state is a real opportunity for people who want to display their supposed moral purity, and harvest a suitable quantity of admiration from like-minded others, without having to deliver on the exacting demands of genuine moral probity. So we find people declaring that Israel is an apartheid state, thus allying themselves to the righteous fight

against apartheid half a century ago, but omitting to notice the huge moral, social and political differences between Israel and apartheid South Africa; they declare that Israel is a colonial settler state, thus displaying their hostility to colonialism without having to ask who the colonising power is, and where else the survivors of the mid-century horrors should have gone, and why the UN decided that the Jews of the world should have the opportunity for self-determination, and why they were so clearly in need of it; we have people publishing in the broadsheet press complaints about how their hostile views about Israel have been silenced by powerful unnamed forces, without noticing the performative contradiction in what they say; we have people explaining that they do of course completely condemn the Holocaust, and this shows that they can't be anti-Semitic, but, they go on to declare, it's appalling to find Jews behaving in the same way against the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank that the Nazis did in the Warsaw ghetto. And so on, and on.

However, my concern here is not with the factual and logical errors in these various charges; I want rather to point out the emotional dividend they provide to those who deploy them. Such people can present themselves as the champions of the weak against the strong, of the colonised against the supposedly imperialist colonisers, of wholly innocent Palestinian victims against bloody and heartless Jewish oppressors. They can also present themselves as being victimised, both by the way in which powerful forces have imposed silence on them (albeit one of the noisiest silences ever heard), and also by the charge, deeply offensive to their moral purity, that their extraordinarily selective hostility towards Israel and its supporters might constitute discrimination against Jews. Indeed so offensive is this charge that it amounts, so it is claimed, to a further victimisation, of a kind which can only be explained by the deceitful and manipulative nature of those who raise the concerns about alleged anti-Semitism. So people who deploy these tactics against Jews can see themselves, and can hope to be seen by others, as being not only on the side of morally pure victims against morally vicious villains, but also as having the coveted status of victims themselves, slandered by people who are determined to exploit their own past sufferings in order to oppress others. Furthermore, since in this narrative Jews are cast as the powerful oppressors, those who single them out for hostile attention can see themselves as 'speaking truth to power'. And paradoxically, focussing on Jews for singular criticism can also be presented as subversive and transgressive, flouting the conventions of polite discourse, and thus conferring on the hostile critic the accolade of being untrammelled by convention, excitingly edgy, possibly even outrageous. All in all, that's an awful lot of moral bang for your anti-Semitic buck.

The reason that it's plausible to construe these various claims and attitudes as being driven by a concern to display moral purity, rather than simply as showing honest moral commitments, is that the hostile attitudes displayed towards Israel and Zionists are rarely directed against other malefactors, including those who have committed far more, and far more serious, violations of human rights than any that Israel has managed. Furthermore, the charges made against Israel are often simply false, and demonstrably so. These two considerations together suggest that what's in play is not serious moral concern, but rather an easy simulacrum of it, along with a conviction of moral rectitude which, though misplaced, offers distinctive pleasures of its own.

The various sources of pleasure which anti-Semitism provides interact in diverse ways. Sometimes the effect of this interaction is simply to reinforce the rewards on offer: tradition plus hatred is a natural pairing, as is tradition plus the desire for moral purity – these relations are simply multipliers. But other relations look at first sight as if they might involve a certain tension: tradition plus transgressiveness, or hatred and condemnation plus the desire for moral purity. However these tensions can be and often are resolved in anti-Semitic discourse in ways which leave the discriminatory drive undisturbed. The claim of transgressiveness can be asserted with respect to the post-war convention of being polite about Jews, arising understandably from their sufferings at the hands of Nazi Germany, but now, it is suggested, exploited by Jews to cover up their wrongdoings. And in the description of such alleged wrongdoings, the rich seam of traditional Jew-hatred can be drawn on without embarrassment, indeed with a delicious frisson, because the transgressiveness defuses in advance any objections based on more conventional

concerns about racism. The defusing of such concerns is expedited where the transgressor uses the device of claiming that he himself is not anti-Semitic, but he can understand those who are, since the Jews bring hostility on themselves by their behaviour. The tension between the pleasures of hatred and those of moral purity can also be reconciled, allowing them to co-exist and even reinforce each other. Hatred, it can be suggested, is an excusable and perhaps even appropriate response to the bloodthirsty acts of Israel; the hatred supposedly arises out of an overwhelming sensitivity to injustice, and is a sign of the extreme moral purity of the hater, who selflessly struggles for justice for the innocent victims of a tyrannical state and its supporters. It's easy to see the attractions of this self-serving self-image to one who wishes to claim moral rectitude, and also to enjoy the pleasures of hatred. It's a terrific opportunity both to have your moral cake, and to eat it up in huge and satisfying gulps.

## **Conclusion**

The factual, logical and moral errors in the various forms of anti-Semitism under consideration are legion, and have been discussed extensively elsewhere (for example in the work of David Hirsh and Norman Geras, both in their contributions to previous issues of *Fathom* and in many other places). In trying to account for the prevalence of these errors, and also to combat them, we shouldn't overlook the pleasures, sometimes very intense ones, which they provide. With the increasing normalisation of anti-Semitic hostility in many parts of the Left as well as the far Right, we can expect these pleasures to be more widely disseminated and enjoyed. What can be done about this state of affairs isn't immediately obvious – the fact that some pleasures are vile doesn't stop them being pleasurable, or prevent some people wanting to taste them again and again. In order to do so these people must bolster up their image of the Jewish state as oppressive and illegitimate, and the Zionists who support her as lying, manipulative, and hostile to human solidarity and justice. Here the devil frequently does have the best tunes, and the thin and reedy voice of rational argument is often quite drowned out by their brassy insistence. But we'll do better in the combat, however we conduct it, if we realise that the views which we're struggling against provide deep emotional satisfactions to those who hold them, satisfactions not easy either to overcome or to replace.

## **Why Muslims must hate Jews**

***Nonie Darwish, The American Thinker, August 2012***

[http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/08/why\\_muslims\\_must\\_hate\\_jews.html#ixzz235Wv76m7](http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/08/why_muslims_must_hate_jews.html#ixzz235Wv76m7)

Recently, a Pakistani religious leader, Pirzada Muhammad Raza Saqib Mustafai, said: "When the Jews are wiped out ... the sun of peace [will] begin to rise on the entire world." The same preaching is routinely done not only by clerics, but by politicians -- in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and elsewhere. This is not just Ahmedinijad; it is at the heart of Islamic theology that world peace will be established only when all the Jews are wiped from the earth. But few people in Western media are alarmed by this kind of rhetoric or care to expose this dreadful dark side of Islam's obsession with Jew-hatred.

I do not believe that one has to be an authority on human behavior or group thinking to find out the obvious pathology in Islamic Jew-hatred. It is time for all of us to uncover and expose this atrocity against the Jewish people. We owe that to humanity and the truth.

No true Muslim can see that such hatred is unbecoming and unholy for a world religion to focus on and that the credibility of Islam is tarnished by such hatred. No Muslim is allowed to go far enough to self-analyze or ask why such hatred. Muslims defend Jew-hatred by claiming that Jews betrayed Muhammad and thus deserve of this kind of treatment. Even when I was a Muslim, I believed that the one-sided story against Jews by Islam was enough to justify all the

killing, terror, lies, and propaganda by Islamic leaders against Jews. To the average Muslim, routinely cursing Jews in mosques feels normal and even holy!

After a lot of thinking, analysis, research, and writing, I discovered that Jew-hatred in Islam is an essential foundation to the Islamic belief system that Muslims cannot seem to be able to rid themselves of. Jew-hatred masks an existential problem in Islam. Islam is terrified of the Jews, and the number-one enemy of Islam is the truth, which must be constantly covered at any cost. It does not matter how many Muslim men, women, and children die in the process of saving Islam's reputation. The number-one duty of Muslims is to protect the reputation of Islam and Mohammad. But why would a religion burden its followers like that? This is why:

When Mohammed embarked on his mission to spread Islam, his objective was to create a uniquely Arabian religion, one created by an Arab prophet, which reflected the Arabian values and culture. Yet to obtain legitimacy, he had to link it to the two previous Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Christianity. He expected the Jewish tribes who lived in Arabia to declare him their Messiah and thereby bring him more legitimacy with Arabs, especially with his own tribe in Mecca, the Quraish. Because his own tribe had rejected and ridiculed him, Mohammed needed the approval of the Jews, whom he called the people of the book. But the conversion of Jews to Islam was part of the scenario that Mohammed had to accomplish in order to prove to Meccans that they had made a mistake by rejecting him.

That was one of the reasons Mohammed chose to migrate to Medina, a town that had predominantly been settled by Jewish tribes and a few impoverished Arabs who lived around the Jews. The Jews allowed Mohammed to move in. At the beginning, the Koran of Mecca was full of appeals to the Jews, who were then described as "guidance and light" (5:44) and a "righteous" people (6:153-154), who "excelled the nations" (45:16). But when the Jews rejected the appeasement and refused to convert to Islam, Mohammed simply and completely flipped. The Quran changed from love to threats and then pure hatred, cursing, and commandments to kill Jews. Rejection by the Jews became an intolerable obsession with Mohammed.

Not only did the Jews reject him, but their prosperity made Mohammed extremely envious. The Jewish Arabian tribes earned their living from legitimate and successful business, but Mohammed earned his living and wealth through warfare -- by attacking Arab tribes, some of whom were from his own tribe -- and trade caravans, seizing their wealth and property. That did not look good for a man who claimed to be a prophet of God. The mere existence of the Jews made Mohammed look bad, which led Mohammed to unspeakable slaughter, beheading of 600 to 900 Jewish men of one tribe, and taking their women and children as slaves. Mohammed had the first pick of the prettiest woman as his sex slave. All of this senseless slaughter of the Jews was elaborately documented in Islamic books on the life of Mohammed -- not as something to be ashamed of, but as justified behavior against evil people.

One does not have to be psychiatrist to see the obvious: that Mohammad was a tormented man after the massacre he orchestrated and forced his fighters to undertake to empower and to enrich himself and his religion. To reduce his torment, he needed everyone around him, as well as future generations, to participate in the genocide against the Jews, the only people whom he could not control. An enormous number of verses in the Koran encouraged Mohammed's fighters to fight, kill, and curse Muslim fighters who wanted to escape fighting and killing Jews. The Quran is full of promises of all kinds of pleasure in heaven to those who followed Mohammed's killing spree and curses and condemnation to those who chose to escape from fighting. Muslims were encouraged to feel no hesitation or guilt for the genocide because it was not they who did it, but rather "Allah's hand."

Mohammed never got over his anger, humiliation, and rejection by "the people of the book" and went to his grave tormented and obsessed that some Jews were still alive. On his deathbed, Mohammed entrusted Muslims to kill Jews wherever they found them, which made this a "holy

commandment" that no Muslim can reject. Muslims who wrote sharia understood how Mohammed was extremely sensitive to criticism, and that is why criticizing Mohammed became the highest crime in Islam that will never be forgiven even if the offender repents. Mohammed's message on his deathbed was not for his followers to strive for holiness, peace, goodness, and to treat their neighbors as themselves, but rather a commandment for Muslims to continue the killing and the genocide against the Jews. Killing thus became a holy act of obedience to Mohammed and Allah himself.

Mohammed portrayed himself as a victim of Jews, and Muslims must avenge him until judgment day. With all Arab power, money, and influence around the world today, they still thrive at portraying themselves as victims. Sharia also codified into law the duty of every Muslim to defend Mohammed's honor and Islam with his own blood, and allowed the violation of many commandments if it is for the benefit of defending Islam and Mohammed. Thus, Muslims are carrying a huge burden, a holy burden, to defend Mohammed with their blood, and in doing so they are allowed to kill, lie, cheat, slander, and mislead.

Mohammed must have felt deep and extreme shame after what he had done to the Jews, and thus a very good reason had to be found to explain away his genocide. By commanding Muslims to continue the genocide for him, even after his death, Mohammad expanded the shame to cover all Muslims and Islam itself. All Muslims were commanded to follow Mohammed's example and chase the Jews wherever they went. One hundred years after Mohammed's death, Arabs occupied Jerusalem and built Al Aqsa mosque right on top of the Jewish Temple ruins, the holiest spot of the Jews. Muslims thought they had erased all memory of Jewish existence.

Mohammed's genocide of the Jews of Arabia became an unholy dark mark of shame in Islamic history, and that shame, envy, and anger continues to get the best of Muslims today. In the eyes of Mohammed and Muslims, the mere existence of the Jewish people, let alone an entire Jewish state, delegitimizes Islam and makes Mohammed look more like a mass murderer than like a prophet. For Muslims to make peace with Jews and acknowledge that Jews are humans who deserve the same rights as everyone else would have a devastating effect on how Muslims view their religion, their history, and the actions of their prophet.

Islam has a major existential problem. By no will of their own, the Jews found themselves in the middle of this Islamic dilemma. Islam must justify the genocide that Mohammad waged against the Jews. Mohammad and Muslims had two choices: either the Jews are evil sub-humans, apes, pigs, and enemies of Allah, a common description of Jews still heard regularly in Middle Eastern mosques today, or Mohammad was a genocidal warlord not fit to be a prophet of God -- a choice that would mean the end of Islam.

Then and now, Mohammad and Muslims clearly chose the first worldview and decreed that any hint of the second must be severely punished. Jews must remain eternally evil enemies of Islam if Islam is to remain legitimate. There is no third solution to save the core of Islam from collapsing; either Mohammed was evil, or the Jews were evil. Any attempt to forgive, humanize, or live peacefully with Jews is considered treason against Islam. How can Muslims forgive the Jews and then go back to their mosques, only to read their prophet's words, telling them they must kill Jews wherever they find them? It does not add up, if someone wants to remain Muslim.

That is why the number-one enemy of Islam is, and must remain, the truth. If the truth exposes Islam's unjustified Jew-hatred, Muslims will be left with an empty shell of a religion, a religion whose prophet was a murderer, a thief, and a warlord. Without Jew-hatred, Islam would self-destruct.

***NOTE: The views expressed in certain articles are not necessarily those of the SAZF***

*South African Zionist Federation*  
*Tel : (011) 645-2505*  
*Fax: (011) 640-6758*  
*E-mail: [froma@beyachad.co.za](mailto:froma@beyachad.co.za)*  
*Website: [<http://sazionfed.co.za](http://sazionfed.co.za)*

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