



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

simple reason that a nation that forfeits its symbols will have lost its head and effectively severed its oxygen supply and its source of inspiration. The term "forfeiting Jerusalem" is not just territorial; it is about forfeiting a mindset, losing the active link with

Commentary...

The Jewish Nation's DNA By Nadav Shragai

Jerusalem, my friends, is the greatest, most justified Israeli settlement there ever has been and ever will be. When celebrating Jerusalem Day tomorrow, we ought to leave discussions about "demographics," "security needs" and "natural growth" at the door.

Instead, let's talk about the very nature of our connection to the city itself, from the time of King David, through the First and Second Temples, to modern independence in 1948, through the Six-Day War, and up to today. To put it simply, let's not trip over our words. Let's not apologize.

The acceptable discourse and language are appropriate for days when we're not celebrating. But on a day like this, remembering from where we came and where we're headed, we need to talk about our right, our birthright, to this city of ours. Our connection to it is rooted in our religious faith, in our history and in two thousand years of recollection and longing. The Jewish presence in Jerusalem never ended. As former Prime Minister Menachem Begin said, "More than Israel watches over Jerusalem, Jerusalem watches over Israel."

Oh, how right he was: Jerusalem is and has been the DNA that runs through the veins of Jewish people all over the world. Jerusalem was a magnet to us, a compass, a glue, the weave forming the Jewish people's most characteristic memory, in which our justice and inherent right were embodied and are embodied until today. Without Jerusalem, our right to the land of Israel is eroded.

On this day, we need to retell again and again the Jewish story of Jerusalem, a story that is unparalleled. Without it our nation would never have been resurrected here, in Israel. Every day, Jews in the Diaspora reminded themselves of the holiness of the city: during the morning, afternoon and evening prayer services, at funerals, circumcisions and bar mitzvahs, in the blessing over food, at weddings, and on holidays. The Jewish people swore and swear to this day, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither."

Islam, which now claims Jerusalem and its holy places, entered the scene some 2,000 years after Israel became a nation. The Palestinians -- who are claiming east Jerusalem, including the Old City and the Temple Mount, as their capital -- only began to define themselves as a nation within the last century. After the occupation of the lands of Canaan ended around the 13th century B.C.E., the Jews ruled over this land of Israel for some 1,000 years. Jews have lived in Israel for the past 3,300 years. Throughout this time, Jerusalem has always been the Hebrew capital. (Israel Hayom May 7)

Jerusalem: A Central Part of our Identity By Reuven Rivlin MK

This week we celebrate the 46th anniversary of the liberation of Jerusalem. Against the backdrop of the festivities, we will have to do some soul searching on Jerusalem and its role in our lives, as a nation and as private citizens.

Several years ago, the Palestine Liberation Organization envoy in Lebanon, Abbas Zaki said that "when the Jews leave Jerusalem, the Zionist idea would begin to crumble and ultimately die a natural death." We don't need Zaki to remind us of this historical, cultural and religious truism. Nevertheless, he has managed to remind us of this fact. What he has articulated came out so naturally; it was simplified. Our kids would never be able to match this rhetoric even with an abundance of words.

When the Jews leave Jerusalem the Zionist idea would die for the

the city and its symbols.

Beta Israel, a community that includes many Ethiopian Jews, has decided to make Jerusalem Day a day of remembrance for those who perished while trying to make Aliyah to Israel. When Theodor Herzl floated the idea of establishing a national home in Uganda in 1903, delegates at the Zionist Congress tore their clothes and placed ashes on their heads as if they were mourning. Only when he proclaimed "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning," did they stop attacking him. National religious citizens are the only ones you will see celebrating on the streets on Jerusalem on the reunification anniversary. For them, Jerusalem transcends the political and ideological divisions; it is the Archimedean point according to which we have oriented ourselves while praying generation upon generation.

In my view, the debate over Jerusalem is almost too painful to conduct. But being indifferent to the city is a failure of the Zionist enterprise and underscores the unraveling of Jewish education. Neither the Left nor the Right should be faulted for Jerusalem's absence from our individual identity or from the identity of our children. It is a major shortcoming of our collective identity.

The political and security tenets of Herzl's Zionism centered on survivability; they are all about securing our existence but they do not guarantee our identity. The chief concern of Herzl's adherents has always been, "What would create more security for the Jewish people? The corollaries were: Would security be better-served with Israel having control over the Sinai? Would Israel be better off with Jerusalem or without it?

If, God forbid, there comes a point at which peace without Jerusalem is preferable, "Zionism would die naturally." Therefore, as far as I am concerned, post-Jerusalemism is tantamount to post-Zionism.

Make no mistake. The lack of affinity toward Jerusalem doesn't imply it is a lousy and underdeveloped city. On the contrary. In recent years it has been flourishing and moving forward at a rapid pace.

Cultural events, festivals, marathons, high-profile lectures. It has all of these things, and quite frequently. Its western neighborhoods are connected to its eastern part via a light rail system. It has a vibrant and prosperous city center. It has youth; its communities include both secular and religious people; they all breathe new life into the capital. Over on the eastern part, education and services have improved, although there is more to be done.

But nothing could be of the same value as education, and particularly that on Jerusalem and the place we have for it in our hearts. Jerusalem Day is not a religious or right-wing holiday; it should not become one. Any attempt to claim it is the exclusive domain of a certain group or a certain political view undercuts the role Jerusalem has in our identity.

I dream of a world in which both secular and religious Jews, Israelis and foreigners alike, view Jerusalem as the core of their identity and regard it as a place where they can shape their perceptions in a way that has the past, the present and the future joined firmly together. This is how we can restore our special attitude toward Jerusalem. We can once again turn the city into a linchpin of Jewish identity, for us and for our children.

It is in Jerusalem that earth is intertwined with the spirit; prayer merges with sovereignty. It is in Jerusalem that Jewish identity must live up to the responsible political and moral ideals it espouses. Jerusalem and our existence are one and the same. The right of return to our homes, our heritage, and our identity, are all derived from that city.

There is no way around it. Happy Jerusalem Day!

High Hopes for Peace Smashed – Tel Aviv Journalist Returns From Dialogue with Arabs

By Baruch Gordon

Lital Shemesh is a 29-year-old successful, female, Israeli journalist who recently participated in a seminar with other young Israelis and Arabs in hopes of igniting optimism for peace. She returned from the seminar disappointed and disillusioned.

Lital Shemesh as Editor of Israel's largest youth magazine

She is a rising star in the Israeli media who openly expresses her political aspirations in the Knesset. She worked as Editor-in-Chief for the Yedioth Youth Magazines, reported for the Israel Broadcasting Authority and the Hot CableTV News channel, and is CEO and Founder of a web-based girls magazine "Pinkish – Everything that Girls Love."

In her first video blog in English two years ago, she says, "I really want... a peaceful quiet country to live in, and I really want peace to come."

But her conclusions from the peace seminar reflect a strong trend in Israeli society: Israelis are realizing that the negotiations with the Arabs are destined to fail from the outset, so why waste the time? As is apparent from the February election results, further talks with the Arabs simply no longer interest many people. It is an issue that has been sidelined and tabled to "maybe the next generation."

Her summary (below) of her experience at the peace seminar will help readers better understand Israeli society of 2013. A must read. Her report appeared this past Thursday (May 2, 2013) on the Walla news site:

Peace? From the Palestinian Standpoint, There is a Past, No Future

By Lital Shemesh

I participated in the Dialogue for Peace Project for young Israelis and Palestinians who are politically involved in various frameworks. The project's objective was to identify tomorrow's leaders and bring them closer today, with the aim of bringing peace at some future time.

The project involved meetings every few weeks and a concluding seminar in Turkey.

On the third day of the seminar after we had become acquainted, had removed barriers, and split helpings of rachat Lukum [a halva-like almond Arab delicacy] as though there was never a partition wall between us, we began to touch upon many subjects which were painful for both sides. The Palestinians spoke of roadblocks and the IDF soldiers in the territories, while the Israeli side spoke of constant fear, murderous terrorist attacks, and rockets from Gaza.

The Israeli side, which included representatives from right and left, tried to understand the Palestinians' vision of the end of the strife– "Let's talk business." The Israelis delved to understand how we can end the age-old, painful conflict. What red lines are they willing to be flexible on? What resolution will satisfy their aspirations? Where do they envision the future borders of the Palestinian State which they so crave?

We were shocked to discover that not a single one of them spoke of a Palestinian State, or to be more precise, of a two-state solution.

They spoke of one state – their state. They spoke of ruling Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Akko, Haifa, and the pain of the Nakba [lit. the tragedy – the establishment of the State of Israel]. There was no future for them. Only the past. "There is no legitimacy for Jews to live next to us" – this was their main message. "First, let them pay for what they perpetrated."

In the course of a dialogue which escalated to shouts, the Palestinians asked us not to refer to suicide bombers as "terrorists" because they don't consider them so. "So how do you call someone who dons a vest and blows himself up in a Tel Aviv shopping mall with the stated purpose of killing innocent civilians," I asked one of the participants.

"I have a 4-year-old at home," answered Samach from Abu Dis (near Jerusalem). "If G-d forbid something should happen to him, I will go and burn an entire Israeli city, if I can." All the other Palestinian participants nodded their heads in agreement to his harsh words.

"Three weeks ago, we gave birth to a son," answered Amichai, a religious, Jewish student from Jerusalem. "If G-d forbid something should happen to him, I would find no comfort whatsoever in deaths of more people."

Israelis from the full gamut of political parties participated in the seminar: Likud, Labor, Kadima, Meretz, and Hadash (combined Jewish/Arab socialist party). All of them reached the understanding that the beautiful scenarios of Israeli-Palestinian peace that they had formulated for themselves simply don't correspond with reality. It's just that most Israelis don't have the opportunity to sit and really converse with Palestinians, to hear what they really think.

Our feed of information comes from Abu Mazen's declarations to the international press, which he consistently contradicts when he is interviewed by Al Jazeera, where he paints a completely different picture.

I arrived at the seminar with high hopes, and I return home with

difficult feelings and despair. Something about the narrative of the two sides is different from the core. How can we return to the negotiating table when the Israeli side speaks of two states and the Palestinian side speaks of liberating Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea? How can peace ever take root in a platform which grants legitimacy to terrorism?

(IsraelNationalNews.com May 5)

Is Resilience the Answer? By Josh Hasten

Resilience:

1. *The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.*
2. *Ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyancy. – (dictionary.com)*

Since the signing of the Oslo Accords with the Palestinian Authority 20 years ago, over 1,500 Israelis have been murdered in terror attacks with thousands more wounded. In fact it's rare in a county this small not to know somebody – or at least not to know somebody who knows somebody, whose life hasn't been directly impacted or shattered by terrorism in one form or another.

Palestinian terror struck yet again recently, when Yitzhar resident and father of five young children 31-year-old Evyatar Borovsky was murdered while trying to hitch a ride at the Tapuah Junction in Shomron. Shomron Council officials say Borovsky was attacked Tuesday morning, April 30 – stabbed twice in the back by Salam Azal, an Arab resident of the village of Shuka, near Tulkarm, who was a known terrorist recently released from Israeli prison.

After stabbing Borovsky for no other reason than being Jewish, Azal stole his victim's pistol and attempted to finish the job.

While nearby Border Police rushed to the scene and were able to disarm Azal by shooting him and wounding him moderately, paramedics were unable to save Borovsky's life.

Shortly after his death was announced, another Jewish hitchhiker who was an eyewitness to the attack recited the Shema prayer and closed the victim's eyes, as other soldiers and security officials began arriving.

While technically this was the first murderous terror attack in Judea and Samaria in nearly two years, it should not be downplayed, since attempts by terrorists to harm and kill Jewish civilians and soldiers – whether by throwing rocks, firebombs, through stabbings or by shootings have picked up steam and are a nearly daily occurrence.

But Israeli society has proven to be resilient in the face of two decades of terror.

When buses were blowing up regularly in suicide attacks in our major cities, just minutes after the dead and wounded were transferred away from the scene and the blood was cleaned off the streets and sidewalks, and the burnt-out shell of the targeted vehicle was towed away, commuters were right back at the very same bus stop ready to get on board the next scheduled line.

On one hand such resilience should be applauded. It sends a message to the terrorists that while you may bend us, we will not break. On the other hand, I would argue that returning to our lives as if everything is back to normal is perhaps a misguided response.

How many more times do we have to be attacked, and how many more Israelis need to be buried, in order to confirm the fact that we are a resilient bunch? For those who are directly impacted, either the survivors of an attack or those who have lost loved ones in tragedies such as terror or war, personal resilience might be the only way to cope on a day-to-day basis.

But for the rest of our society, on a national level, I believe it's time for a psychological paradigm shift away from "resilience" unless it is accompanied first by true and meaningful change.

In other words, instead of having the attitude that "once the street is clear, I'm going to get back on that bus," maybe the attitude should be, "I will only get on that bus again, (or hitch a ride, etc.) once my government proves to me that it is safe to do so. Until there is true change, maybe I won't carry on as if everything is normal."

Imagine if tomorrow, the entire country, or even a large percentage of the working population, decided to stay home, as a protest against terror and in solidarity with this week's victim.

Think what a powerful message that would send to our elected leadership – that unless terrorism is wiped out once and for all, we are going to shut down and stay home.

No stock market, no transportation, no food services, just like the labor strikes we are used to in this country, but this one in each and every sector. I'm pretty sure such drastic action would get the attention of those in charge and force them to implement meaningful policies to gain back

the confidence and support of the general populace.

In all fairness, during these past 20 years we have become experts at limiting casualties – building the security barrier, putting up checkpoints, turning Sderot and surrounding communities into one big bomb shelter, carrying out pinpoint strikes on terror targets, even implementing sizeable (but limited) military campaigns – but this week’s deadly attack, and the fact that other attempts occur time and time again, show that we have been simply putting “band-aids” over our problems and have not been implementing meaningful solutions.

I suggest that we stop having to overcome adversity and show our resilience, but instead avoid being the victims in the first place. (Jerusalem Post May 8)

Are Your Taxes Abetting Church of Scotland’s Assault On Judaism?

By Yitzhak Santis

The Church of Scotland has revived an anti-Jewish Christian doctrine long thought buried in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Last week, in advance of its General Assembly later this month, its Church and Society Council released a report, “The Inheritance Of Abraham? A Report On The ‘Promised Land’”, which declares theologically invalid any claims the Jewish people have to the Land of Israel. Further, the report seeks to demolish what it calls Christian “guilt” over “centuries of anti-Semitism” and the Holocaust as a basis of support for Israel.

While these sentiments are, in themselves, morally unconscionable, the stain is spread as a result of the activities led by taxpayer-funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Church of Scotland report is influenced by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, a Jerusalem-based Palestinian Christian group. Sabeel is a major actor in the effort to convince Christian churches worldwide to support anti-Israel boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS). Sabeel’s influence is noted in the report’s main theme: the “promise to Abraham about land is fulfilled through the impact of Jesus, not by restoration of land to the Jewish people.”

This is called replacement theology, or supersessionism, whose origins run deep in Christian history. Its central claim is that “national Israel has somehow completed or forfeited its status as the people of God... and the church is now the true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded national Israel as the people of God.” After the Holocaust, the Vatican and many mainline Protestant churches reinterpreted this theology to avoid breathing life back into antisemitism.

In contrast, Sabeel laces its Palestinian Liberation Theology, developed by founder Rev. Naim Ateek, with supersessionist language, forging it into a theological sword to undercut Jewish religious and historical claims to Israel. As such it “Christianizes” Palestinian nationalism, which in one of its foundational documents (the PLO Charter) declares, “Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history.”

Ateek has been developing his thesis since 1989 when he wrote, “The tragedy of many Zionists today is that they have locked themselves into the nationalist concept of God. They are trapped in it and they will be freed only if they discard their primitive image of God for a more universal one.”

Ateek’s shocking belittlement of Judaism is odious. But its echo in the Church of Scotland’s report ratchets up its offensiveness: “Christians must not sacrifice the universalist, inclusive dimension of Christianity and revert to the particular exclusivism of the Jewish faith because we feel guilty about the Holocaust.”

Sabeel is an official partner of the Church of Scotland, which describes Sabeel as an organization that “promotes non-violence and reconciliation.” How such intolerant rhetoric can be seen as inspiring reconciliation is difficult to see.

The Church of Scotland is not alone in fostering support for Sabeel. Many Western governments, especially in Europe, outsource their foreign aid through a network of Christian humanitarian aid NGOs. In this manner, Sabeel receives financial support from the governments (and the taxpayers) of the Netherlands, Sweden and Canada.

Sabeel lists the Dutch government-funded Kerk in Aktie among its donors, supplying €50,000 in 2012. Kerk in Aktie itself backs a “general boycott” of Israeli products, in contradiction to official Dutch government policies. Meanwhile, the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO) used Dutch taxpayer money to fund a Sabeel project that sought “to reflect in a theological manner on the Palestinian situation in terms of Israeli occupation.”

The Swedish government, through its International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), funds Diakonia, a partnership of five Swedish churches. Sabeel states that “Sweden, a country which was strongly pro-Zionist in the past, manifests strong support [for Sabeel’s agenda],” and that

“Diakonia is closely associated with Sabeel.” In 2008 Diakonia funded Sabeel’s Nakba Memory program. In 2011 Sabeel received SEK 225,000 (\$32,390) from Diakonia for its “Community Program.” And in 2012, Diakonia donated €44,277 to Sabeel.

The Canadian government provided \$44.6 million to the Catholic Organization for Development and Peace for the five year period 2006 to 2011, some of this making it into Sabeel’s coffers. In 2010 and 2011 Development and Peace gave Sabeel a total of ₪279,374 (about \$79,000).

This is how Western taxpayers in the 21st century are subsidizing medieval religious intolerance.

It is bad enough that the Church of Scotland echoes Sabeel’s radical Palestinian nationalist agenda, and as a result, undermines the positive and historical developments in post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian relations. The fact that Western governments are funding and enabling the poisonous message spread by groups like Sabeel is no less disturbing. (Times of Israel May 6)

The Two-State Psychosis: The Oslo Syndrome Revisited

By Martin Sherman

There were many cogent critiques of the Oslo process. But none addressed why Israel’s leaders, supported by the nation’s academic and cultural elites and much of the broader population, were pursuing a course that was demonstrably placing the nation, including their own families, at dire risk... given the irrationality of Israel’s course, the explanation had to lie in the realm of psychopathology. Israel’s Oslo diplomacy reflected a self-destructiveness inexplicable except in psychiatric terms – Prof. Kenneth Levin of the department of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School.

Psychosis: Fundamental derangement of the mind characterized by defective or lost contact with reality especially as evidenced by delusions – Merriam-Webster Online dictionary.

April was a bad month for level-headedness, least as far as the debate on Israel was concerned, and particularly in reference to the Palestinian issue.

Common sense and rational thinking were abandoned in favor of feverish flights of far-fetched fancy, totally divorced from recalcitrant realities down here on Planet Earth.

As the evidence against the feasibility of any two-state outcome to the conflict with the Palestinian Arabs continually accumulates, the rhetoric of evermore desperate two-staters is becoming increasingly fanatic, their behavior increasingly frenetic and their policy proposals increasingly frantic.

Forced to concede that virtually all the assumptions upon which the land-for-peace approach, and its derivative two-state paradigm, were founded, have been demonstrated to be totally without foundation, two-staters refuse to acknowledge error.

Rather than relinquish the conclusions they had drawn on the basis of disproven premises, they cling to them as if they were some divinely ordained dictate, preferring to find alternative arguments to justify them – even if these happen be to diametrically contradictory to those previously invoked.

The latter part of last month saw a flurry of some of the more fanciful expositions/exhortations of the two-state principle being aired on several prominent public platforms.

The perverse procession of pernicious prescriptions began on April 23, with the presentation of the bizarre notion of “constructive unilateralism” (a.k.a. “the independent option”) at the annual conference of the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv. As I pointed out in my previous columns, this is a policy proposal championed by “a nonpartisan political movement” known as Blue and White Future and endorsed by INSS, and the two organizations cooperate intimately to promote it domestically and abroad.

Since I have critiqued the idea of “constructive unilateralism” over the past two weeks, I will limit myself to reminding readers that this is an approach that advocates a policy of “preemptive surrender,” prescribing not only that Israel acquiesce a priori to virtually all Palestinian demands for statehood, in return for absolutely nothing, but shoulder the burden of financing much of their implementation.

Despite its misleading rhetorical wrappings, it is – much like the 2005 disengagement – clearly an initiative whose immediate focus is far more on ensuring the dismantling of settlements rather than attaining – and sustaining – a durable peace.

Next in line came Prof. Alan Dershowitz’s feckless formula for two states, which he originally touted in The Wall Street Journal last summer (July 3) and was given an opportunity to re-espouse on April 28, at this year’s Jerusalem Post conference in New York.

Dershowitz seems to suggest we should go about solving the issues in dispute by... well, solving them; or at least by declaring the major issues solved, and negotiating – in “good faith” of course – those that remain “reasonably in dispute.”

Thus he proclaims with cavalier abandon that “the first issue on the table should be the rough borders of a Palestinian state,” apparently unaware that this has been the heart of the dispute for almost a quarter century – if not considerably longer depending on your historical point of departure.

He then goes on to declare blithely: “Setting those [borders] would require recognizing that the West Bank can be realistically divided into three effective areas:

- Those relatively certain to remain part of Israel, such as Ma’aleh Adumim... and other areas close to the center of Jerusalem.
- Those relatively certain to become part of a Palestinian state, such as the heavily populated Arab areas beyond Israel’s security barrier.
- Those reasonably in dispute, including some of the large settlement blocs such as Ariel.

Just how “realistic” this division is, can be gauged by the recent uproar over the prospect of Israel developing the E1 region which lies considerably closer to the center of Jerusalem than the rest of Ma’aleh Adumim, which Dershowitz deems “relatively certain to remain part of Israel,” and in fact comprises the territorial link between them.

Putting aside the thorny question as to which Palestinian leader would agree that communities such as “Ma’aleh Adumim and other areas close to the center of Jerusalem” are “to remain part of Israel,” and that Ariel is “reasonably in dispute” – indeed, would even survive making such a publicly binding commitment – there are many reasons why Dershowitz’s proposal should be dismissed as puerile, prejudicial and paradoxical.

I have given a detailed analysis of the flaws and fallacies of Dershowitz’s proposal elsewhere – see “Disputing Dershowitz – again” (July 12, 2012); “Mad hatters, flat-earthers and two-staters” (July 19, 2012). Accordingly, I will spare readers a detailed repetition of my critique and confine myself to perhaps the most glaring defect, which illustrates why the harsh epithets are indeed justified.

This relates to his attitude to the “disputed” areas. He says the “freeze [on Israeli construction] would continue in disputed areas until it was decided which will remain part of Israel and [which will be] part of the new Palestinian state.”

However, he then proceeds to prejudge the outcome of the “reasonable dispute,” by refraining from placing a similar freeze on the Palestinians. To eliminate any doubt about how he really sees the fate of the these “disputed” areas, Dershowitz declares: “An absolute building freeze would be a painful but necessary compromise. It might also encourage residents in the West Bank to move to areas that will remain part of Israel, especially if the freeze were accompanied by financial inducements to relocate.”

Clearly, if the Palestinians are permitted to build in these areas where the Jews are not only barred from doing so, but “induced” to leave, deeming them “disputed” is little more than a disingenuous ruse. For if Palestinian development is allowed, while Jewish development is not, the obvious intention is for them to be eventually transferred to the Palestinians.

See what I mean by “puerile, prejudicial and paradoxical?” While I might disapprove of the disrespect displayed toward Dershowitz personally at the Jerusalem Post conference, I can understand the derision with which his proposal was greeted.

Then, on April 30, Intelligence Squared staged its first debate in Israel, featuring two zealous two-staters, Peter Beinart and Michael Melchior, former MK and currently chief rabbi of Norway.

In the past, I have pointed to the ignorance and arrogance that characterize Beinart’s self-righteous pontifications on Israel’s conduct, and the perversions, prevarications and platitudes that comprise his proposals for Israel’s policies – see “Perfidious Pete, treacherous Tom” – I & II (April 11 and April 20, 2012); “Richard Beinart and Peter Goldstone” I & II (May 31 and June 7, 2012).

But I cannot resist inserting here a caustic comment made by Prof. Barry Rubin in an article titled “Betrayal Glorified: The Bizarre Jewish Movement to Destroy Israel by Pretending to Save It.”

In it he dismisses Beinart, and the positions he espouses, with a withering barb: “We live in an age of intellectual absurdity in which someone who has no notion of Israeli reality and who is, at best, decades... out of date is treated as if he could possibly be of some relevance.”

As for Melchior, in a September 2012 interview, headlined “Islam is ready for peace with Israel,” he condemned Israeli rejectionism – or at least reluctance – for obstructing peace between Judaism and Islam, including the more radical extremist elements, thus, as one popular website observed, “placing the onus for lack of peace with extremist Islamic movements on

Israel.”

One can only wonder whether the good rabbi realizes that by expounding such wildly unfounded indictments of the Jewish state, he is merely providing more grist for the mill of the Judeo-phobic elements that harass his ever-diminishing Nordic congregation.

Both Beinart and Melchior espoused the well-worn theme that if Israel does not facilitate the establishment of a Palestinian state, it will “impair not only its democratic character but ultimately its Jewish character” (Beinart) and “empty the real content of what it means to be a true Jewish state” (Melchior).

We are thus asked to believe that the only way to preserve Jewish democracy is to facilitate Muslim tyranny.

After all, the Israeli withdrawals – whether negotiated or unilateral have made Sinai a lawless jihadi no-man’s land; resulted in Gaza becoming a Hamas-dominated theocracy; and allowed the ascent of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Even dedicated two-staters, such as Dershowitz, concede it is not “out of the question that someday Hamas might gain control over the Palestinian government, either by means of a coup, or an election, or some such combination of both. Israel cannot be asked to accept a fully militarized Hamas state on its vulnerable borders.”

The only way the putative Palestinian state will not become a haven for Arab terror organizations is for the Palestinians to behave in a manner entirely different – indeed, diametrically opposed – to the manner in which they have behaved for seven decades – arguably even longer.

But two-staters have yet to produce persuasive arguments – rather than fervent hopes – as to why this is at all likely. Until they do, they should not be surprised that many relate to their proposal – at best – as a wildly irresponsible gamble.

Or is it that two-staters believe that being nice is more important – and more Jewish – than being?

How then can we account for this proclivity for self-destructive irrationality? Prof. Kenneth Levin of the department of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, has ventured an intellectually audacious explanation that should not be hastily discounted.

Apart from his MD degree Levin, who has hugely impressive and diverse academic credentials, including degrees in mathematics (University of Pennsylvania) an MA in English literature (Oxford), a PhD in history (Princeton), was at a loss to explain Israel’s behavior in rational terms.

Accordingly, in his book *The Oslo Syndrome: Delusions of a People Under Siege*, he turned to the psycho-pathological.

In it, he drew on his experience with children, chronically abused by their parents, who typically blame themselves for their fate, since this sustains a fantasy that if they reform, if they become “good,” their parents will treat them differently. To look at their situation more realistically would force them to acknowledge their inability to change their circumstances.

Adults, as well as children, prefer to fend off acknowledging such bitter realities and to preserve the illusion of control – even when no such possibility exists.

Likewise, people under chronic siege tend to deny the severity of the threat, to blame themselves or others within their community, for the danger or their enemies’ hatred toward them, and to delude themselves about the malicious intentions of their foes. Placing the onus on themselves, rather than on their adversaries, creates the hope that there is something they can do to end the enmity against them.

Levin has come up with an original and, in many ways, compelling, thesis that is becoming ever-more relevant.

As he notes, “Israel has, at best, a capacity to respond effectively to attacks by its neighbors; it does not have the capacity to end the Arab siege, to force peace upon the Arabs.”

Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that Arab/Muslim hostility towards the Jewish state is not a result of what it does but of what it is – Jewish. It can thus only be placated by the Jewish state ceasing to be Jewish.

Accordingly, the Oslo Syndrome theory is one that deserves – indeed requires – urgent and widespread debate. Its validity needs to be carefully, but expeditiously, explored, for the only alternative is highly distasteful.

It is to assume that two-staters prefer to imperil the country, rather than admit the error of their politics, that they are willing to forgo the nation’s security rather than their personal and professional standing. (Jerusalem Post May 3)