

Israel is now history.

We no longer recognize the State of Israel. There is no way back. The State of Israel has raped the world's recognition and will not achieve peace until it lays down its arms. The State of Israel, in its present form is history, writes Jostein Gaarder

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

By Jostein Gaarder

There's no turning back. It's time to learn a new lesson: We no longer recognize the State of Israel. We could not recognize the apartheid regime of South Africa, nor did we recognize the Afghani Taliban regime. Then there were many who did not recognize Saddam Hussein's Iraq or the Serbs' ethnic cleansing. We need to get used to the idea: The State of Israel, in its current form, is history.

We don't believe in the notion of God's Chosen People. We laugh at this people's capriciousness and weep at its misdeeds. To act as God's Chosen People is not only stupid and arrogant, but a crime against humanity. We call it racism.

Limits to tolerance

There are limits to our patience, and there are limits to our tolerance. We do not believe in divine promises as a justification for occupation and apartheid. We have left the Middle Ages behind. We laugh uneasily at those who still believe that the god of flora, fauna and the galaxies has selected one people in particular as his favorite and given it silly, stone tablets, burning bushes and a license to kill.

We call baby killers "baby killers" and will never accept that people such as these have a divine or historic mandate excusing their outrages. We just say: Shame on all apartheid, shame on ethnic cleansing and shame on every terrorist strike against civilians whether carried out by Hamas, the Hezbollah or the State of Israel!

Unscrupulous art of war

We acknowledge, and pay heed to, Europe's deep responsibility for the plight of the Jews, for the disgraceful harassment, the pogroms and the Holocaust. It was historically and morally necessary for the Jews to get their own home. However, the State of Israel, with its unscrupulous art of war and its disgusting weapons, has massacred its own legitimacy. It has systematically flaunted International Law, international conventions, and countless UN resolutions and can no longer expect protection from the same. It has carpet bombed the recognition of the world. But fear not! The Tribulation will soon be over. The State of Israel has seen its Soweto.

We are now at the watershed. There's no turning back. The State of Israel has raped the recognition of the world and shall have no peace until it lays down its arms.

Without defense, without skin

May the spirit and the word blow the apartheid walls of Israel down. The State of Israel does not exist. It is now without defense, without skin. May the world therefore have mercy upon the civilian population; for our prophecies of doom are not aimed at the civilian individuals.

We wish the people of Israel well, nothing but wellness, but we reserve the right to not eat Jaffa oranges as long as they are foul tasting and poisonous. It was endurable for some years to live without eating the blue grapes of apartheid.

They celebrate their triumphs

We don't believe that Israel grieves any more for the forty killed Lebanese children than it has wailed over the forty years spent in the desert three thousand years ago. We note that many Israelis celebrate such triumphs in the same manner they once cheered the plagues of the Lord as "fitting punishment" for the people of Egypt. (In that tale, the Lord God of Israel appears as an insatiable sadist.) We ask ourselves if most Israelis think that one Israeli life is worth more than the forty Palestinian or Lebanese lives.

For we've seen pictures of little Israeli girls writing hateful greetings on the bombs about to be dropped on the civilian populations of Lebanon and Palestine. The little Israeli girls are not cute when they strut with glee at the death and torment on the other side of the fronts.

The retribution of blood vengeance

We do not recognize the rhetoric of the State of Israel. We do not recognize the spiral of retribution and blood vengeance that comes with "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." We do not recognize the principle of ten or a thousand Arab eyes for one Israeli eye. We do not recognize collective punishment or population thinning out as a political weapon. Two thousand years have passed since a Jewish rabbi criticized the ancient doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

He said: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We do not recognize a state founded on anti-humanistic principles and on the ruins of an archaic national and warlike religion. Or, as Albert Schweitzer expressed it: "Humanitarianism consists of never sacrificing a human being for a cause."

Compassion and forgiveness

We do not recognize the old Kingdom of David as a model for the 21st century map of the Middle East. The Jewish rabbi claimed two thousand years ago that the Kingdom of God is not a martial restoration of the Kingdom of David; the Kingdom of God is within us and amongst us. The Kingdom of God is compassion and forgiveness. Two thousand years have passed since the Jewish rabbi disarmed and thoroughly humanized the old rhetoric of war. Even in his time, the first Zionist terrorists were operating.

Israel doesn't listen

For two thousand years, we have rehearsed the syllabus of humanism, but Israel doesn't listen. It wasn't the Pharisee who helped the man who lay by the wayside, having fallen prey to robbers. It was a Samaritan; today we would say, a Palestinian. We are humans firstly - then Christian, Muslim, or Jew. Or as the Jewish rabbi said: "And if you greet your brethren only, what more do you do than others?" We do not accept the kidnapping of soldiers. But neither do we accept the deportation of whole populations or the abduction of legally elected parliamentarians and government ministers.

We recognize the State of Israel of 1948, but not the one of 1967. It is the State of Israel that fails to recognize, respect or defer to the internationally lawful Israeli state of 1948. Israel wants more - more water and more villages. To obtain this there are those who want, with God's assistance, a final solution to the Palestinian problem. 'The Palestinians have so many other countries', certain Israeli politicians have argued; we have only one.

The U.S. or the world?

Or as the foremost protector of the State of Israel puts it: "May God continue to bless America." A little child took note of that. She turned to her mother, saying: "Why does the President always end his speeches with 'God bless America'? Why not, 'God bless the world'?"

Then there was a Norwegian poet who let out this childlike sigh of the heart: "Why doth Humanity so slowly progress?" It was he who wrote so beautifully of the Jew and the Jewess. But he rejected the notion of God's Chosen People. He personally liked to call himself a Muslim.

Starhawk speaks about the Positive Feed Back Loops which keep the disaster running and even more important, she is drawing a picture at large:

While the Bombs Fall

While the bombs fall in Lebanon, I'm teaching a two-week course in permaculture: regenerative, ecological design, with a schedule so demanding that I find it hard to check email every day, let alone watch the news. But it comes in, between lesser messages about leaks in the watering system in the garden and flight cancellations: pictures of dead children on the road. I feel horrified, angry, frustrated, powerless...all the things I'm used to feeling about the situation, but more so. I try to write something in the spare moments when my teaching partner Penny is covering rain catchment or graywater systems, but all I keep writing, over and over, is 'Killing children is wrong.' That seems so self-evident and banal that I can't quite bring myself to send it out. Or rather, it doesn't seem to add much to a discussion in which the decision makers are so convinced that killing our children is very, very wrong, but killing their children is the Path of Righteousness.

While the Congress and Senate are voting their support for Israel's actions, I am teaching systems theory and strategy, including an essay by Donella Meadows, 'Nine Ways to Intervene in a System (in increasing order of effectiveness.) The least effective way, she says, is by changing amounts. Please, General, can we drop fewer bombs? Can we keep it proportional? Could we scale down to killing just maybe two of their children for every one of ours, instead of ten?

The situation itself is a perfect example of what she calls a positive feedback loop. I find the term confuses people, as there is often nothing positive about it. I call it a **self-reinforcing cycle**. Whichever, it means a situation in which the more you have of something the more you get, and the more you need. You kill some of my children so I

Calmness and mercy

We do not recognize the State of Israel. Not today, not as of this writing, not in the hour of grief and wrath. If the entire Israeli nation should fall to its own devices and parts of the population has to flee their occupied areas into another Diaspora, then we say: May their surroundings stay calm and show them mercy. It is an eternal crime, without mitigating circumstances, to lay hand on refugees and a stateless people.

Peace and free passage for the evacuating, civilian population no longer protected by a State. Shoot not at the fugitives! Take not aim at them! They are vulnerable now -- like snails without shells, vulnerable as slow caravans of the Palestinian and Lebanese refugees, defenseless as the women, children and elderly of Qana, Gaza, Sabra and Shatilla. Give the Israeli refugees shelter; give them milk and honey!

Let not one Israeli child pay with his life. Far too many children and civilians have already been murdered.

Public Awareness Management is one of the leading strategies to maintain the status quo. Consequences can be found even within circles of critically reasoning people. An **uprising of humanity** however cannot be blocked for ever.

Public Awareness Management - This video is about how reporting about Middle East is done (1h20min)
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7828123714384920696>

kill more of yours, so you kill more of mine, so I kill even more of yours.

Self-reinforcing cycles are engines of change, for better or worse. They get more and more extreme, until either some new constraint enters to impose a new equilibrium, or they crash. Hurricanes suck up energy from the heat in the sea, and grow bigger, sucking more energy, which makes them bigger still, until they hit land and blow themselves out. Addicts keep taking more of what they're addicted to, until they hit bottom, whether the addiction is to alcohol or heroin or military intervention.

This quality of systems does not bode well-either for the children of Beirut or those of Haifa. Europe and the UN might make some weak attempts to intervene, but as long as the U.S. is cheering the Israeli government on, no serious constraints will be imposed. And why shouldn't we cheer them on, when Israel's addiction to force as a solution is the mirror of ours? We're the big guy and the small guy, standing each other drinks at the pub and throwing the chairs at anyone who threatens us, until we smash the place.

It is this very self-reinforcing cycle that keeps power in the hands of the neo-cons, whose answer to every fear and insecurity is more force. Force which creates more fear, which generates more violence, which requires more force to keep down. It's an inherent aspect of being caught in this sort of system that as it begins to spiral out of control, and starts to break apart, the only solution you can see is more of the same. An alcoholic gets fired for drinking on the job, and drinks more to forget. Iraq is not working out well for Bush and the neocons, so bring in more troops, or expand the war-Lebanon, Syria, Iran.

You can't change a self-reinforcing system by changing amounts. Recovering alcoholics know this, generals and politicians don't. Try to limit yourself to one drink before dinner, and somehow you still

end up behind the wheel of the car that careens into the bus full of schoolchildren on the road. Tell yourself that you are using a measured, limited response for well-thought out political aims, and you still end up with blackened torsos and the severed limbs of infants in smoking piles on the motorway.

Here's some other things we know about these cycles-they are expensive. They consume resources. Drinking up the children's milk money down at the local. Starving every social program to fund our military. And when they crash, they often fall hardest on the underserving. The drunk behind the wheel rolls out of the crushed car, unharmed, while the family of five lies dead. The policy makers are not cringing in tenements as bombs fall, or crying over the bleeding body of their most beloved child. Nor are most of those who support the policies. Yet.

To change the system, you need to change the paradigm, the way you frame the situation and think about it, the deep assumptions that shape your viewpoint. That's Donella Meadows' most effective way to intervene-changing the world view and the constructs that support the system. It's also, generally, a hard and painful process.

A new paradigm, a new construct of self and world, goes against everything we know and believe. If I'm telling myself that I'm a fun-loving, party kind of a gal - how painful to instead admit that I'm an alcoholic! If I'm justifying the deaths of children by telling myself that I'm bringing democracy to the region, or safeguarding my sister's children in Hadera, or fulfilling God's plan, how painful to look at the broken bodies on the pavement and say, 'I did that. I have blood on my hands.'

I'm thinking about one of the many fruitless arguments I've had about the issue, this one with an ultra-Orthodox rabbi's wife, shortly after I'd returned from doing solidarity work with the nonviolent Palestinian resistance in Gaza and the West Bank. I tried to describe to her what I'd seen in that bullet-riddled, shell-shocked land, the ongoing, everyday horrors and humiliations and frustrations, the houses bulldozed, the farmlands confiscated, the lives blunted and stunned and blasted into oblivion, and at the end she said to me:

'But we're good. So if we're doing it, it must be good.'

That's one hard paradigm to shift, because there is nowhere to go from that pinnacle but down, no change we can make that doesn't require us to face the possibility that maybe we are bad, or at the very least, that we are good people doing some bad things. From that vantage point, of course any critique, no matter how measured, seems anti-Semitic, an assault on that basic self-definition of Essential Goodness.

While the killing escalates, I am teaching about soil. How to feed the life of the soil, how to encourage and nurture the worms and the beneficial bacteria and fungi and other soil organisms. How a healthy soil will grow healthy plants, that can resist pests.

Industrial agriculture, in contrast, is based in the same exact paradigm as our Iraq policy, one that was succinctly expressed in a bumper sticker my first husband applied to his van shortly before we broke up: 'Force, It Works!'

So, if corn borers are attacking your crop, blast it with insecticides. Kill the bastards! Are there weeds among the fields? Zap them with roundup. Root feeding nematodes, perchance, below ground? Blanket the whole thing in plastic, and gas it with methyl bromide.

Force-it works, for a while, perhaps for short term goals. But force is costly. And, whether we're employing force against bugs or bacteria or human beings, force breeds resistance. And so insects that survive the onslaught of the pesticides breed young that are not affected. We up the doses, and breed more and more resistant pests, which require more insecticides to kill, in another

self-reinforcing cycle. The helpful insects, the predators that might have kept the pests in balance, are wiped out. And the residues of poison remain, in the soil and in the crops themselves.

Human beings are not insects or bacteria. The human resistance that force breeds is not in the genes, but in hearts and minds. And so the bombing of Beirut breeds rockets falling on Haifa and airplane bombers in London, and all the assaults on South Lebanon, the bombs and blown-up bridges and armed teenage boys in uniform on the ground will breed more rockets yet, more suicide bombs of the future, more death in retaliation.

And the devotion to force is itself a toxin, poisoning the soil of Israeli society, starving its own social programs, warping the very soul and ethics of the religion it purports to defend.

How do we get out of this mess? What would a regenerative paradigm look like as a policy? If compost, worm castings and plants that feed beneficial bugs are the gardening alternative to chemical warfare, what would be the political parallel?

From a purely self-interested, Israeli point of view, a policy maker coming from a regenerative paradigm might say:

'We can never stamp our hatred, but let us not create habitat that favors its growth. Instead, let us nurture health wherever we find it, and create conditions that let flourish those who favor peace.'

So, in the nineties, Israel could have said, *'We have a small window here, when the Palestinians have settled for less than they could have demanded. Let us move quickly to establish a Palestinian state, with true areas of self determination for its people. If the Occupation is a running sore, inflaming rage and hatred throughout the Arab world and undermining our moral credibility, how do we swiftly end it and transform the region into a place of opportunity and hope? Where can we support people's legitimate dreams and aspirations? How do we support the health of the region's actual soil, the vitality of its crops, the abundance of its markets, the excellence of its Universities? How do we create such flourishing abundance that this region becomes a shining model for the whole Middle East?'*

Instead, Israel built settlements, began a long term program of encroachment on the tiny territory allocated to the Palestinians, and maintained an Occupation backed by force.

When Abbas was elected, Israel could have said, *'How do we give him victories and real gains that will strengthen his own people's allegiance? And if corruption runs rampant in the Palestinian Authority, then where are there leaders of integrity we can ally with? And if Hamas is winning over the people with its social programs, how do we feed a healthy economy so that they become unnecessary?'*

Instead, Israel continued to build a wall which confiscates huge amounts of Palestinian land without compensation, destroys the very communities which historically have been most friendly to Israel, unilaterally 'withdrew ' from Gaza while keeping it surrounded, an isolated, open-air prisons with its resources destroyed and its factions inflamed-creating a perfect breeding habitat for yet more violence.

There are a hundred other missed opportunities. And there will be more. But the longer the cycle goes on, the more damage is done, and the harder it is to stop.

Am I 'blaming' Israel unfairly? Couldn't Hezbollah just stop shooting rockets, and the Palestinian factions stop bombing?

Yes, certainly they could, and it would be good if they did. Children would live who otherwise would die.

When we're caught in a self-reinforcing cycle, it's a fairly useless ex-

ercise to ask, 'Who started it?' Or to debate whether one side or the other has the 'right to defend itself' by continuing the cycle. Far better to ask, 'Who is in position to stop this cycle?'

And it is Israel, the occupier of the territory, the fourth largest military power in the world, that sets the conditions of the region, that has the power to create a habitat where violence flourishes, or peace is favored.

And I admit that I want Israel to act as the moral agent it claims to be. I'm a Jew who was raised with the dream of Israel, as a safe place after the Holocaust, as a refuge in that visa-denying world which sent boatloads of my people back to their deaths, as a place where we could finally, after two thousand years, be ourselves, in our own home. Among the many casualties of this war is all that was good in that dream.

Because of the pennies I saved as a child to buy trees for the promised land, because of the songs I grew up singing, because of the deep well that was carved in my heart for that dream that now spews anguish and blood, I have the right to an accounting from those who have replaced the God of Justice with the God of Force.

The place has a history of great prophets and lousy kings. There is nothing more Jewish than thundering at the policy makers, saying *'Jahweh and Allah and all good-hearted people agree: killing children is wrong. Just plain wrong, and when you do it you have left the Path of Righteousness. The cost of force is too high-it includes your soul.'*

Even as the bombs fall, there are people choosing to come from new assumptions. They are the Palestinians of the villages where the wall is confiscating their farmland, choosing nonviolent means of struggle, returning day after day to demonstrations in which they get beaten, tear-gassed, arrested. They are the Israelis and internationals who cross borders to stand with them, saying, *'We are not 'Palestinians' and 'Israelis', we are people together struggling against injustice.'*

They are the Women in Black, who stand in silent vigil for peace, year after year, fleeing Katusha rockets and returning back to their stand for peace. They are organizers of cross-cultural dialogues, soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories or to kill civilians, youth who refuse to don the explosives belt.

That these people still exist, that they somehow grow out of the blasted, toxic soil of the Middle East, gives us some reason to hope. In spite of the million missed opportunities, the oceans of spilled blood, the escalation of stupid policies, the situation is not yet utterly without hope.

But what can we do, we who are not policy makers or generals or Queens of the Middle East, who are simply ordinary people of compassion, wringing our hands in front of the TV set. Every day, I hear people ask, *'What can we do that will be effective?'*

And for once, I can't think of a damn thing. Never has political action felt so futile.

But I think about the advice the great war journalist Robert Fisk received, for surviving decades in Lebanon and other war zones. *'Do something,'* he was told. *'Don't do nothing.'*

So do something. While we're waiting for the effective thing, do something even if it seems small and futile. Write your representatives. Go to the demonstration, or organize one. Educate yourself more deeply, then talk to someone who has less information. Stand in vigil with the Women in Black. Some of the founders of the International Solidarity Movement in Palestine are organizing nonviolent civil resistance in Lebanon. Join them, or support them. Pray to those Gods who may secretly resent being cast as child killers.

Do something. We don't know what the effective thing will be, may never know. But if we do nothing, we will surely have no impact.

And what do we say? How do you stop a vicious cycle? Just stop. Stop now. Don't wait until the enemy is utterly defeated, because your every effort to defeat them strengthens the forces that created them. Just stop. Not tomorrow, when our position is stronger. Not the day after, when you have neutralized more territory. The longer the cycle continues, the worse the crash will be. Just stop. Stop now.

Come from a new paradigm. Feed the soil of the Holy Land with something other than blood. Cherish all children, ours and theirs.

Starhawk - <http://www.starhawk.org/>

Recommended reading:

The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community by David C. Korten

I have just finished reading David C. Korten's latest book, *The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community*. If there is one book that needs to be read by every awakening adult, college student, and high school senior, this is it. It reviews the glories and horrors of U.S. History. It reviews the horrors of the wrong turn for Empire that was made 5000 years ago. It shows us the presence of hundreds of millions of people who are already turning away from the sorrows of Empire toward a vastly new sort of society that can take its place. It reveals how the current neocon policies of the Bush Administration are not new in U.S. history, but rather a carrying of these themes to their furthest and most destructive extremities. For those with eyes to see, this administration is discrediting these obsolete patterns. The plutocratic Radical Right and the religious Radical Right have combined together in a futile attempt to preserve the social mode of Empire. It is they, not we cultural and religious creatives, who are on the defensive. A confident persistent offensive on our part can overcome this backlash and bring about a viable future for humankind. This is the hopeful message of this book.

Decades ago Kenneth Boulding spoke of the end of civilization and the beginning of post-civilization. He spoke of this turning as the most radical social shift since the shift from the tribal to the civilization mode of social organization. Korten has updated this vision. He has filled in details from the work of hundreds of people who have pioneered aspects of this turning for decades, indeed centuries. Those of us who have done our homework in these arenas will find much of this book familiar, but Korten has pulled it all together in an inclusive overview, filled it in with detailed examples, and communicated it all to this generation with an illuminating prose. Every tenth page has a quote that you might post on your refrigerator do.

I have some disagreements with Korten in the religion arena, but they do not undermine my overall appreciation for the thrust of this book. It is gratifying to me that he sees the arena of religion as a primary cultural arena along with family, education, and media. Korten's theology, like that of so many who are rejecting the supernaturalism of the past, tends to water down religion to statements of human-made rational meaning. I feel called to assist my era to see that good religion is a relationship with That Final Mystery that never makes sense, but only makes Awe. Nevertheless, as I attempt to live in these times from the awareness of Awe and Wonder, I find myself joining Korten in his basic vision of what we must accomplish in the realm of social reorganization. I count him one of the "prophets" of our times.

Go ahead; add this book to your library, and get it read this year. We need it for both 2006 and 2008.

For Earth, Gene Marshall - <http://www.realisticliving.org/>