

After 100 Years of Middle East Conflict – an Honorable Solution

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Some chapters of the book already appeared as blogs in „The Times of Israel“:

The Religions’ Potential to Contribute to Peace in the Holy Land. A dream image presented at the UN-Center in Vienna on the occasion of the Interfaith Harmony Week of 2017 C.E.: The PM of Israel, Benyamin Netanyahu, re-enacting the scene behind the origin of the name “Israel”. <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/religions-potential-to-contribute-to-peace-in-the-holy-land/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/two-israels-two-tricks-two-offended-brothers-two-deadly-threats-two-reconciliations-peace-through-authenticity/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/good-news-about-peace-in-the-holy-land/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/why-did-the-imam-of-al-azhar-visit-the-pope/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/naqba-how-a-new-interpretation-of-facts-on-both-sides-can-create-a-reality-in-which-both-sides-become-winners/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-settlements-an-opportunity-for-peace/>

Letter to the publisher

When my first book ("Resurrection - Before Death") was about to be published, the editor said: "it is twenty years too early. We may have to pulp most of the copies. But we will take the risk and print it anyway."

Most publishers would hardly want to take such a risk. They'd rather stick to well-worn views and, since in peace negotiations this conflict has hardly ever been discussed in terms of religion, they will not be interested in the concepts of this book.

Other publishers may, however, realize that this very lopsidedness is creating a niche in the market. So they may want to seize that opportunity and publish this book, which promotes viewing and using religion as a major key to peace.

Mainstream authors argue that religion must be disregarded, because all the major troubles of the area have been caused by the religions.

I agree, yet I do not agree with their conclusion. In the past, the religions have indeed had a destructive influence. I analyze that influence in great detail in my book. But instead of excluding religious motives from my considerations I prefer to point to the most essential asset of each of the Middle East religions: their overwhelming peace potential. Up until now, nobody has tried to utilize that. The mainstream fashion of being secular does not allow that.

Thus, people would rather believe that this conflict is only about land.

That belief disregards the very real trauma suffered by the Muslims, when the Jews took possession of what had once been their ancient homeland, but which had for the last fourteen hundred years been one of the territories most sacred to Muslims. It disregards the Muslims' fear that, with the Jews once again in possession of their Holy Land, they might even lose their great sanctuary in Jerusalem. Or why else would the Grand Mufti claim "there never has been a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem"?

A very similar fear is obviously motivating Hamas. Together with Iran, they are the only ones left who dare to point out the disaster Jewish domination of Jerusalem would pose to the belief in Muslim superiority.

If this were just a conflict about land, it would have been solved decades ago. All major 20th century conflicts about land have been solved rather quickly one way or the other. Think of the 15 Million German refugees from Germany's former eastern territories. All of them were integrated almost without a problem into the rather small area of Western Germany. Or think of South Tyrol, with its German speaking population. After WW I it was annexed by Italy. Since Austria had surrendered unconditionally it could not do anything about losing the heart of its "holy land" of Tyrol! Yet today, 100 years later, South Tyrol is one of the provinces with the highest

productivity in Italy – despite foreign domination. Nobody is talking about the injustice done to them anymore. So why is everybody talking about the injustice done to the Palestinians or the Palestinian refugees? What is preventing Palestinians from considering such a forward strategy for themselves?

In my view, the predominant tendency to treat religion in mainly political terms is that obstacle. Instead of allowing the spiritual function of religion to play its part, which touches every human being, the political aspect of religion can easily create an enemy image and, thus, an overwhelming obligation to feel offended. Nor does that obligation allow the Palestinians to react in a more positive way. If this observation is correct, the talk about the refugees may be primarily the shield they need to hide their trauma, the offense the Jewish conquest posed to their view of themselves.

But hiding motives can never bring lasting peace. Peace will be possible only if the real agendas are presented openly.

This book discusses all these questions. It will enable readers to look behind the scenes and understand why all peacemaking has failed thus far; they will see all that has been blanked out throughout the seventy years of international peace efforts. This book will enable politicians to avoid customary detours and to take the direct approach to peace by acknowledging the fears felt not only on the Jewish but also on the Muslim side, by targeting freedom of religion, equal rights and raising living standards, especially on the Palestinian side.

It is high time for such a book and above all for such an approach. It will pressure those in authority to include in their policy hitherto ignored spiritual and social factors in order to arouse essential reciprocal respect – for without such true respect there can be no hope of attaining lasting peace.

Peace will be based on building bridges.

Only once the underlying spiritual unity can be seen beyond customary divisions will ingrained prejudices lose their compulsiveness – and then, under these new auspices, Palestine will indeed stand a good chance of becoming one of the most productive countries of the Middle East.

If I've done my job right, the views presented in this book could change many people's lives. They could change the lives of the people you love.

For more information please go to www.temple-project.de