A Response to Five Critics

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There were two questions on my mind when I started thinking some years back about writing *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?*[1] First, how much suffering (its perpetration on others, or having it inflicted upon one) can be considered reasonable in the pursuit of a human end? And second, related to this, what would anyone (not just *us*, but whoever we may happen to be) want a state for? There were countless horrendous acts being carried out by Israelis and—at the time—Palestinians, to make the first question pressing, almost obsessive. As to the second question, I wished for those of us immersed in this seemingly interminable national conflict to remind ourselves as individual human beings of the basic needs we seek to have satisfied by any system of government. Are *national* or *religious* states really necessary for the pursuit of our ends as human beings, or as "normal" people?

Had I tried to challenge the reader to take my questions seriously by proposing that Israel drop its demand for a *Jewish* or *national* state by assimilating Palestinians under its rule into its political system, my Palestinian readers would not have felt the bite of my provocation, and my Israeli readers would have viewed it as yet another call to destroy the Zionist dream. But my real message (to both sides) was that states can be malevolent (not only in the Leninist or class sense, but also in the religious and national senses), and when they are such, sane people should together try to *reduce* the role of states to the bare minimum that serves the welfare of individuals.

Of course, the other factor that troubled me while writing the book was (and remains) whether a reasonable two-state solution is still realistic, and what else we can all realistically work toward, even as a temporary measure. In reading the comments on my book in this symposium, I must say that I haven't come out feeling that my worries (which are not merely academic or scholarly, but are live issues) have been laid to rest. In what follows, I will deal with these comments thematically rather than in strict sequence. My sense is that my underlying questions about what states are for—and by implication what a Jewish state is for—remain unanswered.

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[1] Sari Nusseibeh, *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

One could read the negative reaction to *What Is A Palestinian State Worth?* in Donna Robinson Divine's article[2] as being predicated upon an understandable concern for the viability of a democratic Jewish state. "Nusseibeh, in effect," she writes at one point, "turns into a reality the polemical charge of *apartheid* against the Jewish state since Palestinians would, in accordance with his proposal, be formally denied full citizenship."[3] Sensing "despair" and even perhaps the seeds of an unrealistic and "redemptive" rather than a future-looking and constructive politics in the proposal to consider granting basic civil rights to Palestinians under Israel's control, she argues that even if such rights were to be granted, the Palestinian condition would still not be an improvement on their condition under occupation. A two-state solution (allowing for proper engagement in national self-determination through elections, etc.) is a far worthier, and more sensible target to remain committed to, Divine in effect concludes.

But Divine neither states for how long Palestinians should suffer the present conditions until the two-state solution is brought into effect, nor addresses the effects of the passage of time on the practicality of such a solution—effects as simple as the fact that more than half a million Jewish settlers now live across the so-called 1967 lines, and that, unlike Ben Gurion's view of religion and Zionism, recent surveys of the Jewish public in Israel reveal a strongly "biblical" and "messianic" Zionism that would clearly and by definition be far less accommodating to Palestinian national claims (forget "rights") than was the case even twenty or thirty years ago.[4] (And by saying

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[2] Donna Robinson Divine, "What Is a Palestinian State Worth to the Palestinians?" *Reason Papers* 34, no. 2 (October 2012), pp. 47-51. The negativity I mean is an anger that can be sensed in many of the expressions she uses. For example: "Nusseibeh has nothing new to say . . . about Israel's occupation" (p. 48); "has really not thought about the state in a serious way or delved deeply" (p. 48); and "ends up providing a spurious logic wrapped in a tone of moral loftiness" (p. 49). It is an anger reminiscent of some other reviews of the book; see, e.g., Elliott Abrams, "A Peaceful Palestinian's Perplexing Plan," *Commentary*, January 2011, pp. 41-44; and, from the opposite political angle, Tom H., "What Is a Sari Nusseibeh For?" *Jadaliyya Magazine*, March 2011, accessed online at: http://sari.alquds.edu/state_worth/jadlyh.htm.

[3] Divine, "What Is a Palestinian State Worth to the Palestinians?" p. 49.

[4] There are various indicators of the problems Israel faces in dealing with its increased religious conservatism, including, most recently, public debate over whether or not to renew the law on excluding the (quickly expanding) Haredi community from military service, the court case and consequent street violence concerning the "busing" and separation of (orthodox) school children having eastern and western roots, and attacks on young female school children in Beit Shemesh for "improper" dress, as well as the mounting violence being perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and even, in some bizarre cases, against Israeli soldiers. In terms of general trends, perhaps one of the more reliable studies was that published by the Israel Democracy Institute in 2012, but concluded a year before that, which compared its most recent findings with those from 1991 and 1999, where it is revealed that there has been a reversal of democratic

this I should not be thought to be discounting the negative effect of the passage of time on peace-making that a rising religiosity on the Muslim side can have, as Divine points out, and is also expressed in the last sentence of Paul Rahe's commentary.[5])

Of course, if one were to draw up a balance-sheet of the comparative advantages and disadvantages in a frozen time-slice accruing to Palestinians of having full civil rights within Israel and having political rights in their own independent state, one may well conclude that the second option would be more advantageous for Palestinians than the first. It would certainly also fit more neatly with the concept of a democratic Jewish state. But likewise, and using the same calculus—again thinking in terms of a frozen or provisional time-slice—a regime of full civil rights for Palestinians is surely, and contrary to Divine's claim, far worthier and morally far less offensive (both to Palestinians as well as to a democratic and Jewish Israeli) than the state of occupation. The fact that Divine is unaware of the benefits Palestinians can derive under a regime of full civil rights as opposed to what they have access to in the present regime of occupation, is one that raises the concern that well-meaning Jews are not fully cognizant of the deprivations of basic rights Palestinians suffer, not least being the right of free movement. Security reasons are typically cited to justify these deprivations, but "to justify" cannot be a substitute for "to see," and it is thus a matter of elementary calculus to see that Palestinian living-conditions under a full civil rights regime would be a vast improvement over present conditions.

If so, then why does Divine not see it that way? I believe the answer lies in viewing the "proposal" (that Palestinians be granted full civil rights) with a *dynamic* rather than a *static* lens. Such a condition, viewed long term and cumulatively, rather than in a frozen time-slice, will be seen for what it is, namely, as *apartheid*, thereby constituting an existential threat to the very

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trends in Israel as compared with the survey taken in 1991. See Asher Arian et al., *A Portrait of Israeli Jews: Beliefs, Observance, and Values of Israeli Jews, 2009* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2012), accessed online at: http://www.idi.org.il/sites/english/events/Other_Events/Documents/GuttmanAviChaiReport2012_EngFinal.pdf.

How all of this reflects on the two-state paradigm is best expressed by Israel's latest elections, which resulted in the formation of the most right-wing government in Israeli history. While members of this government (but not all of them) pay lip service to the two-state solution, none of them has in mind a paradigm that would meet even minimal Palestinian demands. Andrew Wilson, in his "Why the Quartet Turned Its Back On The Middle East," *World Policy Blog*, August 28, 2012, accessed online at: http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2012/08/28/why-quartet-turned-back-middle-east, in effect fingers Israel as the procrastinator in the failed efforts over the past year to put life again in what everyone by now has come to see as a dead peace process.

[5] Paul A. Rahe, "The Return of Abu Nasr al-Farabi," *Reason Papers* 34, no. 2 (October 2012), p. 37.

concept of a democratic Jewish state. This becomes more obvious once we take the choice of "return" into account, which I include as a basic civil right that, under these terms, would have to be granted for individuals. (The situation—and conditions—would be different under the terms of a two-state solution.)

Viewed this way, Divine's concern as someone who upholds the vision of a democratic Jewish state is understandable. But herein lies the inconsistency of the position she holds, namely, that a two-state solution is both better and more realistic to stick to. Why should it make more sense for Palestinians to "stick to" a two-state solution regardless of the effects of the passage of time, than it would be for Israelis to deny Palestinians a regime of full civil rights for fear of the effects of the passage of time? If a consideration of the dynamic nature of history is to be heeded at all—as it surely must—then it should be seen as bearing relevance to whether a two-state solution is realistic in the long term just as much as it does to whether a regime of full civil rights is a threat in the long term to the existence of a democratic Jewish state.

This prospect of a civil rights regime for Palestinians "threatening" to transform Israel (and the occupied territories) into a secular binational state (of one form or another) is also noted by the other commentators in this issue of *Reason Papers*. Fahmi Abboushi welcomes the implication,[6] and Rahe points out that some in Israel will regard my proposal as "a Trojan Horse," though Rahe quickly adds that while the proposal may well be a ruse, it may be one of another kind: that of trying to awaken Israelis to the interest they have in hastily ending the occupation and allowing Palestinians to establish their own independent state.[7] Said Zeedani, mindful of the "proposal" as being either an alarm bell or a "threat" (or both), gives his article the interrogative title "A Modest Proposal: Is It?"[8] But instead of choosing to charge me, as Divine does, with "providing a spurious logic wrapped in a tone of moral loftiness" in its defense, Zeedani opts to take the subject seriously by challenging both the "liberal" notion that the individual's identity is ultimately "extractable" from its contextual embeddedness, and is subject therefore to being defined anew, as well as the validity of the very principles (freedom and equality) on which the proposal is based, and their derivability from what I call "the compassionate impulse"—both notions constituting the foundation of how I articulate the relationship between individual and state. Neither, he claims, do I take seriously "the communitarian critique of liberalism," nor is it

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[6] Fahmi Abboushi, "Nusseibeh on Secular Faith," *Reason Papers* 34, no. 2 (October 2012), pp. 45-46.

[7] Rahe, "The Return of Abu Nasr al-Farabi," p. 32.

[8] Said Zeedani, "A Modest Proposal: Is It?" *Reason Papers* 34, no. 2 (October 2012), pp. 38-44.

evident, he writes, "whether the compassionate impulse or sense, or the sense of benevolent sympathy for that matter, can justify the derivation of the two ultimate principles Nusseibeh has in mind."[9]

I shall reserve my observations on the important question of compassion for Rahe's critique below. What I wish at this point to do by way of responding to Zeedani's "skepticism" concerning my claims in the book on identity and universal moral values is to add what I hope would be corroborative reasons for accepting what admittedly, and as Zeedani suggests, were simply statements of opinion on the matter.

First, then, as to identity, my claim is not that this is not embedded— quite the contrary. It is very often so deeply embedded that, I point out, one ends up simply being a vehicle for an external determining agency (an ideology, a context, etc.) that defines what one does. Zeedani asks whether and how it would make sense to strip away those contextual layers, and whether and in what way it could be claimed that an innermost layer would be left behind after that hypothetical contextual stripping has been done—this innermost layer being regarded as the genuinely human and specifically personal layer constituting an individual's identity.[10] The answer, I believe, can be given by any one of us on the basis of our experiences, as we can all testify to a self that has the capacity to question at times how "wedded" we are to a particular contextual layer or other, for instance, an ideology, a set of beliefs, or a relationship we happen to have. We needn't go as far as Rene Descartes or—closer to home—as Avicenna (in his "flying man" thought-experiment) in trying to articulate such a core layer by abstracting from our sensations, thoughts, and physical extensions.[11] Surely, though, we all have the capacity to imagine ourselves as somehow abstracted from the contexts we happen to be embedded in, and it is precisely this (very human-specific and

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[9] Ibid., p. 41.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Rene Descartes, "First Meditation: What Can Be Called into Doubt," *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Descartes, Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoof, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 76-79. Two references to Avicenna's so-called "Flying Man Experiment" are found in *Avicenna's De Anima* (Arabic Text) *Being the Psychological Part of Kitab al-Shifa'*, ed. F. Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 15-16 and 255. In these thought-experiments Avicenna "calls attention" to the sense one can begin to have of one's separateness from one's body through an introspective process in which one proceeds to deny the attribution of bodily parts to oneself. Avicenna does not propose this as proof for the existence of immaterial souls or selves, but simply as a "reminder" to any of us that we can in fact engage in this kind of experiment and come to this conclusion by ourselves. At one stage, he likens the imaginary process of shedding one's physical parts to the shedding of the clothes one wears, so that there remains in each case a core substance beneath or behind the contingent layers that constitute the whole person.

imaginative) capacity that allows us to seek to be better people, or to be better positioned in the world. Not all of us take charge of ourselves, or try to, but the very fact that some of us do, and that we understand what it is for a person to do that, proves that identities to one extent or the other can be *made* or developed through one's life rather than are such as to be impervious to human agency. While this is not an *argument* to prove that we are capable of "renewing" ourselves by getting rid of some layers in favor of others, it is more tellingly an empirical *fact*, and is thus more reason to accept my claim. But the ability I attribute to individuals need not imply, as Zeedani suggests, that I therefore discount (like some versions of liberalism do) the individual's surrounding environment. Quite the contrary, my reading of the role of compassion (see below) might rightly place me in the communitarian camp by some, if only to show how simplistic this (liberal/communitarian) division can be if taken to extremes.

Turning to an even more abstruse area of ethics, Zeedani questions my account of universal moral values—that there are such, that they are chiseled out from human experience over a long period of time, that they are rooted in the sentiments of love and compassion, and that a model can be set up in which they can be seen to rest on two ultimate principles, namely, freedom and equality.[12] It is clearly impossible to defend these claims in a short space, but I can perhaps add a few comments to the brief account given in the book, especially concerning Rawls-type thought-experiments. Clearly, a more detailed explanation of my various claims here would need to separate between a *genetic* account (how values evolve in different societies, and finally converge), and what one might describe as a *structural* account (how, given a jumbled bag of such values that have been developed over time, one can in retrospect organize, structure, or order these items in relation to one another). My thought-experiment addresses the second of these issues, simply by positing a situation where rational agents, having become stripped of all of their possessions (or having been pulled out of the game of life), are given the chance to "play again" by an omnipotent god who asks them to choose from among the bag of all the goods/possessions in the world, including those states and conditions they believe to be desirable, as well as those principles that can determine their relations with one another, those items—one by one and in consecutive order—that they most highly value. Ballots will be cast in secret and simultaneously, and the results will be announced after the end of each round. The idea behind the thought-experiment is to determine, when push comes to shove, what order of importance might be given to worldly goods by rational individuals making a choice, while accounting as they do so for the choices that would be made by their peers. The players in this game, unlike Rawls's, are not innocent newcomers to the world,[13] but mature citizens who

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[12] Zeedani, "A Modest Proposal: Is It?" p. 41.

[13] See John Rawls's discussion of the "veil of ignorance" in his *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 118-23.

are conscious of who they are and of the past and the possessions of which they have just been dispossessed. The ticket that receives the highest number of votes in each round will be the winner (the correlated "good" will be duly granted to all), and voting will proceed item by item in this manner until the number of participants no longer constitutes a quorum, indicating a waning common relevance, as this is viewed, of the voting procedure for the distribution of the remaining goods in the world.

It is important to note that this is not necessarily a zero-sum electoral procedure for all goods, where a good (e.g., wealth or health) that fails to get the highest vote will be lost forever. But there will remain an important element of doubt in the players' minds, namely, whether a good they highly value will be similarly valued by a sufficient number of other players for it to get voted on at all. On the whole, as all of the participants will know, "highly valued" goods will most likely await their being given their place in the order being established. On the other hand, participants can immediately calculate that specific choices will not have a chance (being specific, people will not know about them, let alone vote for them), while some general goods (such as gold or property) are limited (so that a rush on them will not make a difference as to the share each can eventually have). Under the circumstances, the question therefore being posed—which item is most likely to be voted for in the first round, and which in the second?—can of course elicit different answers, but my contention (equality in the first round, and freedom in the second) is supported by the consideration that, while I can ask for, and probably receive, everything I may desire in some amount or other, I need first to ensure that I will not be short-changed in anything that I may or may not think of that will be a good to be distributed. The principle of equality, being so comprehensive, will therefore ensure for me the same chances, especially those that have not occurred to me but may well occur to those more in the know, as everyone else in the new world. The same consideration of "general coverage" will dictate my second choice, as it will guarantee for me access to all of those goods that I will need in order to develop myself to the extent possible, and protection from all of those restrictions that may arrest this development. But I note that "the reach" of the first principle is more extensive than that of the second, which is what gives it priority. Given those two items as a foundation, I could proceed to vote for more specific goods or possessions (such as love, health, wealth, happiness, etc.).

The above should be seen as a "fuller explanation" of the reasons for selecting these two items as foundational principles of the values that are held by rational agents (assuming there are such values). This should be sufficient, given that I do not believe (nor, presumably, does Zeedani) that a foolproof argument can be provided to show that this is exactly how the new game might be played. But I hope it is clear that, were there to be a rational public discourse in anticipation of the vote and in preparation for it, the choices I outline would stand a very good chance of winning wide support.

Now I wish to turn to that other area—concerning psychology or genealogy—of whether compassion can be considered a *source* and ultimate standard of measure of universal moral values. And here Rahe reminds us that, while the highfalutin and domineering ideologies and political systems feeding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and which mercilessly hound normal human beings, may drive some of us (including me) to take refuge in what seem to be more down-to-earth humane sentiments as compassion, similar states of mayhem in Europe in the Reformation and post-Reformation eras persuaded thinkers from Montaigne through Hobbes and Montesquieu to take the opposite path. They sing the praises of reason and commerce instead, finding an exit route from that chaos through these values rather than through human sentiment:

> Montaigne, Hobbes, and their successors—including John Locke, Bernard Mandeville, and the Baron de Montesquieu—sought systematically to reduce the hold that "anthropomorphized higher-order objects" have on men and to promote civility within political communities and cooperation among them by debunking idealism, unleashing instrumental reason, and encouraging on everyone's part a sane, sober calculation of material interests. The three last-mentioned authors in particular thought that the growth of commercial society and the habits of self-interested petty calculation that it would instill would dispel in considerable measure the illusions that give rise to religious and ethnic strife.[14]

Having thus outlined the path from the state of nature to peace charted by the requisite habits of thought that are fostered by "the spread of commerce," Rahe then takes to task Rousseau for having reintroduced a compassion that he blames for "the nationalism that brought murder and mayhem to Europe in the twentieth century on an even greater scale than had religious sectarianism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."[15] In addition to compassion's nature not being such as to lay the ground for a wide-ranging sympathetic and civil polity (it is "contagious" but "partisan"), Rahe tells us that it is even more dangerously inflammatory, compassion and hatred being, all too often, "peas in a pod."[16] Rahe goes on to cite, by way of indicating better routes to Rome, the story of what is now the city of Empuries, as told by the ancient geographer Strabo. Strabo explains how the indigenous Indicetans eventually merged with the Greek interlopers into a single polity on the Iberian mainland, with "a certain mixture of barbarian and Greek customs." The dynamic

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[14] Rahe, "The Return of Abu Nasr al-Farabi," p. 34.

[15] Ibid., pp. 35 and 34.

[16] Ibid., p. 35.

involved in the process was commerce, aptly also indicative of the original meaning of the city's name, Emporium, as a trading post.[17]

I wish to address the question of reason below, in my commentary on Abboushi's observations, where it is juxtaposed with will and faith. As to commerce and compassion, I will confess straightaway that I find Rahe's argument, in one respect, perfectly persuasive. Europe post-Monnet is not the same as Europe before, and a regime of commercial interchange between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East—where people can "rub up" against one another with great frequency, with a view to mutual financial benefit—can certainly foster the habits of thought conducive to a civil polity, as well as of moral behavior and values. But while I agree that commercial society can only function in a civil state, or in a state of peace, and becomes an ingredient in the nurturing of a civil polity, I question whether it is itself what *produces* such a state of peace (or a civil state). I question, in other words, whether it is a source or a result. In the years between 1967 (when Israel took the West Bank and Gaza by war) and 1993 (when the Oslo peace accord was signed), there were ebbs and flows in the level and rate of commerce between Israel and Palestinian society, but never enough to create a state of peace, let alone a civil polity, between them. This was the case, let it be noted, despite the fact that over 90% of the entirety of goods and services consumed by Palestinians during that period were of items that either originated in Israel or came via Israel. And in the post-Oslo period (1993 onwards, and until this day), the existence both of an on-paper peace agreement and a semi-total economic dependence on Israel for goods and services, has also failed to produce the much sought-after state of peace or the requisite "habits of thought" for a civil polity. Yet, admittedly, this is no reason to discount Strabo's paradigm. Assuming an extension of another sixty-odd years or more of more or less the same conditions of life for Israelis and Palestinians in the region between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, it is possible, and even quite probable, that a single civil polity can emerge. But when it does, I would still claim that it would do so not *because* of commerce, but because, through human interaction, both sides come to see and recognize the human face of the other, having become disenchanted and fatigued with previous images each had of the other. I would still claim, in other words, and would not have had my claim disproved by the said paradigm, that it would be human sentiment in the end that brings about a real state of peace (along with its values).

I find irresistible the urge here to refer explicitly to Ibn Khaldun, which I resisted in the text of *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?* While accounting for *fear* as a primary motivation for bonding with others (a theme common to social-contract theories, its Hobbesian version underpinning much of modern-day preemptory strategic thinking), Ibn Khaldun's incredible and under-recognized insight in this regard is that this instinct's bonding function

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[17] Ibid., p. 36.

is the fear one has not for oneself, but for *the other*.[18] Ibn Khaldun's paradigm is the mother's protective instinct for her child, extending to placing herself in harm's way on that child's behalf. Surely this instinct is, as Rahe observes in referring to compassion, "partisan." Likewise, for Ibn Khaldun, it is tribal. But in Ibn Khaldun it constitutes, politically, a genealogical starting point for a social relationship that, ultimately and cumulatively, leads to and is replaced in larger human contexts by what he calls "kingship," which by now becomes the civil contract between ruler and ruled. There is, undeniably, and as Rahe observes, the constant danger that, besides the positive aspect of bonding that compassion brings with it, it can be accompanied by correlated passions such as hatred and fury (e.g., against those who are seen to have done harm to one's kin or relatives). But surely, this is no reason to banish it, or to diminish its role, just as it is no reason to banish love or to deny it its positive role in human affairs just because of the devastating fury or wars it can unleash. The question that should be of concern is: Is it the cold-blooded calculation of financial benefit between individuals that accounts in the first place for a state of peace between them, or is the state of peace based on the natural instincts of love and compassion people have, commerce being consequent upon this? Hobbesian strategizing (that is, building up relations with the other on the assumption of having to avoid a constant potential threat from them) has had, and continues to have—especially in the Israeli-Palestinian context—unfortunately calamitous results. It is only once we return to our real selves as human beings that we can begin to sense the naturalness and attraction of building peace with the other.

       Rahe rightly places commerce alongside reason as being its logical extension or companion. This being the case, he trusts it more than faith for peacemaking. Abboushi also questions faith as a mechanism for bringing about peace, arguing both that it needs to be embraced by the two peoples as a whole rather than only by leaders for it to work, and, indirectly, that it has to be accompanied by justice—and therefore result in a one-state solution—if it is to succeed. Abboushi also brings up the question of moral as opposed to

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[18] In *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Bahiyah al-Misriyah, 1930), I.8, p.108, Ibn Khaldun first introduces and explains the term *assabiyya* (commonly translated as solidarity). Kinship, he claims, is to have a natural disposition to protect one's kin and blood-relatives and to be averse to any harm or misfortune befalling them—*indeed, even to wish that one could place oneself in the way of any such harm lest it befall them*. Suffice it in this context to point out that, for Ibn Khaldun, what *binds* people together in the first place and in advance of any social or political contract of any sort, is a basic protective instinct toward loved ones. But even in primitive bedouin groupings, where political leadership first comes into play through the role of the local chieftain who enforces peace and security for all, *it is already formed kinship groups* which are capable of providing the chieftain in question to the larger community. More on this can be found in a lecture I gave (in Abu Dhabi, March 15, 2009), "Fear *of* the Other, Fear *for* the Other," accessed online at: http://sari.alquds.edu/ad.pdf.

legitimate rights, referring to two major "moral compromises" that have to be made (borders and refugees) for a two-state solution to work. Indeed, there is something of the "redemptive politics" of which Divine speaks expressed in Abboushi's comments, which, however, I will leave aside in order to concentrate on the roles of reason and faith. The reservation that I express about reason in my book primarily has to do with defining objectives.[19] In some contexts, such as that of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, protagonists define their objectives by factors other than reason (beliefs, inclinations, desires, etc.), which is why negotiations in these situations—even though apparently carried out rationally—cannot be expected to resolve anything. I explain this by saying that the two negotiating parties in contexts like this do not operate in the same "rational space"—they would not be "on the same page," to use a common modern-day metaphor.[20] The focus on reason in searching for a resolution through negotiations would therefore be like barking up the wrong tree, and is a waste of time—as our own experience of negotiations has only too painfully proved. In such cases, what is required for making negotiations potentially fruitful, I argue, is "a change of heart," or a transformation of attitudes—a process involving what can be viewed as an identity change, or a rearrangement of the layers of one's identity.[21] Such a change of heart (a realignment that places the two sides on the same rational plane) can then allow for a rational discourse that is at least so positioned that it can lead to a resolution of the conflict. But how can such a transformation occur?

Proactively speaking, it has first to occur in oneself, by oneself. Strongly held but wrong beliefs about oneself and the other must bravely be questioned, and shed; objectives begin to be adjusted, and behavior is consequently affected. Self-change begins to have an effect on the other, transforming the antagonist into a protagonist, to use Abboushi's words. We already have many examples in our own history showing how this works, Yitzhak Rabin's change of heart being one of them. But I agree with Abboushi that one individual cannot by himself bring about the desired change.[22] A critical mass of the respective populations must form, requiring transformations of the collective identities. My use of the three elements of will, faith, and vision in this context is meant to address this. A leader, or group of leaders, must first have a vision—of a prophetic nature, if you will. A beautiful new world beyond the conflict is imagined, that is, it is thought possible "of itself," or thought at least not to be inherently self-contradictory.

[19] Nusseibeh, *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?* pp. 180-93.

[20] Ibid., p. 183.

[21] Ibid., pp. 210-11.

[22] Abboushi, "Nusseibeh on Secular Faith," p. 46.

One then has to have faith that such a vision can be brought about by one's own efforts. This is faith in one's self and in one's abilities. Unlike optimism, which is an observer's passive (though positive) reading of the world, faith in oneself that one can bring about the new world is a proactive attitude, and extends naturally to the third element, which is the exercise of one's will to bring it about. And faith, let us not forget, works like a magnet—that is what prophets, political leaders, innovators, and others throughout history have proved possible. One man's dream can become that of a nation. This is the secret of faith, namely, that it can start with the few, but then become the creed of many. It is in seemingly intractable situations like the one we have that peace, I argued, could be made to come about. All this, of course, is not a foolproof or magical mechanism that works automatically. But a human conflict so deeply embedded in history, religious beliefs, and conflicting self-righteous claims should not be thought of as being amenable to mechanistic conflict-resolution theories, such as straightforward market-place and interest-focused negotiations.

Issam Nassar reminds us of the present state of affairs, where Palestinians as Palestinians are deprived of their basic rights, and look to a state therefore as the agency through which such rights could be assured.[23] After all, ours is a world already made up of states, and it is natural therefore for Palestinians seeking their rights to seek them through the agency of their own state. Even so, Nassar is cognizant of the fact that a state, while potentially securing certain rights, will also and by definition require the forgoing of other rights (territory, return, etc.). How does one weigh the pros and the cons here, the value of some rights as opposed to the value of others? He leaves the question unanswered.

In the book, I take up this dilemma and I argue in favor of a state (assuming it fits Palestinian requirements) as against the right of return. However, it seems to me that Israel has made this dilemma obsolete through its unyielding aggrandizement of Palestinian territory beyond the Green Line of 1967. But in raising the question of whether states are the agencies of rights, Nassar in fact echoes concerns also expressed by other authors. The general question here is whether civil rights aren't by (historical or logical) definition dependent upon (or follow upon or are guaranteed by) political rights. My short response is that while some have argued that the existence of civil rights requires political rights, in fact, historically speaking, civil rights have typically (in stages and in different forms) preceded and led political rights.[24] Furthermore, there is nothing in my proposal that excludes the

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[23] Issam Nassar, "Reflections on What a Palestinian State Is Worth," *Reason Papers* 34, no. 2 (October 2012), pp. 52-56; see p. 54.

[24] See, e.g., the far-reaching critique of the ideas expressed in the book by Avner Inbar and Assaf Sharon in their "A Too-Modest Proposal: A Palestinian Peacemaker Gives Up on Politics," *Boston Review*, July/August 2011, pp. 58-62. The point about which

possibility of moving on from full civil rights in an open geo-economic space in the area under discussion to a new version of a two-state model, now conceived confederally, or federally, and whose borders are not necessarily defined by what have now become an obsolete 1967 line. Such an outcome might, at the end of the day, be an "honorable" way out for both contestants.

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comes first, political or civil rights, is just one of many dimensions raised in their article.