

4 Sons and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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Source: Original

The 'Redemptionist Child' – what does he say? The whole of the historical land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people and talk about 'peace' with the Arabs is dangerous utopianism. The world has an implacable hatred towards us and nothing we can do will change that. The international community may show sympathy when we are weak but it can't stomach the resurgence of Jewish sovereignty and power to its ancestral homeland. Even when we endanger our own soldiers so as not to hurt Palestinian civilians we are accused of carrying out massacres and genocide. Whether we like to admit it or not, Jews will always be a 'people that dwells alone' and concessions in order to gain favour with the Arabs or 'Goyim' makes us look spineless and imperils more Jewish lives. Things may look bleak but redemption is within reach. We need to have faith, be steadfast and unify the people around true Torah values, one of which is settling and taking ownership over all the land of Eretz Yisrael.

The 'Realist' Child - what does he say? Peace with the Palestinians may be possible, but not in this generation. At the Palestinians' core - their public statements, television programs, textbooks - they don't accept the right of the Jewish people to live in a state of our own. Each withdrawal is not perceived as a sign of our peaceful intentions but as weakness and capitulation, evidence that we're no longer willing to fight and struggle for the justice of our cause. We withdrew from Lebanon and Gaza and got rockets in response. How can we consider a similar withdrawal from the West Bank? We need to cause the Palestinians to internalise the fact that we're here to stay, that we have roots in this land, that we're not leaving. We can ultimately achieve peace, but it will take time, and we need to be patient. In the meantime we need to sit tight, and continue to fight. It sounds fatalistic but with the correct education, Israeli society has the capacity to survive the storm.

The 'Pragmatic' child – what does he say? I'm not necessarily a fan of the Palestinians, but Israel's continued control over the West Bank is bad for our national security. 'Occupation' causes our friends to desert us, demography erodes the chances for the two state solution and isolated settlements actually make it harder to defend ourselves against terrorism. We think our control strengthens us. Yet ultimately it weakens us. The forces of religious extremism are on the rise. And unless we resolve our differences with those Palestinians who accept the two state solution, the window of opportunity for a secure Jewish and democratic state may close. Peace doesn't mean we'll eat hummus in Damascus and Ramallah or stop calling up people to Miluim. But in an unstable neighbourhood in unstable times, an agreement that ensures a Jewish majority in approximately 80% of Mandatory Palestine while guaranteeing normalization with the Arab world is worth considering, even if it entails painful concessions. It is after all, a situation that original Zionist leaders could only dream of.

The 'Justice' child – what does he say? The continued occupation over millions of Palestinians is poisoning and corrupting Israeli society, undermining our social fabric and is a betrayal of the core values of Judaism (and Zionism). The Israeli – Palestinian conflict is a tragic struggle of right against right – with both sides having legitimate claims and grievances on the other. As a people, the Jews deserve the right to self determination, to express our national values and dreams...but so do the Palestinians. While we have religious, historical and cultural connections to this land, so do the Palestinians. Zionism is the national liberation movement for the Jewish people. But it loses its moral legitimacy when it denies that same thing to another people. We have a responsibility to partition the land and undo the injustice our (justified) presence in our homeland has caused to the Palestinians.