

# The Future of Israel



**Dr. David Passig**

**2005**

## The Future of Israel:

**Time is on the side of the Jewish People resident in the Land of Israel**

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Dr. Passig is consulting many industrial and social entities in futurizing their decision makings. Among them are entities such as Bank Hapoalim, the Israeli Air Industry, and more. He is the consultant of the [Commissionaire for Future Generations](#) at the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) since 2002.

He is writing and broadcasting weekly [columns](#) on social, economic and technology trends. He is also publishing an [electronic magazine](#) on a variety of trends. One can subscribe to its mailing list through his web site.

## Content List

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. A Short Introduction to Future Research
4. Trends Which Already Exist
5. Trends Which Have Yet to Develop
6. The Driving Force
7. Supposed Driving Forces of the Arab-Israeli Dispute
8. Meta-analysis of the driving forces
9. A matrix of interactions
10. A possible driving force
11. Jewish-Israeli Identity as a Driving Force
12. Three strata
  - a. A land of refuge
  - b. A Land of Choice
  - c. A Land of Mission
13. The Covenantal Mission of the State of Israel
14. Hints of a National, Civil Covenantal Mission
15. Hints for a National Religious Covenantal Mission
16. The Driving Force behind the Arab-Israeli Dispute
17. Trends in the Dispute
18. An Optimistic Assessment of the Situation
19. Possible Scenarios for the Solution of the Dispute
  - a. The Optimistic Scenario
  - b. The Less Optimistic scenario
20. Epilogue

## 1. Abstract

[to Content List](#) 

**The root of the ongoing argument between Israel and its neighbors is its identity.**

This article is meant to identify the forces which drive the dispute between the Israelis on one side, and the Palestinians and the confrontation states, as well as the Arabs as a whole on the other. Our basic assumption is that the self-definition of the Jews is at the root of the ongoing argument between Israel and its neighbors. Our intention is not that this identity is the cause of the dispute, but that its role is that of the obstacle which puts off open and far-reaching dialogue between the opponents, and therefore makes the solution of the problem impossible. This identity has been in the process of formation for the past four thousand years, and is due to arrive at a landmark position in another forty years. If the Jewish People in Israel succeed in living through the next forty years without a major shake-up, Israel will gain the momentum necessary to fashion the next important phase in the formation of its identity. That next phase is the formulation of a covenantal mission for a modern, democratic Jewish State. After attaining success in this historic task, Israel will have the courage to put an end to the bloody struggle which has been accompanying it for the last one hundred years. The evaluation put forth in this article is that the peoples of the region will accept Israel's existence only after Israel clarifies its national purpose.

The article explains the methodology according to which the forecast was made, and contains suggestions for a possible national identity which would make it possible for the conflict to be put to rest. The article's principle claim is that the Jewish People has never before been prepared as it is today for taking on the task which confronts it; demographically, geopolitically, and organizationally. As time goes by, the Jewish People is positioning itself increasingly better for entering the crucial phase in the formation of its national identity. We therefore conclude that time is on the side of the Jewish People resident in the Land of Israel.

## 2. Introduction

[to Content List](#) ↪

It sometimes seems as if everybody's busy trying to foretell the future. The problem is that the last century proved that very few<sup>1</sup> know how to make forecasts of the future of the State of Israel. Even the few whose forecasts turned out to be correct employed a process which could, at best, be called hitting the target while shooting in the dark. There was no use made of a reliable methodology; one which would be open to evaluation.

If the issues on the public agenda were not deducted from our own estimates of the future, we wouldn't be interested in knowing what the future holds in store. We would leave the making of those estimates to fools or prophets. However, the crucial opinions regarding matters of life and death are formed by future images which are the products of our own creation. Failure to formulate reliable images of the future, which are the result of rational, valid, and transparent research available to professional critique, could be to the detriment of the continued existence of the People. In other words, only future images which are distilled from a process whose reliability is relatively clear can assure a reliable way of reaching decisions.

It is sad to say that not a few of the estimates of the future which we have heard recently – starting with those dealing with the region's demographic future, including geopolitical directions, and social trends – are not the product of careful formulations based on valid, reliable methods of prognostication. Serious methodological problems are evident in the forecasts we are hearing in Israel, because they can be considered – at least from the point of view of one who does research on the future – as the ruminations of a novelist, personal inclinations, subjective values and assumptions; some based

**Most of the predictions formulated up to now are not the product of valid and reliable Futures' methodologies**

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Biluim – the 1880's – there were 34,000 Jews and 330,000 Arabs in the Land of Israel. The Jews made up 10% of the population. The great historian, Dubnow, was negatively impressed by the flow of immigrants of the First Aliyah, and predicted that by the year 2000 there would be only 500,000 Jews in the Land. In not many years' time it looked as if he was right. At the end of the First World War, the population included 55,000 Jews and 500,000 Arabs. The 1:10 ratio was maintained. On the day Independence was declared, on May 15, 1948, there were 600,000 Jews and 980,000 Arabs; approximately 40 Jews living west of the Jordan River. The Chief Statistician at the time, Roberto Bacchi, recommended postponing the declaration of the State, out of fear that the demographic problem would end the State's existence. To our great, good fortune, Ben-Gurion ignored him. About 20 years later, Levi Eshkol chose to ignore the later to be debunked warning after the Six-Day-War that by 1987 there would be an Arab majority west of the Jordan.

**The trends being studied today are based solely on linear extrapolations from the past.**

on fact, and others not. Few of the forecasts made with the help of some research methods or other can be said to be based on valid and reliable methods of forecasting. At the very best, they lean on statistical methods which are linear extrapolations of processes which took place in the past. Unfortunately, few know, for example, that the reliability of forecasting based on linear extrapolation is no greater than 20%, on the average.

Futures' research of the last three decades has proved that in the short and middle range ( $\pm 3$  years) prediction reliability of extrapolation can reach up to 30%. If we are trying to predict trends beyond the immediate range ( $\pm 18$  months), and certainly beyond the short range (2-5 years), the reliability of the forecast descends to 20%, especially when the estimates are more complex and unbalanced.

In all modesty, the time may have arrived to suggest a different way, in which it may be possible, to some extent and with more reliability, to identify future trends and processes. In this article I describe a method of making predictions, with whose assistance I attempt to evaluate trends in the Arab-Israeli dispute over the middle (20 years) and long (50 years) range. In an earlier article I drew the reader's attention to a more rigorous and more promising analysis of demographic trends: [Time is on the side of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel](#),<sup>2</sup> as opposed to the common wisdom on the subject, and to the view of the future accepted by Israeli society at the time.

This time, I intend to present a methodology which may be capable of providing an explanation for the force which is driving the Arab-Israeli dispute, but in a somewhat different way. This methodology can help us to identify Israel's future social and security trends. Careful analysis shows us again that time is on the side of the Jewish People in Israel, and that in thirty to forty years there will be a change in the operative assumptions regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute, so that it will be possible to arrive at a peaceful solution to it. A number of short introductions to Future Research are

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<sup>2</sup> Passig, David (2002) "Time Is On the Side Of the State of Israel: Demographic Trends," Everest Magazine For Successful Managers, May, 2002, [www.passig.com/pic/IsraelFuture-May2002.htm](http://www.passig.com/pic/IsraelFuture-May2002.htm)

necessary here, in order to clarify what has been said up to this point. I hope that the reader will forgive me for holding on at such length.

### 3. A Short Introduction to Future Research

[to Content List](#) 

**Futures' methods are based on the assumption that there is eminent logic within systems.**

The age of future research began with the Second World War. Researchers developed many methods with whose help they attempted to understand trends. The range of [research methods](#)<sup>3</sup> extends from a large number of statistical models, to complex matrices, and includes interesting qualitative methods. All these research methods are based on one, main assumption. They are based on the assumption that there is eminent logic within systems. What futurists attempted to do over the years was simply to identify the logic of the systems. When they were successful in identifying a logical pattern which described how a system develops (ecological, financial, social, technological, political, and other systems) they would arrange the logic in scientific models, validate them, clarify their reliability, and, with their help, forge ahead to identify the subsequent phases in the systems which they were trying to understand. Essentially, Futures' Research is another branch of systems analysis.

After decades of research on various trends, the reliability of predictions was tested in many and varied fields. In most cases an average of  $\pm 65\%$  of the predictions were found to have been correct<sup>4</sup>. For this reason, it is customary today to say that the predictive reliability of the research methods at the disposal of future researchers is .60 (60%).

### 4. Trends Which Already Exist

[to Content List](#) 

Futures' Research methodologies may be divided into two categories. The first, which encompasses most of the research methods, includes those which

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<sup>3</sup> Passig, David (1994) *Introductions to Eighteen Prediction Techniques*. The book gives a brief description of 18 outstanding predictive techniques in future research, and is edited especially for the Israeli reader.

[www.passig.com/pic/BookFutureMethodologies1994\(1\)\(1\)htm](http://www.passig.com/pic/BookFutureMethodologies1994(1)(1)htm)

<sup>4</sup> Cornish, Edward (1997) The Futurist forecasts 30 years later. *The Futurist*. Washington: Jan/Feb 1997. Vol. 31, p. 45.

are employed in the analysis of trends that already exist. The great majority of the trends which are recognized by the public belong to this category. For example, with a greater than average degree of reliability, in the year 2005, the manpower division of the Israel Defense Forces can estimate the number of those who will be inducted into the ranks of the IDF in August, 2020. If you ask how that's possible, the answer is simple: all the children who will be inducted on that date were born a few years ago. To the basic predictive model they add estimates of various variables such as infant mortality, the drop-out rate, draft dodging, and so forth, and the result is a reliable forecast of the size of the group of inductees of August, 2020. It is important to emphasize that we still don't have a comprehensive understanding of systems and how they develop. Beyond this, we are unable to assign weight to all the variables which affect systems. Nonetheless, we possess enough knowledge today so that we are able to help organizations which desire such assistance, and to provide them with data on future trends so that they will be able to conduct more effective and considered policies.

## 5. Trends Which Have Yet to Develop

[to Content List](#) 

**Futurists do not maintain that it is possible to know for certain what the future holds. At best, they attempt to indicate trends.**

An additional category of Futures' Research methodologies has developed over the past few years. Futurists call this cluster of methodologies methods for studying trends which have yet to develop. The seeds of trends of this sort must of necessity already exist, but have yet to sprout. Futurists, aided by these methods, try to identify trends which, at the time the analysis is being made, are considered dead ends by most of the experts in their field. At the time of their formulation, they are usually seen by the public and by the experts as illogical or totally unreasonable. However, it seems that their predictive reliability is no less than the average range of the first category.

It should be pointed out here that the futurists do not maintain that it is possible to know for certain what the future holds. At best, they attempt to indicate trends, and not the precise coordinates of the future. If the contents of this article can contribute to slightly more humility in the expression of "knowledge" and "insights" regarding the future which belongs to us all, the writer will be pleased.

I will try below to give a brief description of a Futures' Research method; one of many designed to study trends which have yet to develop—trends in conception. With the help of this method we will try to evaluate the trends involved in the conflict between Israel and its neighbors. We will suggest how to plan our steps in order to design a better future for the State of Israel.

## 6. The Driving Force

[to Content List](#) ↪

**Changes that are occurring in the present are but trends that have been conceived in the past.**

One of the Futures' Research methodologies with whose help futurists attempt to study trends which have yet to develop is called *Universal Force Theory*. This theory hypothesizes, in simple language, that if we want to identify trends which have yet to develop, we must not try to identify changes which are taking place in the present, as they are trends which already exist. Instead, we must identify the force behind those changes, its underlying dynamics, or the hidden, subsurface assumptions which shape those changes. If we are successful, and are able to identify the force which drives those changes, if we succeed in arriving as clear a verbal formulation as is possible, and in as short sentences as can be composed, then, with the help of the resulting diagnosis, we will be able to set forth trends with which most of the experts will not agree at the time they are presented. And, if we remember our average reliability of prediction, it is reasonable to expect that we will be approximately 60% right.

I hope that no one will take this lightly. This is especially so as regards very complex and extremely chaotic systems! Qualitative, statistical, and mathematical methods allow us to identify the driving force. Not long ago, the author of this paper prepared a forecast of [the economic future of the State of Israel](#),<sup>5</sup> using this research method. In the course of this study we identified quite clearly economic growth for the years 2010 – 2020, the likes of which Israel hasn't experienced since its founding.

In the following sections of this article we will attempt to use this research method in order to try to locate driving forces of the Arab-Israeli dispute in

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<sup>5</sup> Passig, David (2002) "The Driving Force of the Israeli Economy," a weekly column on the website of Bank Hapoalim, July, 2002.

<http://www.passig.com/pic/IsraelEconomy%201.7.02.htm>

directions which we have hitherto not searched. We will suggest avenues which the State of Israel must traverse so as to settle that dispute, for the good of all the peoples in the region.

## 7. Supposed Driving Forces of the Arab-Israeli Dispute [Content List](#)

**Israeli public discourse has yet to finish discussing the driving forces behind this blood-ridden conflict.**

Public discourse in Israel, from the days of the first Zionist Congresses of approximately one hundred years ago, and up to this day, has revolved around the issue of the source of the dispute between the People dwelling in Zion and the Arabs of the region. It sometimes seems that the Israeli community has yet to finish discussing the question of the driving forces behind this blood-ridden conflict. It would appear that there has yet to be a methodical approach to the understanding of the conflict. This article is an attempt to address precisely this point.

This doesn't mean that there haven't been renewed efforts to deal with this issue, and it doesn't mean that there aren't people who have reached conclusions regarding the driving forces behind this conflict. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has yet to be performed a study of this issue using a Futures' methodology. Generally speaking, those who concern themselves with the driving forces of the conflict, and who have done so in the past, have reached their conclusions as the result of evaluations whose sources and reliability are difficult to measure. Beyond that, people with the same sources and evaluations arrive at different, and sometimes opposing, conclusions. Many of those who have dealt with the conflict and who do so today base their conclusions on beliefs which are hard to evaluate, or which are based on wishful thinking, with which it is hard to argue, or to verify.

Worst of all, most of those who are concerned with the issue of the driving forces behind the dispute, focus on only one of the variables of the issue. They generally turn the variable on which they have chosen to focus into THE driving force of the dispute. This can be said about people representing the entire political spectrum in Israel, past and present.

A number of conclusions regarding this issue can be found, both in the past and in the present, in the Israeli, as well as in the international public

discourse. There are different variations of those shallow conclusions. In essence they are as follows:

- The driving force behind the conflict is **economic**. In other words, control over the water sources, the land, and natural resources.
- The driving force behind the conflict is **cultural**. In other words, Middle Eastern cultures (Druse, Bedouin, Circassian, Muslim, Christian, and others) are not ready to accept a Western entity into their midst; one which has a rhythm of life, values, and aspirations which are opposed to what is acceptable in this region.
- The driving force is **national**. In other words, two new, national entities are struggling to define their identities. Unfortunately, these definitions careen into one another at many junctures – economic, cultural, and religious.
- The driving force is **humanitarian**. In other words, one side's right to self definition is so aggressive, as a result of thousands of years of suffering and repression, that it leaves no humanitarian space for the right to self definition of the neighboring entity.
- The driving force is **ethnic**. In other words, two ethnic groups are struggling over the ownership of a particular piece of territory. The Jews claim that the land was promised to them 3700 years ago, in a transcendental promise, while the peoples of the region – without relating to the question of whether this is historically true or not – claim that they are the descendants of the Philistines and Canaanites who lived in this territory well before anyone promised anything, without asking their opinion on the matter.
- The driving force is **religious**. In other words, Islam and Judaism have been struggling for the authenticity of their religious narratives for thousands of years – beginning with the issue of who was bound up as a sacrifice by Abraham, and ending with the past, present, and future religious significance of the Temple Mount.

**For more than a hundred years the Israeli public didn't reach an agreement regarding the genuine driving forces behind this blood-ridden conflict.**

We don't intend to maintain here that one of the above is more authentic than any of the others, or that it is the most basic driving force behind the dispute. It is clear that everyone who believes in one driving force or another has a

number of sources on which his belief is based. On the contrary, I want to suggest an alternative way, which will attempt to give an answer to the question of why Israeli public discourse has failed, for more than one hundred years, to agree on a prime diagnosis of the driving force which has been keeping this blood-ridden conflict going. I would like to suggest here that it is possible to overcome this lack of agreement, in order to identify another driving force which lies in the deepest strata of this dispute, and holds us back from bringing it to a discussion sufficiently thorough to lead to a solution. Without solving the dilemma which dwells at that deep stratum, it will be difficult to solve the disagreement regarding the diagnosis, and to begin to work toward its solution.

## 8. Meta-analysis of the driving forces

[to Content List](#) 

**We are dealing solely with the examination of the situation. We aren't dealing with the roots and dynamics which are the driving forces behind it.**

All those who believe in one of those forces mentioned above haven't noticed that they have been trying to explain the hidden assumptions of the conflict through their behavioral expressions. Practically speaking, it could be that public discourse has erred in defining those reasons as the driving force behind the conflict. It could be that public discourse identifies only a deeper aspect of already existent trends, which are expressed as a political, social, cultural, economic, religious, or ethnic dispute.

It could be that the above are not the driving forces behind the dispute, but related phenomena and the byproducts of another, invisible force which we still haven't succeeded in identifying. If we are able to identify that force, we will be more easily able to reach an agreement as to how it affects and shapes the future of our region. Hopefully, we will then be able to derive from it a more effective policy approach, which will benefit the Jewish People and the other peoples in the region. The fact that there isn't Israeli public agreement regarding the driving forces we have described above, or ones similar to them, is an indication that we are occupying ourselves only with the explanations of phenomena which have existed for a long time, and which express themselves in security, economic, and other manifestations. We are dealing only and solely with the examination of the situation. It appears that we aren't dealing with the roots and dynamics which are the driving forces behind it.

When we take a serious look at the *Universal Force Theory* method, we see that the deeper one looks beneath the surface, and tries to map out the center of the seismic pressure which expresses itself in some point above the surface, only then do we have a chance (and still, humbly, with only a 60% degree of probability) of succeeding to identify its nature, degree of power, direction, and the time at which the earth will quake. After thorough examination of the above-mentioned list, I am forced, in all humility, to entertain the doubt that it is nothing but a list of temblors and above-surface phenomena, which are almost certainly not the driving force itself.

If this hypothesis is correct, we will evidently witness other eruptions in various places, and the list of causes mentioned above will grow longer. The new wave of anti-Semitism can serve as an example, e.g. the delegitimization of the State of Israel's rights to self-defense, and to the management of its internal politics without external interference.

## 9. A matrix of interactions

[to Content List](#) ↪

**As seismologists, we try to identify the center of the seismic activity and pinpoint the vector beneath the surface of the dispute.**

One of the ways which help us to identify the original driving force is to arrange the phenomena which are visible above the surface of events in a matrix, and to attempt to identify the interactions between the different parts of the matrix. As seismologists try to identify the center of seismic activity, analysis of interactions can lead us, by drawing lines between phenomena charted on the matrix, to the center of what is going on. The point at which these lines cross could be the source of the above-surface phenomena.

Meta-analysis of the development directions of the interaction lines leads the vector to a point very deep indeed, beneath the surface of the dispute, at the height of which we find ourselves today<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis, we must confess, is only one of several possibilities. The nature of matters of this kind of analysis is that they are affected by a great degree of subjectivity, to whose source it is difficult to get. As a result, it affects the analyst's point of view. Below, I will try to relate to the source of the subjectivity of the author of this article.

## 10. A possible driving force

[to Content List](#) ↪

**It is difficult to identify the true source of this dispute with a high degree of certainty.**

The more above-surface points we have available, and the more we are able to draw certain lines of interaction between them, the more reliable the matrix. As strange as it may sound, we have yet to have located sufficient above-surface points to enable us to identify the driving source with a high degree of reliability. Above all, it is difficult for us to connect clear lines of interaction between points so that we can reliably say that, at this stage, we are able to identify the true source with a high degree of certainty. Having said that, the list of reasons/phenomena available to us today can provide sufficient indication for us to begin to identify the area from which a more primal driving force of the Arab-Israeli dispute radiates forth.

In my estimate, a great deal of work needs to be done in calibrating our matrix over the next twenty to thirty years, until we arrive at the point where we can say that we have a complete solution as to the whereabouts of the deep source of the conflict between Israel and the peoples of this region, and, to some degree, between Israel and the peoples of the world.

The goal of the following table is to provide the reader with a sample of the phenomena as they find expression on the surface, and are driven by the clash between elements of the Israeli nation of today (as if they were the driving forces). The table suggests that there must be a deeper driving force, which propels these above-surface phenomena.

Table 1. A three-dimensional rendering of the matrix. It is possible to extend the matrix further into the third dimension, and to add breaking points and points of tension which point to a deeper driving force.

	<b>Ethnic</b>	<b>Cultural</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Humanitarian</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>R e l i g i o u s</b>
	Bring the Falashmoura to Israel	Renounce sovereignty over the Temple Mount	Jerusalem forever united	Laws of Shmita and modern economics	Disengagement or transfer of populations	Judaism as the official state religion	
	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Ethnic</b>	<b>Humanitarian</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Cultural</b>	
<b>C u l t u r a l</b>	Shabbat as a regular business day	Definition of "Who is a Jew?"	Knesset debates in Arabic as well as Hebrew	The right of non-Jews to purchase homes in Jewish towns or on lands of the Jewish National Fund	National service for those who don't serve in the IDF	The performing of Wagner's music at public cultural events	
<b>N a t i o n a l</b>	Privatization of defense industries	The Law of Return	A State for all its citizens	The Separation Fence	National Service for minority members	Permission for minority members to sing an alternative national anthem	
<b>H u m a n i t a r i a n</b>	Increased support for one-parent families	Increased old-age pensions	Citizenship for the children of foreign workers	Social security benefits for the families of those involved in terror	"Focused assassination of terrorists" is execution without trial	Mixed communities (Jews and Muslims)	
<b>E t h n i c</b>	Equal opportunity for members of minorities	Citizenship for non-Jewish soldiers	The status and rights of olim from Ethiopia	The use of unnecessary force in demonstrations by minority groups	A differential core educational program for members of minority groups, the ultra-orthodox, and others	Strengthening minority women's rights for those who work outside the home	
<b>R e l i g i o u s</b>	Daylight saving time until after the Fall holidays	Certificates of kashruth from the State Rabbinate or from the Ultra-Orthodox	Ashkenazi vs. Sephardic Jews	Citizenship for the non-Jewish parents of IDF soldiers	Equal status in providing religious services for Reform rabbis	Equal rights for social benefits for homosexuals	
<b>E c o n o m i c</b>	A capitalistic or social-democratic state	A Shmita year in a modern economy	Equal rights for those who don't serve in the IDF	Increased children's allowances for large families	Equal opportunities	Equal opportunities for working women	

## 11. Jewish-Israeli Identity as a Driving Force

[to Content List](#) 

**The driving force behind the dispute with the Palestinians is buried in the issue of how Israel perceives the *raison d'être* of its existence in the future.**

Even though it might be a bit premature to reach a conclusion at this stage, the lines in our matrix lead to an interesting point beneath the surface. The best I can do with the data at hand is to say that the lines lead in the direction of the Jewish identity of the Israeli People. To be more precise, in the direction of the area of the future images of Israel as a Jewish State. In other words, the, on one hand, and with the peoples of the region and most of the peoples of the world, on the other, is buried in the issue of how the Jews in general, and the Jews residing in the Land of Israel in particular, individually and collectively, see the significance of the State of Israel, past and present, and especially how they perceive the *raison d'être* of its existence in the future.

What is the issue here? There is no denying that the State of Israel is a patently illogical phenomenon. There is no example in modern history of an entity which penetrated a distant land, and based its definition of self only on the “religious identity” of individuals who came there from every corner of the earth, without a common spoken language, without a common national culture, with no social leaders common to all, without a common religious tradition (only about 10% of world Jewry in the last century defined themselves as Orthodox, and 40% as Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Neolog, and other. The rest defined themselves as traditional, secular, and even atheist), with no common ethnicity (there are, thank God, black, white, and yellow Jews, as well as from every other color of humanity). In brief, even if they didn’t have a clear, common religious identity they gathered and committed to the establishment of a new national state; something which they had heretofore never had, and which had no precedent anywhere in the world.

The only force which united this entity was its bitter fate and common religious narrative, which was and is still a matter of great controversy. Over the years, this controversy gave birth to another religion, and to serious side effects – such as messianic movements which changed their faith, or various movements which betrayed individuals to the regime in power.

## 12. Three strata

[to Content List](#) ↪

**Three tiers in the Jewish identity of the state of Israel: land of refuge, land of choice, and land of mission.**

It appears that there are three strata to this driving force. Of late, the Jewish People has carried out a satisfactory clarification of only one of them. Until such time as the Jewish People in the Diaspora, and the Jewish People resident in the Land of Israel will clarify for themselves all three strata of the Jewish identity of the State of Israel, it will be exceedingly difficult to make an authentic beginning of a solution to the conflict between them and their close and more distant environment. As I understand it, the three strata of the Jewish identity of the State of Israel which make up the driving force of the conflict are the three paradigms in the definition of the State of Israel's Jewish role in modern times: *a land of refuge, a land of choice, and a land of mission*. It's unnecessary to remind the reader of the old saw – “It takes two to tango.” This analysis relates only to one side of the dispute. In my humble opinion, the other side – the Palestinians – must perform a thoroughgoing analysis of the driving force of this conflict from the viewpoint of their side in order to begin to move toward an agreed solution. However, even if the other side fails to devote itself to such an endeavor, we are not exempt from doing what we must do in this regard. I only hope that the other side will not take longer than is necessary to fulfill its historic task. Moreover, the first to ascend the stage of history with a clear answer, agreed-upon by its people, will have the relative advantage.

### A. A land of refuge

[to Content List](#) ↪

The first stratum is the definition of a covenant of fate which unites the Jews who are resident in the Land of Israel. At the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Jews in the world maintained that there was nothing sufficiently real to their covenant of fate to unite the various Jews of all corners of the world, so that an historic adventure, such as the establishment of a national state would succeed. Despite many efforts during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a tiny minority of the world's Jews responded to the call to “go up to Palestine.” Only the cataclysmic Holocaust convinced some of the remnants of the Jewish People, and the nations of the world, to support the establishment of a state for the Jews (the majority of the Jews moved to other places on the globe). The mission of the State, or so they imagined, would be to gather those spared

from the conflagration, and other persecuted communities, in order to build something like a zoo in which an endangered species of persecuted humans might be preserved. Support of this idea was meant, of course, to salve the conscience of the enlightened nations, whose moral bankruptcy had been exposed for all to see.

#### **The despair land.**

There are still those who refer to the entity which arose on the basis of this stratum of the Jewish identity “the land of our affliction.”<sup>7</sup> Truthfully speaking, very few believed that it would be possible to make a clear definition of the covenant of fate which would be able to attract enough people to it to establish the State of Israel’s first identity – the State of the Jewish People.

Identifying this covenant of fate has taken more than fifty years since the establishment of the State of Israel; 56 years, to be exact. At the end of 2004 the State of Israel reached that important point. For the first time in the history of the Jewish People, since the biblical conquest of the Land, the world’s largest Jewish community was resident in Zion. According to all the estimates, the largest Jewish community in the world since the Second World War – the Jewish community in the United States – declined in size to less than 5.2 million people, while the community in Israel rose to 5,235,000<sup>8</sup>. If we add to that number approximately 290,000 immigrants whose Jewish identity is in doubt, then Israel passed that point some time ago. The size of the world’s Jewish population was estimated at the beginning of 2005 as being less than 13,000,000 people. By way of comparison, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were only about three million Jews in the world<sup>9</sup>. Before the Second World War, the Jewish People numbered approximately 18 million souls. After the war, there were only 12 million Jews in the world. It is sad to say, but were it not for the Holocaust, European Jewry would number about 30 million people at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and perhaps

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<sup>7</sup> A.B. Yehoshua generally refers thus to the connection of the Jews to his country.

<sup>8</sup> Press announcement by the Central Bureau of Statistics, December 30, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Bisk, T. and Dror, M. (2003), *Futurizing the Jews: Alternative futures for meaningful Jewish existence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Praeger Publishers: Westport, CT.

more. Most important of all is that without the State of Israel, it is possible that there would be only from seven to nine million Jews in the world.

This stratum has been highlighted and made clear enough so that 40% of the Jews of the world adhere to it. We may sum it up in the term **A Land of Refuge**. Most of those 40% came to the young State of Israel because they had no place on earth where they could build a better life for themselves. Most of those who had alternatives, and who took the chance, did not choose to join the small gathering of Jews in Zion. At the beginning of the 25th century, not many Jews outside Israel remain, for whom this stratum is their driving force. If, however, there should occur a disaster in some part of the globe, this disaster could become the fount of more human resources motivated by their status as refugees. An eventuality of this sort can't be ruled out, as it is possible that we are not making a proper reading of the earthquakes on the surface of events.

## B. A Land of Choice

[to Content List](#) ↪

**The alternative land.**

The second stratum of Israeli Jewish identity as the driving force of the Arab-Israeli dispute is only beginning to become clear now, at the outset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are two reference points which reflect this stratum, and expect to be realized in the future. The first should happen in the years 2010 – 2015. In those years we expect that more than 51% of the Jews in the world will live in Israel (taking into account the natural reproduction and immigration strata which have characterized the State of Israel in the first fifty years of its existence, minus the attitude of the Jews who remained in countries defined as “states of refuge”). The second reference point should arrive between 2030 to 2035, or 2040 at the latest. In the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we estimate that 70% of the Jewish population of the world will live in the Land of Israel.

There is a 60% to 70% likelihood that those trends will take place, for two main reasons. First, only two Jewish communities are on an upward growth trend at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All the other Jewish communities in the world are in the process of numerical decline. The Jewish community resident in Israel at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the Jewish community with the greatest natural growth in the world. The other Jewish community with an

upward population trend is that resident in Germany, as a result of immigration from the formerly Communist countries. The average birthrate of parents in the communities of the Diaspora is from 1.2 to 1.4 children per couple, while the rate in the Jewish community in Israel has been stable, at 2.6 children per couple, for some time, with a constant tendency to increase in times of war. Thus, since the outbreak of suicide bombing in the year 2000, the average number of births increased each year by one point. The estimate is that at the end of the current period of violence, we will return to a birthrate of 2.5 to 2.6 children per couple.

The second reason is the issue of assimilation in the Diaspora. The average rate of intermarriage in the Diaspora has run at about 55% in the last decade, and the trend seems to be growing at a constantly growing rate.

The significance of these two reference points is that, on one hand, the Jewish People in the Diaspora is decreasing steadily in size (on the average, each pair of Jewish parents, leaves only 0.7 Jewish children!). On the other hand, the Jewish People resident in Israel is steadily increasing in size (because of natural growth, and as a result of aliyah – although the latter will dwindle in proportion to the rate to which we were accustomed in the first fifty years since the establishment of the State of Israel).

In a situation in which the force of refuge works itself out, it remains to be seen if the stratum underneath it will begin to bring about above-the-surface changes. This stratum, so it seems, will be defined in terms such as **the land of choice**. Since most of the residents in Israel define their presence in Israel as being the result of having no alternative, it is hard for all of us to see how that mind set could change. It appears as unlikely that this national mood would change. Nonetheless, as opposed to what is likely to be the case today, it can be assumed that those residents of Israel, many of whom are beginning to experience the feeling of having an alternative, and many of whom are having opportunities open up for leaving for some other place, will have to define for themselves the nature of the choice which becomes available to them. At the same time, the Jews of the Diaspora will have to examine their options – to continue to reside in the countries of their birth, or to elect to come on aliyah by free choice. They will have to define why they do or do not

choose aliyah, and to set a reasonable timetable for acting on their decision. The Diaspora Jews who do not do so seal the fate of their descendants, to an increasingly obvious extent, to mass expulsion from the Jewish community of the future. The Israelis, too, who do not define their increasingly coherent choice, will find that they are obliged (without being aware of it in most cases) to attach themselves to the same fate as that of the Jews of the Diaspora.

One may therefore assume that the driving force of Jewish identity will make itself felt politically, economically, socially, and culturally during the next thirty years. The behavioral terms of this stratum of driving force will express themselves in interesting and surprising ways in the Israeli public forum. It appears that one of those expressions will be the nullification of the Law of Return within the next twenty years. Public discourse will be occupied with the fact that a law which permits any Jew arriving on Israeli soil to be accepted as a refugee will no longer be necessary. Moreover, it will become germane to examine the individual applicant's seriousness of choice, and his/her ability to contribute to the Jewish community in Israel.

A more sensitive calibration of this approach will enable the analyst to distinguish between the Jew and the non-Jew's seriousness of choice and ability to contribute to the Jewish community. A non-Jew may also join those who are dwelling in Zion, although with a status which the Israeli legislator will have to formulate and define very carefully indeed.

### C. A Land of Mission

[to Content List ↪](#)

**The covenant  
land.**

The third level, which evidently will drive the changes and the above-surface phenomena we are seeing, is, so far as I can see, the deepest driving force of the conflict between the Jewish People in Israel and its Middle Eastern environment. We can label this stratum with the term **Covenantal Mission**.

The driving force of various systems – social, technological, economic, and so on – is also the goal which the system sets for itself, or the immanent mission infused within it. The deepest stratum of the driving force can have many aspects. It can include a cultural aspect, a defining aspect, and, obviously, the

aspect of universal mission. We will focus here on the aspect of the national mission.

In order for a people to exist, it needs a covenantal mission under which all its energy and *raison d'être* can be rallied. A people without a covenantal mission leave no mark on history. Sooner or later it slips away into the creases of time. Peoples who shaped the fate of humanity over time had clear missions. They survived the trials of history for hundreds and thousands of years. A mission needs a clear, succinct formulation for it to be an authentic, powerful driving force. Generally speaking, it should be able to be expressed in just two words. The two examples to follow support that statement. The first is from the present, and the second from the future. The past is full of examples, but that does not concern us here.

**The American  
covenantal  
mission:  
*Individual  
freedom.***

The American People have a short, clear covenantal mission. That is part of what evidently turned America into the most active world power of our generation. That mission can be summed up in two words: *Individual Freedom*. The Constitution and the laws of the US are derived from that covenant. It is the driving force of the institutions they establish, the force behind their foreign policy, and is that which supports the wars they wage.

Most people don't understand how a President can stand up before the world, and declare that he will see to the liberation of the Iraqi citizen from the yoke of tyranny, and that he is prepared to spend a huge amount of the American taxpayers' money to build free institutions for the Iraqis, even if the price of all this includes the lives of hundreds of American soldiers. There are those who think that the driving force of the war on Iraq is oil. That is plainly not the case. It is true that there are interests of that kind, but they are not the driving force.

The second example is the covenantal mission of the European Community. In its emergence this community understood that it needs a covenantal mission. It needs something which will unite its different parts, and contain the force which drives its institutions in a way which will place its stamp on the future of humankind. The European Community understands that in order to write a constitution, to conduct a foreign policy, to make trade agreements, and also to go to war, it must formulate a covenantal mission which can be

**The Europeans  
Covenantal  
Mission: *Unity in  
Diversity*.**

expressed in two words; short and simple as is possible. In fact, late in 2004, they succeeded in formulating a phrase which will evidently be the central axis of the future European Community. The Europeans have proposed the following phrase as their Covenantal Mission: *Unity in Diversity*. There will be those who claim that such a covenant is too ambitious for a continent which, over the last two thousand years, has known so many clashes over precisely the issue of difference. The future will prove who is right.

By the way, Man, and all his strata – agenda, community, culture, national, and ethnic – is the only system in nature, so far as we know, which needs meaning in order to survive. In contrast with other animals, a person without significance becomes self-destructive. Man is a creature which has a built-in mechanism of self-destruction. This mechanism is set in motion when he has no mission. A person needs a mission in order to survive. Otherwise, he consciously begins to destroy himself and his surroundings. After The Jewish People clarifies sufficiently for itself all the strata of its Covenantal Mission – Land of Refuge and Land of Choice – it will arrive at the crucial point in shaping the deepest stratum of its driving force. It will need, if it wants to live, to formulate its Covenantal Mission.

**The people of  
Israel will need, if  
it wants to live, to  
formulate its  
Covenantal  
Mission.**

The State of Israel was established to base its existence on a partial covenant of fate. Systems Theory teaches us that there is no reasonable likelihood that this will be sufficient for continuing as a people in a modern state. Beyond that, it teaches us that a covenant of fate is like time-limited glue. It can hold many individuals together as a people for a while; one or two generations at most. Glue of this sort dries up and ceases to hold, sooner or later. When its power to hold ceases to exist, what remains is scattered shards. On the basis of those fragments the people must formulate a covenant of mission, as the new European Community has done.

We have also learned that a minority of a people can't take on the weighty task of formulating a covenant of mission. A majority of a people must be present in the country at the time of the covenant's formulation in order for it to be formulated and accepted. It is likely that most of the Jewish People, according to the rhythm of present population trends, will be resident in Israel within the next 40 years. Only then, in my estimation, will the Jewish People

be able to undertake the task of formulating its Covenantal Mission for the State of Israel, most of whose citizens will be Jews. Until that time, we will be witness to the further weakening of the covenant of fate, even though this process will become increasingly evident to the Jews resident in Israel, and to those living in the Diaspora.

**The responsibility that lies upon our generation is to provide today's children with the background material and the tools they will need for formulating an agreed upon Covenantal Mission.**

This doesn't mean that we can do nothing but stand idly by, our hands in our pockets. As I understand it, the task of today's generation of educators is to prepare today's children, who will, when they will be in their forties and fifties, have to take part in the formulation of the Covenantal Mission of the modern Jewish People on a sovereign national state. Today's educators will have to provide today's children with the background material and the tools they will need for formulating the Covenantal Mission for the newly reborn Jewish People in his alnd. Our children, today, must have available to them the knowledge and the spiritual power to match the challenge which will be set before them. No challenge such as this one has been presented to the Jewish People in its long history, so we can not provide them with an allegory from the past to which they can refer in their deliberations. The challenge is of the order of magnitude characterized by the rebirth of a people. The people bases itself on its past, but breaks new paths to the future. It draws sustenance from the collective memories and traditions of the past, but ignores them in order to undergo its renaissance. The challenge of preparing a generation for its time in history is a weightily responsible assignment. We must not take this challenge lightly. Many of us today do not understand our task. There are those who ask only to preserve the past, and others who ask only to ignore it. Today's educators have to define their task in light of the challenge which will be placed before our children in the future.

### **13. The Covenantal Mission of the State of Israel** [to Content List](#)

Today, probably there exists no one in the Jewish People, in Israel or in the Diaspora, who is able to imagine the uniqueness of the Covenantal Mission of the State of Israel, and how it will finally be formulated in another 50 years. It is immensely difficult what the Covenantal Mission of the Middle Eastern, Jewish, democratic, and modern, with a 25% non-Jewish Minority State needs

to be. There never has been an entity such as this one. There are many who believe that an entity of this sort cannot exist and function.

**When the majority of the Jewish people will reside in Israel it would be possible to define a covenantal mission.**

There are those who will ask “Why can’t a minority of a people formulate its mission? To what degree does the majority of the people feel that this issue important? Throughout history we find that a tiny minority decides for the majority the way the people’s identity is seen. Why is it that a covenant of fate can be decided by a minority, while only the majority of a people can determine the people’s covenantal mission?

The question is valid, and it is hard for common sense to accept the claim that a minority can’t formulate the Covenantal Mission while the majority of the Jewish People continues to reside outside Israel. In order to give an answer, even a partial one, to questions of this sort, we will require another motif from Jewish tradition.

In various systems – *e.g.*, among communities on earth – the majority dictates its terms to the rest. In a community, for example, most of whose members were caught lying, none of its members would be accepted as reliable witnesses in court. In the Jewish tradition, on the other hand, one can find a totally different motif. There is something special in a majority which is able, against all logic, to turn upside down the situation of its individual members. In the Jewish tradition we find that in very special circumstances, *e.g.*, at the time of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on Jewish festivals, when only the ritually pure may go up to the Temple Mount to offer a sacrifice, if 50% + 1 are ritually impure, against all common sense, the entire assemblage automatically becomes ritually pure for the remainder of the pilgrimage. The logic behind this motif is broader than may be set forth in this article.

To the matter at hand: There is something in the sense of community which can change the mind set of the entire assemblage, even if the majority is incapable of so doing. In the same way, so long as the Jews dwelling in Israel are not the majority of the Jews of the world, the People will be unable to overcome a situation of consciousness which was forged in exile over thousands of years.

The Jew’s consciousness, as it developed over thousands of years in the Diaspora, is communal at most, but decidedly not national. Communal

considerations alone were etched into the Jewish way of thinking. The organizational manner of taking considerations into account by communities and by those who create Halacha took on a narrow form; essentially limited to a communal outlook.

**The Jewish People resident in Israel will need a different mindset in order to formulate the Covenantal Mission.**

The Jewish People resident in Israel will need an approach to thinking different from that which exists today, in order to formulate the Covenantal Mission. The organizational, social, religious, and cultural considerations must become national ones, which derive their power from the absolute majority of the People, and not from the plurality residing in Israel today.

The Jewish People lost this thought context in the course of a hundred generations of living in the Diaspora. Although it is entirely possible that such a thought context never existed. It's conceivable that the Jewish People had a monarchical thought context in the days of the kings, or a tribal thought context. There was, however, no national thought context, because the Jewish People never had an organizational framework in the form of a national, democratic state. I believe that only a majority of the Jewish People concentrated in the Land of Israel will have the power to invent the national thought context with whose aid it will be able to begin to formulate its Covenantal Mission.

This quality of thinking could radiate new insights to the whole People in Israel and to those remaining in the Diaspora. It is my hope that these insights will assist the coming generation to formulate an accepted mission-related task for a modern, democratic Jewish State in the Middle East, which includes a large minority population.

Unfortunately, I find it difficult at this particular point in time to imagine a covenantal mission which draws its rationale from other contexts. Like the rest of this generation, we have difficulty in escaping the contexts imprinted on us over thousands of years. Anyone who thinks that he has a different context is only misleading himself and the public. In any case, people like him are also unable to formulate a covenantal mission in a two-word phrase.

#### 14. Hints of a National, Civil Covenantal Mission [to Content List](#)

If one makes the effort, it is possible to identify its distant edges. It is important to stress that we might err there, as well. On one side, the lower edge can be a mission similar to that of the Maccabi Tel Aviv sports club, and the spirit it symbolizes when it wins championships. On the other side, on the upper edge, there could be a mission like that of “Light unto the nations,” with all that that entails - social, economic, scientific, ethical, religious, and legal in the sense of religious law.

**A possible future covenantal mission: Bridging East and West.**

For curiosity’s sake, and not because I think that this will be what develops, I will give one possible mission which provides us with a hint of a new thought context. The next mission could be formulated as follows: A Synergy of Cultures.”

The mission of Israel could be the building of a junction of cultural nodes which would make cultural, cognitive, and political integration possible for cultures of the West and of the East. A behavioral expression of a mission of this sort could be on different scientific and social levels. For example, developing new scientific theories on the basis of Systems Theory, which would be compatible with the modern, technological, global, complex, and multifaceted world.

By dint of painstaking work over thousands of years, the Jewish People developed a system of complex integration between the concepts of the individuum and society. Very interesting insights were developed regarding holistic systems and the tasks of their component parts. The People also took on the task of establishing organizational, economic, community, and legal systems, which were managed with considerable efficiency and which proved their worth over a period of millennia.

It’s possible that young Israel’s subcultures – those which came from European and Eastern communities – are the epistemological foundations of a mission of this sort. If the People in Israel will succeed in taking the bull by the horns, and jumping onto his back, it will be able to gallop forward in creative directions, to new levels of achievement, with the cultural mission of a nation in renaissance. A mission of this sort could take an important place

**The religious  
covenantal  
mission: God  
Worshipping.**

among those of modern, advancing nations, and could provide us with a respite from our dispute with them.

Allow me to make clear that my intention is not in the direction of a religious mission for the Jewish People. I'm talking about a national mission. The Jewish religion had, and remains with, a clear religious mission. It can be summed up in two words: Worshiping God. At the same time, Judaism as a religion, so far as I am familiar with it, needs to add another facet to its identity: a national Covenantal Mission of a modern state.

### **15. Hints for a National Religious Covenantal Mission** [Content List](#)

In the responsa of the rabbis from the communities known as "the Spanish communities" (*kehillot sfarad*<sup>10</sup>) one can find hints of another kind of national covenantal mission, which can look to religious law (*Halacha*) for its foundations. Following is an example of a halachic decision which can give an idea of a national thought which could lead to the formulation of a national Jewish mission for the State of Israel, in a style and form with which we were not familiar during the first fifty years of the State.

The following story appears in a book written by Rabbi Yosef Mashash, *Mayim Chayim*<sup>11</sup>. Rabbi Mashash served as the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Haifa until his death, in 1974. He was born in the city of Mekness, Morocco, in 1892, to a well-known rabbinical family<sup>12</sup>.

One of the first communities which Rabbi Mashash served was in an Algerian town, named Tlamsan. In his book, he recounts that when he came to the town to serve as the community's spiritual leader, in 1924, he found a highly developed Jewish community, with many educational and welfare institutions. He found that the community was supported by ten wealthy families, the heads of which all owned butchers' shops. To his astonishment, they all kept

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<sup>10</sup> Zohar, Zvi (2001) *They Illuminated the East: Halacha and Thinking of the Sages of Israel of the Middle East*. Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Tel Aviv. (in Hebrew)

<sup>11</sup> Mashash, Yosef (1967) *Mayim Chayim*, Aviktzitz Press, Jerusalem. pp.124-127. (in Heb.)

<sup>12</sup> His cousin, Rabbi Shalom Mashash, served as the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem until his death, in 2003. His nephew, Rabbi David Mashash, serves as the Chief Rabbi of Paris.

their shops open on the Sabbath. As befits a Sephardic rabbi, he set himself the task of convincing them to close their businesses on the Sabbath.

There were some difficult decisions before him. If the butchers don't agree to stop doing business on the Sabbath, should he forbid the Jews of Tlamsan to eat the meat they sell? If he would do that, he would be bringing about a situation in which the Jews of Tlamsan would know that they were eating non-kosher meat, and would have no alternative, as there was no place in Tlamsan where it was possible to purchase kosher meat. Was, in fact, the meat sold on the Sabbath non-kosher, when it was obvious that in every other respect, the butchers were stringent in their observance of the laws regarding the preparation of kosher meat? The problem which stood before him was that the halachic authorities through the ages had made it clear that a person who publicly violated the prohibition of working on the Sabbath was not to be trusted regarding the performance of other halachic prohibitions.

However, when he saw that his efforts were unsuccessful, he decided to go to the home of each of the butchers, and to put the same question to each one: "If all the other butchers will close on the Sabbath, will you close, too?" To his surprise and chagrin, although, nine of the butchers answered in the positive, one remained stubbornly immune to all the rabbi's requests, explanations, and supplications.

When Rabbi Mashash saw that there was no evident way out of the impasse, he decided to close himself up in his study until he discovered the halachic solution. Indeed, in an unusual, tortuously argued treatise, Rabbi Mashash found a halachic basis for declaring that meat prepared by a butcher is kosher, even though he violates the Sabbath publicly, and declares it his intention to continue doing so<sup>13</sup>.

**One can buy  
meat from a Jew  
who is not  
observing  
Shabbat!**

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<sup>13</sup> He found halachic support to maintain (Hatashbetz, Part II, responsa 43 and 47, quoted in the name of the Atur) that the issue of public violation of the Sabbath is not relevant, except in cases where the violation involves working the land, *i.e.*, a capital offense. However, where the offense was not a capital offense, despite its being defined as a crime in the Torah itself, so long as it was not the sort of public violation of the Sabbath, whose intent was to nullify the entire Torah, it was not relevant to the status of the meat sold by the butchers of Tlamsan.

The State of Israel, in approaching the formulation of a national covenantal mission based also on Halacha, will need to find very creative halachic solutions in order to preserve its Jewish identity, on the one hand, and to continue to develop as a modern, open community, on the other. This story gives only a hint of creativity and openness of this sort. The issues which will be confronting the Jewish community in Israel in the future will be ten times more complex than that faced by Rabbi Mashash in Tlamsan. Halachic issues stemming from technology, such as cloning, genetics, robotics, and the like will demand halachic treatment with the broadest judgment possible, in order to enable the advancement of industry and the welfare of the individual, on the one hand, and the Jewish identity of the State, on the other.

**Whosoever plays down the importance of either poles – tradition and science, is dooming his graduates to exclusion from formulating the Covenantal Mission in the future.**

One needn't point out that the educational challenge for this generation is breathtaking. It falls upon this generation to prepare its children for the mastery of modern scientific areas, while providing them with broad knowledge of the languages and of the issues which have demanded the attention of Jewish tradition and literature over the ages. Whosoever plays down the importance of either of these poles of knowledge is dooming the graduates of his educational institution to exclusion from the group which will formulate the Covenantal Mission of the Jewish State of the future.

He who insists on claiming that he can manage without the other side is liable to find that he has become irrelevant to the process from which the joint vision of the State of Israel will be formulated. History is not usually patient with intellectual irresponsibility.

In order to be faithful to the truth, I have to say that one time, when I mentioned Rabbi Mashash's halachic pronouncement regarding the butchers of Tlamsan, one rabbi stood up and requested the floor. He asked to point out that he was the grandson of Rabbi Mashash, and that the end of the story was that two years after the rabbi's action, all the butchers of Tlamsan voluntarily closed their shops on the Sabbath.

## **16. The Driving Force behind the Arab-Israeli Dispute** [Content List](#)

How is everything detailed above connected with the bloody conflict between the State of Israel and the peoples of the Middle East? Beyond that, how is

this dispute tied to phenomena such as the new anti-Semitism, and to the feeling that “the whole world is against us” which accompanies it?

**Only when the Jewish People resident in Israel has a clear, razor-sharp mission will the peoples of the region be ready to accept it as one of them.**

It appears that the driving force behind the dispute between Israel and the peoples of the region, and between Israel and most of the rest of the world is nothing more than an *identity crisis*. It is a drama which has been going on for about 4,000 years, from the time of Abraham, and has reached its climax with the establishment of the Jewish state, in 1948. In order for the conflict between Israel and the other peoples of the region to be settled, a new aspect of Jewish identity must emerge: a national mission. This national mission must draw from the past, the present, and the future.

The Jewish People will have its right to exist recognized by the community of nations only when it has clarified its mission for itself. Only when the Jewish People resident in Israel has a clear, razor-sharp mission will the peoples of the region be ready to accept it as one of them. It will be possible to begin to negotiate our right to exist in the region and in the world only when most of the Jewish People resident in Israel have a clear idea of what is unique to it, and what its unique contribution is as a people, and not just as a religion, to the peoples of the region and of the rest of the world. This is not to say that it will be easy, only that it will be clear to all just who we are, and what our historic mission for the future will be. They will continue to argue with us, but the arguments will be the arguments of equals.

## 17. Trends in the Dispute

[to Content List ↪](#)

It may be understood from the foregoing that the conflict will continue for the next fifty years. In my estimate, we are only halfway to being accepted in the region. On the way, we are likely to see periods of lesser and greater violence, periods of relative peace, cold peace, and other situations.

Underneath the surface, the earth will continue to rumble, because the People in Israel have yet to begin the process of clarifying the matter of its mission-related identity as a modern and democratic people. Many forces will continue to pull this identity in different, conflicting directions. There will be those who will want to see the mission of the State of Israel as a state for all its citizens, as every other modern state defines itself. There will be those who will want

to see its mission as a religious entity, as per the dream of thousands of years. There will be those who will wish to see Israel's mission as that of a megalopolis, and as a technology hub, as per the dream of many men of business, and according to the spirit of globalization which pervades the very air they breathe. There will be yet others whose desire will be to pull the mission in directions which will only emerge in the years to come.

**The result must be unique to the Jewish People, its past, and to the degree to which it understands the future of the humanity. Any other compromise will not last.**

It's difficult to tell, from the point in time that these words are being written, what will finally take shape. One thing, however, is clear to this writer: the result must be unique to the Jewish People, its past, and to the degree to which it understands the future of the human race. Any other compromise will not last, and will not provide a fitting response to the pressures of the peoples of the region, or to those of the peoples of the world.

Those pressures will mainly find expression in a demand for the geographical definition of the Jewish-Israeli People. So long as this People will not be clear regarding the matter of its identity and mission, it will not be able to stand up to the pressures for geographical definition, and will have always to provide a logical response not available to it, on the subject of its needs, and of its rights to this, or some other territory.

So long as those pressures exist, there will be no peace in the Land. This won't be because the people resident in Israel do not want peace, or because they have not made efforts to achieve peace, but because the People will not have the right to live in peace because it has not yet institutionalized its rights by making a clear definition of its mission. There is a bumpy road ahead in this mid-stage of the process, where the People has yet to define itself and its mission. As sad as it is to say the following, civil war remains one of the eventualities which could slow the process considerably, and send it into years of panic, terrible loss of life and of national direction.

**As sad as it is to say the following, civil war remains one of the eventualities which could slow the process considerably.**

## **18. An Optimistic Assessment of the Situation**

[to Content List](#) 

Despite these trends, in the final analysis, the Jewish People has arrived today at an historical landmark dreamed of by generations and generations of the downtrodden and rejected. It has arrived at this point with immeasurable resources of experience and history, and of collective wisdom acquired with

**By any criteria, the Jewish People is currently experiencing the most important golden age in its history.**

much trial and labor. The Jewish People arrives here with the wet-behind-the-earschutzpah of a young, dynamic, and optimistic young man, together with the thick skin of an old man, rich in experience and in troubles overcome.

The Jewish People has never been better prepared for the task set before it. After 4,000 years of ups and downs, of challenges and obstacles, it has reached a situation better than it has ever known. With the exception of short periods in its history, the Jewish People has never been so well organized. It has never had political institutions – local and international – in such a vital and robust condition. Never before has the majority of the Jews in the world possessed so many rights and freedoms in their places of residence, in the Diaspora and in Israel. It has been thousands of years since the Jewish People was able to bear arms and defend itself. It is the first time in thousands of years that the Jewish People has an international strategic status; a status which has been growing and becoming stronger with the years. It is true that there are many threats to its existence, of the most frightening sort, but it is also true that Israel's ally is the most important superpower of the age<sup>14</sup>.

By any criteria, the Jewish People dwelling in Zion, and the Jewish People residing in the Diaspora are currently experiencing the most important golden age in the history of the People. The spiritual and scientific creation, the physical building, and the social, geo-political and geo-economic involvement, are of the highest quality the People has known in hundreds of years.

The results of the intense, creative, and diligent labor performed by many of the Jewish People are legion: Nobel prizes, key roles in the business, industry, and government of the countries of which they are citizens, in the many national and international projects and causes in which they take part, and the social and economic experiments in which they are involved.

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<sup>14</sup> There are those who will maintain, on one hand, that this promises nothing for Israel in the future, and on the other, that this alliance works against Israel's best interests. In any case, the alliance is widely considered the most important strategic asset which the State of Israel has had to date.

**What is lacking is the mandate which requires the consensus of the majority of the People.**

To the best of my understanding, there has yet to be a generation so well prepared to take on the task of formulating the People's Covenantal Mission as is this generation. What is lacking is the mandate which requires the consensus of the majority of the People. The broad consensual support, which only a majority of the People can provide, will grant ethical sanction to the Covenantal Mission. Such sanction is necessary if the Mission is to be of binding significance for the generations to come. It is necessary in order to provide the spiritual power needed to redefine Judaism and the components of its identity in a different national platform, as well as its cognitive ability, and the imagination needed to stand up to the task. It is an honorable task dreamed of from the People's days as the nomadic followers of Abraham, in Haran, of ancient Babylon.

If the truth will out, it must be said that the overriding mood of this article stems from a great faith in the strengths of the Jewish People, as well as faith in the transcendental powers which are helping it to meet honorably the great, historic challenge before it. However, even without these beliefs, one may still propose the hypothesis that the powers pulsing in the Jewish People point to a great potential for success. Its relative situation, along all the dimensions of its existence – geopolitical, economic, and social – are proof of this potential. Moreover, if the People does not succeed, it doesn't mean that all will be trampled into dust. It means that this episode of its history, known as the State of Israel, will end with the State shattered, and the remnants of the Jewish People resident in Israel scattered among the nations of the world for another two thousand years, if not forever. This fear alone is strong enough to stimulate the creation of a promising future.

**All the signs point to a situation in which the People is ready for the last stage before its final renaissance.**

There should be no doubt that the Jewish People has a proclivity to underestimate the strength of its existential situation. For readily understandable reasons, the People feels oppressed, with many conspiracy theories enjoying serious consideration at any given time. This People, in any case, does not and never has liked to take historical tasks and responsibilities upon itself. It has always made its crucial decisions at the proverbial gunpoint. Beyond that, there is no guarantee that it will not renege on its decision after having succeeded. That's just the way this People is. Nonetheless, it looks as

if all the signs point to a situation in which the People is ready for the last stage before its final renaissance. Afterwards, its life will begin to become normal; with reasonable difficulties, such as passions, disappointments, struggles, and many successes, just like all the nations of the world.

## **19. Possible Scenarios for the Solution of the Dispute** [Content List](#)

After the Jewish People, most of whom will be resident in Israel, will possess a mission formulated and agreed upon by most of the residents of the country, there will be a strong likelihood that the conditions will be created which will allow for final agreements with the neighboring peoples and with the world as a whole.

There are two possible scenarios for the solution of the dispute between the Jewish-Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. One scenario is optimistic for both of the sides, and the other is less optimistic.

### **A. The Optimistic Scenario**

[to Content List](#) 

In this scenario, one may assume that the two, hostile sides to the dispute, who had tired of grinding one another down for over 150 years, will look for a creative compromise. Such a compromise would recognize the transcendental rights of the Jews to places which they had held sacred for thousands of years, on the one hand, and on the other, the rights of the Muslims of all kinds to be partners in the places for which both the religions have a holy narrative.

The sides would then come to recognize and honor each other's rights. Of course, if the Palestinians would develop a clear and recognized mission, they could dwell together, honorably, and reap the benefits of mutual respect for the Jewish People. If the Palestinians are unable to formulate a clear mission, the world will put such pressure on them that they will have no alternative but to withdraw to their minimum bargaining position, and to accept the conditions dictated by the world community. A situation of this sort would be a mirror image of the situation of the Jews in Israel today.

### **B. The Less Optimistic scenario**

[to Content List](#) 

According to this scenario, the Palestinians would formulate a mission which would be in conflict with the mission formulated by the Jews. In such a case,

**The sides would then come to recognize and honor each other's rights.**

**The covenantal mission with the higher moral ground will prevail.**

there would have to be an historical determination which would leave no doubt as to which mission possesses the higher moral ground. This determination could be a judicial one, in a court held by most of the nations of the world, or a military determination, on the battlefield. In any case, after the determination, both sides would have to establish mechanisms and institutions which would guarantee a reasonable life for the loser.

## 20. Epilogue

[to Content List](#) ↻

**Futurists don't believe there is such a space that we call the Future.**

It is true that futurists attempt to study various ways in which different trends can lead, in order better to conceptualize the future. However, dear Reader, in all sincerity, futurists do not believe that there actually exists a “place” known as “The Future.” All the theories – beginning with Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, and continuing on up to the most recently formulated theories, such as the physicist Gell Mann’s theory of Information Gathering and Utilizing Systems (IGUS), and the work of Robotics theoretician, James Harrie – maintain that the feeling of “time passing” is only a cognitive fiction. Past, present, and future are nothing but an individual’s and a group’s processing of information. The way in which they process a bit of information is what dictates their relationship to their environment, which acts or reacts to the frameworks they have created.

From this point of view, the superficialities mentioned in this article are merely an attempt to construct a framework with whose help we could build an environment which would meet the needs of the Jewish People in Israel. In other words, we are trying to point in the direction of the solution to our dispute with ourselves and with other frameworks of the peoples around us, in the Middle East and beyond.