

Beyond the Diaspora

An Inclusive and Egalitarian Community



By Paul Parker

particularity matters. Citizens, residents, refugees, diaspora, and internationals – we all matter. We may be Palestinian, Israeli, Syrian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Egyptian – we all matter. Sufi, Muslim Brotherhood, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Evangelical, Ultra-Orthodox Jew, Religious Jew, secularist, Samaritan, Druze, and Baha'i – we all matter. Despite the differing elements, there is in all our religious teachings a vision of one inclusive and egalitarian community rich with human diversity, all of which matters.

The vision of a world where everyone matters is indeed aspirational, but yet real. It pulls us into the future. Many of us who see tomorrow as if it were today are grounded in the vision of the one Source of the universe. Although many of us think about God in different ways, our differing concepts do not invalidate that we are thinking about and seeking the same God who created all of us. The best in every one of our religious traditions agree that God did not create us for wars, divisions, or cultural assimilation, but for life in community with each other, embracing all of our glorious differences.

This is a vision of inclusive and egalitarian political and economic structures, a vision that values everyone with all our diversities. It is not an unreachable ideal. Our religious traditions teach that indeed it is inevitable, already present (in part), and still to come – albeit along a bumpy path that is at times unclear, sometimes even moving backwards. Globally, such progress is most clearly evident only over the long term, because in the short term, the particular atrocities of regional conflicts such as in Syria or in Israel and Palestine appear disproportionately indicative of the course of the cosmos. But in the end, Good will triumph.

In the meantime, many of us in Israel and Palestine, among the diaspora, and across the globe look for ways to live in solidarity with all persons – inclusively, as equals and in freedom, at ease and at peace with our particularities. This is not a de-contextualized ideal but real political engagement because *to live in solidarity with all persons means to resist those who practice injustice, inequality, and exclusion – however, to resist in a manner that does not destroy.*

The challenge is to resist all types of injustice, domination, and violence

The future of Palestine and of all humanity lies not only in ending war but also in living together in one inclusive and egalitarian society that embraces our beautiful particularities. The call of the cosmos is to live the future in the present until the present becomes the future.



Walls, minefields, checkpoints, and closed roads are so passé! The occupation and inequality are hideously unjust, but the day is coming when they will be only a faint and distant memory.

The future is here and its full blossom inevitable.



without adopting any type of injustice, domination, and violence. As Gandhi taught, “the means are the ends at an incipient point.” Ill-will and vengeance cannot be found in Jesus or the Prophet. Martin Luther King Jr. practiced the political application of this vision with what he called “the sword that heals” – nonviolent direct action.

For those of us who are working for one inclusive and egalitarian society in Israel and Palestine (whatever political structures may emerge), the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions, and the International Criminal Court can be the swords that heal. Although some

persons may deride as ineffectual international law, human rights advocacy, and nonviolent resistance to injustice, our religious traditions suggest that these can become the secular tools of Divinity that help create one inclusive and egalitarian community for all men and women, with all our beautiful particularities.

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