ISRAEL AS A FOREIGN STATE:

THE PALESTINIANS' POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Last week I began my lecture with a presentation of intellectual types and perspectives. My purpose was to view, and understand Arab intellectual attitudes towards Israel. My message throughout was to try and show how it is more Israel's foreignness, or otherness, tied up with an entire and long history of a non-Arabo/Islamic spreading superiority and hegemony, both in the region and surrounding it, that explains to a large extent the intellectual rejection or denial of the new State. I also intimated that the pursuit of a politics of peace rather than a politics of rejection vis-à-vis the Western civilization at large, and towards Israel as a special case, has far more chances of bringing about salvation, whether to the Arab world or to the Palestinians more specifically.

Today I shall ask your indulgence as I once again approach the same subject from a local Palestinian point of view, this time by drawing on a personal and non-intellectual tool of child memories and constructed cartoon-like images, all of them seemingly innocuous skip images that float in and out of the mind, but in some informal manner perhaps eventually contributing to the formation of a different intellectual attitude.

I grew up in the years between the birth of Israel and the Arab defeat of '67 in a house in East Jerusalem which bordered on what U.N. and security negotiators had ingeniously decided to call "No Man's Land", a 200 meter across expanse of wasteland, jutted with one lonesome, semi-destroyed and bullet-hole riddled dismembered cement structure, a U.N. observation and border-crossing station, scattered rocks and thistles, and perhaps the odd land-mine or two, stretching across from the garden wall at the back of our house all the way westwards to a narrow street forming the outer strip of the Mea Shaárim, or Hundred Gates quarter, inhabited by the East European

1

religious Jews with their anachronistic black coats and hats, their white beards and their curly dangling sideburns. Needless to say, the wall at the end of the garden for me defined a literal dead-end, a signpost of the beginning of a forbidden territory inhabited across on the other side by strange, foreign beings, the terminal point of physical, experimental and psychological space. Hardly a day passed after school, when I didn't stand in that part of the garden in the back of our house, gazing wondrously across no-man's land, at the front row of houses, the only inhabited structures visible, behind the narrow street. Sometimes, I would see strange-looking buses and vehicles –pre-modern even by our standards then- churning along the narrow street. Sometimes, appearing from behind a corner, blackly-clad pedestrians, in ones, twos and threes, would emerge and walk a short distance along the narrow street before once again disappearing behind another corner, seemingly cut off from any reality of before and after, almost like a detached and independent strip of film. And, sometimes, I would see, standing at the other end of no-man's land, facing me, small groups of such blackly-clad, bearded men gazing back, sometimes pointing, and sometimes gesticulating, totally incomprehensibly. It was almost like seeing a dream, but it wasn't.

The inside of the house in which I grew up in those years was pervasively inundated by reminiscences and political discourse, the former mostly associated with mother-talk, and the latter with men-talk, always passionately engaged in by my father and his visitors, friends and cousins. Reminiscences evoked generically opposite images from a temporally-divided past, a past divided into a before and an after, expressing respectively happiness and contentment on the one hand, and pain and sorrow on the other. Although schooled in Jerusalem, my mother had grown up in the countryside of Wadi Hnein, present-day Nizziona in the heart of Israel. The images from the time of BEFORE were ones which pervaded the national memory, and my young receptive mind was constantly picking them up almost from the air, so to speak. They were about the blissful period in the magical,dream-land of Palestine, the orange groves, the idyllic innocence of words and objects, of human beings and relations. They were about a mystical country, lying out there, beyond no-man's land, behind present-time. The images from the time of AFTER, on the other hand, again pervading the national atmosphere in one specific form or another, were about a national political earthquake, the violent intrusion by the foreigner into the innocent and blissful life of the indigenous inhabitants of the magical land, the struggle with the British, with the Jews, death and

massacres, the terrorized emigration, on foot, from the national cradle. My maternal grandfather, you must understand, had had his countryside property confiscated by the British, his house burnt down, and he himself had been exiled from the country for three years by the British for political activism before finally being allowed to return, when he died two years later, 48 years of age in 1948, the year also when my mother, her mother and the rest of the family, had walked out from their temporary abode in Ramleh where my grandfather had served for two years as mayor after his return from exile, on their foot journey east, a journey which scattered my mother's family, first in different parts of the Arab world, and later in the world itself. Finally, you must also understand that, although my mother, torn from father, family, and home had remained in Palestine, in East Jerusalem with my father, she nonetheless lived a precarious life knowing that her own husband, my father, had himself almost by miracle escaped death in those clashes of '48 to '49, and had returned to her after the battles with an amputated leg, dismembered but still passionately possessed, a daily, and nightly reminder of the rupture in her life, of the border between the BEFORE and the AFTER.

And while the reminiscences floated around the house, in every room, in every corner, the politicians discoursed about what came to be called "the situation", this being the euphemism for what the men considered a maladjusted reality, a temporary twist in the course of history, and in the course of their lives, brought about by the '48 political earthquake and the creation of Israel. The disturbed waters of the river of history, suddenly blocked and forcefully diverted from running their natural course, will surely return to their rightful flow. So, the men politicized. The national cradle, dispossessed of its rightful inhabitants, will surely be retrieved, physically, but even, in some mystical fashion, also temporally. The return, in space as well through time, shall yet be achieved, however miraculously.

So were those years. Inside the house, images and discourse of a lost but retrievable moment, as well as space from the past; outside, a forbidden physical borderline separating between that moment and space existing in past time, in dream-land, and the here and now, perhaps even between the permanent as concept, and the transient as reality. The incomprehensible and dark gulf between the feared and unknown fiend on the other side of the border of the mind, and the familiar and tangible friend on this side of that border is too difficult to explain. Would I be overstating it if I confessed to a lurking fear, deep down in the farthest reaches of my heart, of some such fiend, bearded and blackly-clad, somehow inhabiting the trunk of the now-

gone large pepper tree just outside our front door? Anyway, darkness was never a soothing or comforting environment. And each morning that I successfully managed to cross the tree on my way to school, I felt that I had somehow managed to avoid a potential disaster, or that I had managed to escape the potential sudden emergence and stretching of a dark claw reaching out from inside the trunk, from inside the forbidden territory, from across the borderline of no-man's land, snatching me with it into nothingness.

I was sent to England to study in 1966, and returned home on a dreaded visit just two months after the '67 war. For me at least, but I suspect for many others in my position as well, the '67 war must have been a momentous event, collapsing past into present, dream into reality, the familiar with the unknown. I do not think I can ever describe, in mirror-image words, the sense of strangeness I felt as the plane landed at Lod, a few miles from the place where my maternal grandfather had been buried. El Al, Hebrew letters and words, foreign faces…you must remember that all these had been beyond the experiential grasp, beyond no-man's land, beyond the familiar and friendly. And then, the following day, I undertook it, my forbidden journey. What I always dreaded even thinking I could, let alone would do. I stepped over the back-garden wall, and into no-man's land, the land separating us from them, this world from that.

So began my journey, perhaps one of the most uneventful, but mind-boggling journeys I ever made. Let me try to recapture some of its moments: I took my first few steps into the rocky, thistly, forbidden territory. My eyes, first, were set, believe it or not, on a luscious grape-vine that had simply been rejuvenating itself, year after year, under my watch, untouched, leaning on and straddling the edges of the half-destroyed, deserted cement structure that was the undisputed king of no-man's land. Was this unique, this solitary grapevine already dispossessed of its fruit in August 1967? I cannot remember. Probably. But taste something I did, whether withered leaf, a faintly suckly nerve end of an already shriveled or disgorged grape. Something anyway definitely satisfied my nervous teeth before I dared take my further steps into the unknown.

Then, with each step or set of steps I took towards the other end of this forbidden territory, with each sharpened visual image of what lay on the other side, I would stop, turn back, and gaze eastwards at our house, at the garden where I stood, year in and year out, gazing wondrously westwards. At long last I managed to reach my destination, not more than 200 meters

across, to that narrow street bordering no-man's land from the other side. Mosherem, I had thought. Actually, the Mea Shaarim quarter. Mea Shaarim. Mea. One hundred, also in Arabic. Sounds and words begin to fall into place, from foreignness into familiarity.

I reached my destination, that narrow street where strange men stood, and, standing where they stood, I took a long and steady look at the east. I tried to visualize, in my mind, myself as standing in the place, in the habitat, of these strange men. And I tried to visualize myself as an other, that little boy standing way out there in the back garden of a red-tiled roof house, gazing westwards back at me.

I tried, in other words, in this and other, later experiments, to cross the space of no-man's land, which had divided between myself and my enemy, the fiend at the other end of the forbidden teritory. Perhaps not quite in the same way, but perforce because of the new circumstances, the entire Palestinian population which had come under occupation in 1967 also went through this strange experience of testing the dream against the reality, the past against the present, as past and present collapsed into one. Meantime, abroad, and as I mentioned in my last lecture, this collapse had unleashed a second-generation of debate among intellectuals, as yet another wall, another border, another no-man's territory was established. Across the new border, further reminiscences and discourse about imagined realities. Within the collapsed reality, new dynamics as borders disappeared, and perceptions and experiences began to shape new attitudes.

I would now like you to retain these memory-images as I try to construct a child-like cartoon image based on a recent conversation I had with my mother. After this, and a third, and final child-like cartoon image, I promise you that I shall return to grown-up talk.

Of course, I had for a long time been aware of the ugly facts concerning the Jewish experience in Europe, leading up especially to that inhuman and horrendous tragedy of the Holocaust. But while recently reading a pastime book about something completely different, though involving, accidentally, two very remarkable philosophers with Jewish Vienna backgrounds, the hard facts as I knew them, or the facts, if you will, that I knew in some dispassionate and hard way, suddenly engaged my emotions, as if providing me with an empathic insight. It was the reference, unintended but as an explanatory background to understanding the familial and class roots of the

two disputing men, to the emerging anti-semitism in Europe, with its gradually increasing dire and destabilizing consequences on the ordinary lives of Jews, that fired my sympathy, perhaps because of the similarities and parallels in those early days with experiences in my own home and my own people. I am speaking only of problems with papers, travel, beaurocracies, the threat of property confiscations, and the like. The days of the impending tragedy, or of the gathering storm. Something then occurred to me, and I went to my mother with a question. Suppose, I told her, just suppose, that an elderly and learned Jewish gentleman from Europe had come to your father, in the early years of the century, and had asked to consult with him on an urgent matter. And suppose that gentleman, I told her, started recounting the increasing dangers and threats facing the Jewish people in Europe. I can foresee, the wise Jew might have told him, an impending human catastrophe of incalculable proportions. And suppose this gentleman added, that as a seer of a Jewish people with historic ties to this land, the land of your father, and as an Abrahamic cousin, he would like to seek permission for his people to return to the shared homeland, to provide them with safety and refuge, to prevent the horrors to come. What do you think, I asked my mother, your father would have said ?

My mother's answer shocked me. With a wave of her hand she instantly replied, What do you think? How can anyone have refused? I say her answer shocked me because I thought that I might have had to prepare for a longer discussion. You will perhaps now realize why I dwelt before on my mother's reminiscences of pain and passion, as well as on her father. It is amazing how easy compassion can cut straight through a mountainful wall of painful memories. So turning back to myself, I tried to construct this cartoon-like image in my mind, which I shall now try to represent to you. I imagined the scared, and running Jew, escaping a threatening Europe, parachuting down in search of refuge, gun in hand, suddenly seeing himself heading straight towards a strange man's head, Arab head-dress and all, standing in the middle of a field with a shovel in his hand, looking threateningly terrified himself. This was my grandfather. Running scared from the hell of the concentration camps and the gas chambers he had just escaped, the terror-impelled Jew immediately prepares to shoot at this odd-looking man with a threatening shovel. My grandfather, shocked by the totally out-of-this world sudden appearance of a flying man with a death instrument in his hand, heading down straight towards him, immediately prepares to end him off with the shovel. The two clash, each driven by fear and terror, each totally unaware of the condition of the other, one seeking

space to the death, one defending it to the death. A shooting confrontation. In a sense, the two have since then been shooting at each other, not really comprehending the motives of the other, let alone sympathizing, each with the other's human condition.

I now run this cartoon image, appended to my grandfather's hypothetical answer, in my mind in parallel with recalling my own journey through no-man's land. Both the image, and the journey, for me define a political, or an intellectual double negation, the denial of denial; or how to overcome a foreignness-paradigm. I realize that my child-like caricatures and images do not stand up to the scrutiny of academic theories, whether about imperialism, colonialism, existential religious incompatibility, the politics of oil and exploitation, or what have you. Nor are they meant to. But I believe they more importantly shed light on normal human feelings, on the concerns and emotions of normal human beings, whether Israeli or Palestinian, who stand behind the theories and concepts, and behind the leaders who propound and execute them. Sitting with the ex-chief of Israel's internal security in a Harvard square café only last weekend sipping coffee, I was amazed how, in exchanging views and analyses of the last two years of violence, the parachute paradigm seemed to be repeating itself. The established view of the Israeli intelligence community was that the Palestinian Authority had somehow planned to execute an intifada against Israel, with a view to destroying the chances of peace. Their studied and logical response, therefore, was to destroy the Palestinian Authority. My interlocutor had dissented from that assessment, trying to assure his colleagues, unsuccessfully, that the Authority had not, at least as an Authority, schemed the way it was presented.

I myself had great misgivings about the outbreak of violent confrontations in September 2000, and while many activists and journalists had begun elatedly to use the term "intifada" to describe what was happening, I personally felt this was not an uprising against Israel, as much as it was a calculated war by Israel against us. Yet, so convinced the people around me were that this was a true uprising, and so sweeping was the euphoria of the moment that some bedazzled grass-roots leaders, watching the mass demonstrations breaking out in the streets of the Arab capitals in sympathy with the Palestinian cause, had even called it "a transcontinental intifada". At first, I was totally skeptical and confused. At a second stage, I came to the conclusion that this was a classic case of a tragedy, where the situation worsens as each party, misreading the intention of the other, carries out an action that only

vindicates the second party's worst interpretations or expectations of it. Finally, I came to my conclusion that this must have all been a devilish Israeli scheme right from the outset, with the intention of destroying the possibility of Palestinian statehood and ending the occupation. In other words, I had come to that entrenched conspiracy-theory position of viewing the other which was the exact mirror-image of the Israeli intelligence community's perception of the Palestinian Authority.

Were there indeed such conspiracies and theories somehow brewing in the heads of schemers and political leaders? Possibly. But my point is that if that were indeed the case, then it was a major betrayal of the ordinary human being, the average and normal Israeli seeking security, and the average and normal Palestinian seeking freedom from occupation.

I would now like to introduce my third and last child-like image. In a sense, one could tie it up with the falling Jew, landing on my grandfather's head. Let us now suppose that two individuals suddenly find themselves involved in a physical brawl. Neither of them is sure how it started, but each suspects the other of having maliciously provoked it. One of them manages to overthrow the other to the ground, and immediately sits on top of him, holding him down by the arms. The one underneath kicks back, bites where he can, and whenever he manages to get one of his hands loose he bashes the one sitting on top of him with all his might. It seems like a locked situation. The one on top is afraid, yes, afraid, of loosening his grip or letting go of the man underneath him. The one wriggling underneath cannot for the life of him allow this bully to have the slightest chance of rest. Clearly, a gentlemanly exchange of points of view is almost out of the question at this stage. Let us say a third man comes along, beseeching the man on top to let go, and the man underneath to lay quiet. Each of them now is in a quandary. The man underneath is afraid that if he were to lay quiet then the man on top would not have any incentive to let go, while the man on top is worried that if he were to let go then the man underneath would quickly grab the opportunity and jump him down, causing him even more harm. Existentially locked into one another, the one begins to think that there is no salvation but through the other's total elimination. Even more terrifyingly, each one of them begins to suspect that the other entertains this very thought.

Do we have such a situation at our hands ? Perhaps we have an even worse scenario. For let us assume that the two men are not lying, one on top of the other, on solid ground, but that the deceptive surface actually hides

8

underneath it a large hole of quicksand. Very quickly, one of the two men begins to notice that, with each blow or bite or bash on the head, the two are actually sinking, imperceptibly at first, but unquestionably. This is not a zero-sum game, but a lose-lose situation.

Now here is a strange observation. It is psychologically more problematic for the man on top to let go than it is for the man underneath to lay quiet. Paradoxically, being on top he has more to lose, and more to fear by deciding to act otherwise than he is in fact acting. He has therefore a lesser margin of choice, or lesser power. The man underneath, on the other hand, being underneath, has less to lose, and less to fear by restraining his opposition. He has therefore more power, for he can afford to change his act. Having let go once, the man on top might lose his advantage altogether. But having lay quiet, the man underneath can always revert to wriggling and biting. But he has no advantage to lose. Thus, far more effective than the intervention of a third man, the man underneath holds the key to unlocking the puzzle. Of course, it is not enough for him to stop wriggling. He has to complement that with a conscious effort at reaching out to the other man's mind, in order to affect him. He has to make a journey, in other words, through no-man's land. He has to know, not how to win over him, but how to win him over. Winning him over immediately changes the paradigm into a win-win situation.

I promised from the outset that I shall return to grown-up talk. Now, drawing on the help of the various images and memory clips I have presented, I shall do precisely that. Several months after the collapse of the Camp David talks and the outbreak of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, I published an article both in Hebrew and Arabic in which I argued to both sides that the use of violence will not decide the outcome in favor of the side which uses it, and that violence will simply lead to the eradication of the possibility of making successful the national project each side purports to be attempting to defend or bring about. Neither can Israel force its will on the Palestinians, nor vice-versa. But the continued use of force by both sides, and the continued immersion in the quicksand, will bring about a result which is neither a Jewish state nor an Arab one. And whatever else it will be, it will neither be democratic nor a safe haven for anyone. Eventually anyway, and after much more suffering and bloodshed, reason will still dictate that the two sides return to negotiating some formula of collective co-existence, which by then will by force of changed demographic circumstance have to be some version of a confederation of Jewish and Arab city-states.

Rationally, it is therefore in the mutual interest of both sides that violence be summarily stopped, and for negotiations to resume. However, I further argued that, learning from past negotiating experience, the negotiations to be entered into now should be different, in that they must directly tackle the three sensitive issues that the two sides have been putting off, namely, the issues of borders and settlements, of refugees, and of Jerusalem. The two sides have to take the bull by the horns. On the first issue, Israel has to give; on the second, the Palestinians; and on the third, both Israel and the Palestinians. Israel has to give on the first issue because, in return for its guarantee of existence, it has to allow for the existence of the other. The Palestinian state, defined by its '67 borders, should therefore be empty of settlers. The Palestinians have to give on the second issue because, in return for the guarantee of their state's existence, Israel's existence should be genuinely and not only nominally recognized. To recognize genuinely that Haifa is an integral part of Israel is to forego the wholesale return of Palestinian refugees there. To recognize Israel only nominally is to seek their return to Haifa, thus transforming it into a second Palestinian state. On the last, and symbolically-loaded issue of Jerusalem, I suggested drawing on the so-called Clinton formula of an open city, whose Arab neighborhoods can fall under Palestinian sovereignty, its Jewish under Jewish sovereignty, and which can therefore serve as the twin capital of the two states, or as two capitals for the two states.

My suggestions were not as outlandish as it might at first appear. In the aftermath of the '67 war a gradual process of political change had begun to take root in Palestinian thinking, essentially pointing to the eventual adoption of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although the PLO, and Fatah as a nationalist liberation movement in particular, were established a few years before the '67 war, it was primarily after that war that a Palestinian leadership, now in the driver seat, had begun to look more clearly at the terrain in front of it, and to calculate pragmatically what best to do with its national load. It is true, some of the PLO factions, still wedded to some form of a revolutionary though clearly by now defunct pan-arabism, saw national salvation as being arrived at only through a prior transformation of the Arab political condition. But the mainstream faction of Fatah, a purely Palestinian-focused liberation movement for whom the reactionary Arab condition was one which could be tolerated rather than changed as a condition for liberation, managed to sway PLO policy in the political path of its choice. The process was speeded up both by Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut in '82, as well as by the intifada

of '87-'88. In the latter, the local Palestinian leadership, in coordination with the PLO leadership outside, was able to articulate, in genuine expression of the public sentiment in the occupied territories, the national goal of freedom and independence in a State alongside Israel. The Palestinian ideology of reconciliation in the aftermath of these events was thus inconsistent with the ideologies of the intellectuals in the Arab world whom we discussed last week. And the divergence widened as the process unfolded. The Madrid talks in the early nineties, which had been made palatable to the formal Arab establishment in the wake of the Gulf war, and which had been made a logical path to pursue in the wake of the late 80s intifada, eventually yielded the Oslo Declaration of Principles, now drawing even more sharply an ideological division between the politics of rejection and denial on the one hand, and the politics of reconciliation and co-existence on the other. And although the implementation of Oslo was a disappointment, its terms of reference were still sufficiently fresh in Palestinian and Israeli minds not to make my afore-mentioned article as outlandish as it might at first appear. Nonetheless, the article drew fire, especially from the Palestinian side, partly because the entire Israeli-Palestinian engagement mode had by then been confrontational and violent, and partly because I was dotting the I's and crossing the t's, at a time when those dots and crosses had been kept fudgy in the public eye, or at best kept in deep and hidden storage where no one could touch them.

However, the reaction of anger and rejection only reinforced the threatening image in my mind of the two struggling men, both sinking, and both needing each other's help in order to survive. Together with a fast-dwindling Israeli peace camp, a joint peoples' peace campaign was publicly launched in December 2001, based on the signing of a Time for Peace document essentially calling for an end to violence, a return to talks, a two state solution, and a just and equitable resolution of the refugee problem. Thousands of Israelis and Palestinians signed the document, and pledged to work together as partners for peace, instead of as enemies in war. However, the violence continued, and even escalated, locking the two sides in what was dangerously becoming an existential dance of death. At this stage, recalling the logic of the man underneath, and the paradoxical power he wields, a call for a halt to suicide attacks was issued in the local press, signed consecutively over four days by more than six hundred local intellectuals and activists. The logic of non-violence of this, and similar and more general calls for an active peaceful resistance was clear. This was neither a morally-based call, nor yet one based on the presumption of

universal validity, although perhaps a case could be made for both. But specifically in this locked situation, where Jew and Arab literally lived at each other's doorsteps, it was clearly irrational and self-defeating to pursue a strategy of force and violence. Even so, the rift continued to widen, and the anger and fear to deepen, but with one redeeming feature. Israeli polls consistently showed a pull to the right, but a practical recognition of the eventual terms of a settlement with the Palestinians. Palestinian polls consistently showed a majority continued commitment to resistance, and the use of violence, but also a deeper recognition of the eventual terms of a settlement with the Israelis. In other words, even at the very height of exhibited confrontational attitudes framed in present-time, Palestinians and Israelis seemed to be expressing remarkably complimentary and conciliatory attitudes when it came to a possible future. Hence the Vote for Peace initiative, this time worked out by former security chief Ami Ayalon and myself, basically trying to outline the contours of that possible future agreement, and intended to make present-day enemies converge on a single vision defining their mutual interest. Ideally, such a convergence of the vision can first be used to pacify present-day attitudes, and it can secondly

bring public pressure to bear on the respective leaderships to negotiate on its basis. A destination map, as such a vision can be described, would increase the chances of success for the road map being floated around at present by the Quartet, for it would link the road to a destination, and would have public support behind it. Most importantly, it would put the people in the drivers' seat, thus diminishing the role of schemers or leaders from either side whose agendas and concerns might be different from those of the ordinary human beings around whom the conflict revolves.

This is, however, only an ideal situation. In the reality of present-time, however, the sense of mutual enmity is deepening, and the politics of denial and rejection seems to be spreading even wider. On the Palestinian side, the failure of Oslo and the deteriorating conditions have observably reinforced the rejectionists, as evidenced by the rising power of the Islamicists. On the Israeli side, the very same facts have reinforced the right-wing groups, as evidenced by the recent elections, and the poor showing of Labor and Meretz. Can there be a way out of this suicidal entanglement of the two peoples?

My contention is that there is, and that the key to a disentanglement lies with the Palestinians themselves. This is, admittedly, a hard pill to bite. People
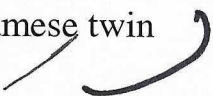
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12

who feel unjustly treated expect the injustice to be lifted, if not through force by them, then by a party other than themselves. But going by the image of the two struggling men, neither option is actually possible. The third man's mediation efforts are limited by the mistrust of the two struggling parties, and the man on top is powerless to act for fear of losing his advantage. It therefore falls to the man underneath to exercise his power of changing his act. That is why the adoption of a peace strategy, while not being such as to be capable of achieving the impossible, such as the attainment of perfect justice or the retrieval of the idyllic past, will at least provide the people with a path towards a future which is better than the present.

But would Israel, could Israel, the man on top, in fact yield?

Let me conclude with a few observations concerning this question. First, at a time when most people have lost hope in the possibility of positive change, clearly positive change cannot happen, because change requires the active participation of the people themselves. A necessary condition for change, therefore, is that the people have hope, or even more strongly, faith in a better future. Once upon a time prophets walked the earth to inspire faith in life after death. In the present context, it is similarly necessary to inspire faith in life after the conflict, in a potential paradise on earth waiting out there in the future, if only we would pursue the right political path to reach it. A company of the faithful could surely therefore have a tangible impact on the campaign to mobilize for public support, and if people can believe strongly that they can change the world, chances are that they can change it.

Second, however, since this is a people's politics and not the politics of governments, and since it is rooted in human rather than in more complex schemes and agendas, Israelis themselves can lend a hand in the process. In any case, to share a vision with the party on the other side of no-man's land is already to have succeeded in expunging the paradigm of foreignness. It is to have been able to view the political terrain from both sides, and not from one side only. Therefore common Israelis also, perhaps influenced by my grandfather's hypothetical answer, would themselves make those approaches to Palestinians, and adopt those attitudes that would evoke compassion in my mother's heart, and melt pain. In fact, we can now think of the paradigm of the two struggling men, having expunged foreignness, not as being one between Israelis and Palestinians, but as being between those who share the faith, both Israeli and Palestinian, and those still tethered by their anger and fear. Remember, we are still talking about ordinary human beings, and not

about overarching political structures or paranoid intelligence systems. Therefore, a joint Israeli-Palestinian peoples' peace campaign can work its way to disarming, and alleviating the fears and insecurities of the human mass of fear and anger lying on top. The twin-man, or Siamese twin underneath can work to win over the twin-man on top.

In short, imagine how my grandfather's hypothetical answer might have changed the course of the region's history. And consider, in contrast, how the parachuting incident shaped it. Surely, there is a lesson to be learnt from that.