

## **Clarity is More Important than Agreement: Understanding the Israel-Gaza Crisis**

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When I am in the car at the right time of day, I enjoy tuning into the Dennis Prager Show on AM radio. Dennis Prager is a proud, observant Jew and a respected, conservative political commentator. While I don't always agree with Mr. Prager, what I deeply respect about his show, and what makes him different from a lot of hot-headed radio talk show hosts, is a line that he repeats often to his listeners. Prager's mantra is: **"I prefer clarity to agreement."** How that plays out on the show is his unwavering commitment not to manipulate or twist the words of his guests in order to demonstrate that he's right and they're wrong. Rather he spends an inordinate amount of air time making sure that they say what they mean and mean what they say; that there is no confusion about their views, regardless of whether they agree with his point-of-view or not. Clarity is really a blessing. No doubt Joseph's brothers appreciated his unambiguous statement of clarity when he said to them *ANI YOSEF ACHICHEM*...I am Joseph your brother. And just to make sure there was no confusion whatsoever, he continues *ASHER MECHARTEM OTI MITZRAYMA*, you know, the brother you sold into Egypt! Although those words probably sounded terrifying to those brothers, now that the annoying, narcissistic little Joseph had become *Tzofnat Paneach*, the grand vizier of all of Egypt, I imagine that they too preferred clarity over agreement. This whole drama had a lot of twists and turns, with Joseph testing them and 'messing with their heads'...concealing his true identity from them, demanding that Benjamin, their father Jacob's new favorite son, leave the elder Jacob's side and come down to Egypt with them, planting an object in their bags to make Benjamin look like a thief... Although the truth is that Joseph is very much alive and in a position to exact ferocious revenge on all of them, I still contend that knowing the truth is still better than all the tricking and ploys and maneuvers and subterfuge that went on before. Whether you are picking a broker with whom to invest your life savings, thinking about whether to open that Blue Mountain card in your computer's inbox, or fighting an intractable enemy, it's always best to know who you're dealing with.

So here we are, at the end of the first week of the secular year of 2009, and we are facing another situation where clarity is more helpful than agreement. *Who are we dealing with in Gaza* is the question that everyone from UN diplomats to global press correspondents should be asking. What is the true ideology of Hamas, which cowers in underground bomb shelters while they dispatch women and children to lie on top of their weapons stockpiles as human shields? What is their agenda and what do they hope to achieve? Thankfully, clarity is now available to anyone with the courage to look at it. At Yale University Law School, the Avalon Project has collected an on-line data base of documents relevant to the fields of Law, History, Economics, Politics, Diplomacy and Government. On the homepage: [Avalon.law.yale.edu](http://Avalon.law.yale.edu) there is a disclaimer of sorts... We know that some of the documents on this site are controversial, and we don't endorse everything written here. This whole collection, the good, the bad, the indifferent, is provided for the purpose of study and research: Clarity is more important than agreement. If you click on the 1900-1999 documents, you will find two illuminating charters that shed critical light on Israel's current struggle with Hamas. If you need help explaining what Israel is doing to your co-workers, classmates, neighbors, family members or friends, just direct them to this on-line resource. It provides *crystal* clarity. The Hamas Covenant, written and adopted on August 18, 1988, also known as the "Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement," states in its preamble:

*Israel will exist and will continue to exist **until Islam will obliterate it.***

Reeking with anti-Semitic innuendo, it goes on to say:

*Our struggle against **the Jews** is very great and very serious.*

The Jews? Reading this document makes it clear that Hamas makes an enemy out of every Jew, whether or not they live in 'the Zionist entity,' the State of Israel. Their covenant knows no borders, no states...it is a struggle that pits fundamentalist Islam

against the Jewish people, wherever in the world they may be. Article seven of the covenant states that the Islamic Resistance Movement “*is a universal one.*”

Article 8 states:

*Allah is its target, the prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad s its path and **death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.***

Article 11 states:

*The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until judgment day. **It or any part of it should not be squandered. It or any part of it should not be given up.***

Article 13:

*Initiatives, and so called peaceful solutions and international **conferences are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement...there is no solution to the Palestinian question except through jihad.***

There are thirty six articles to this covenant...thirty six articles dripping with anti-Jewish myths like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the purported Zionist plan to take over the world; the saber rattling call to arms of Muslims the world over; the hatred of anyone who disputes absolute Islamic sovereignty over all of Palestine. If I could, I would make this document required reading for every single United Nations attaché, every one of them who stayed silent for years as southern Israel was attacked by 6,000 rockets and mortar bombs launched by Hamas militants in the Gaza strip. Every one of them who failed to issue a single resolution condemning the war crime of firing upon innocent civilians, and doing so with such pride and audacity that many of the militants signed their names on the rocket casings before firing them into Israel. I would make this document required reading for every leader of every sovereign nation that equivocates about Israel’s alleged disproportionate response. What, pray tell, would these leaders counsel Israel to do when faced with an enemy that is absolute and unequivocal about its

intention to flout any peace agreement or cease fire and to rest only when the entirety of another nation-state is wiped off the face of the earth?! What would these esteemed prime ministers and presidents do if their civilian population centers were being fired upon daily, nightly, forcing children and families to run into bomb shelters with only seconds to spare before detonation? What would they do if their enemy vowed complete and utter destruction? Like Dennis Prager, I prefer clarity over anything else, and this document is required reading for anyone who has the guts to want to know the truth about who we are really dealing with.

But wait, there's one more document on that website...another, much shorter, national charter that is a must read for figuring out who's who in this diabolical conflict. Click, if you will, on the Declaration of Israel's Independence, issued in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. Read if you will where the signers of this foundational document write:

*The State of Israel...will foster the development of the country for the benefit of **all its inhabitants**; it will be based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure **complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex**; it will guarantee **freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture**; it will **safeguard the Holy Places of all religions**; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.*

Israel has not been perfect in implementing these goals and aspirations...All governments and nations are human constructs, sometimes succeeding, other times missing the mark...Israel is no different. But these are its goals...this is Israel's charter...and I encourage you to at some of the facts on the ground...some of the ways Israel strives to make good on its national agenda:

-The current Israeli Minister of Science, Culture, and Sport, Ghaleb Majadle, a cabinet level minister, is a Muslim Arab, who by the way has refused to participate in Cabinet-level discussions on the Gaza invasion...He is the highest ranking Arab in the government, who continues to serve in the coalition despite what some interpret to be

openly siding with the enemy in this conflict! There are 12 Arab members, as well as Arab interest parties, in the current Knesset.

-Consider that in today's Israel that the speaker of the Knesset, the chief justice of the Israeli supreme court and the foreign minister—likely the next prime minister—are all distinguished, accomplished *women*.

-Take note that just last June, thousands marched through the streets of Jerusalem in a Gay Pride parade under the protection of the Israeli police and army.

Could there be a Jew in the highest echelons of leadership in any Arab country today? A women in charge of the legislature, judiciary or foreign ministry in a fundamentalist Islamic state? A gay pride parade in Gaza City, much less any other Arab capital? It makes you wonder how it is even possible that the populations that are rallying for Hamas in European cities today could identify with a fundamentalist organization that would vanquish the very rights these “liberal” protesters hold most dear! There is only one country in the Middle East where a member of a minority religious group can attain significant political power, where women have the possibility to lead a nation, or where there is legally protected freedom of sexual inclination...and that one country is Israel. Do those protesters in London, Amsterdam, and New York understand that?

Please read on in the Israeli Declaration of Independence where the founders:

*appeal, in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the state on the bases of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.*

Take note of where the State of Israel extends

*our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help...The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.*

Obviously, I have only taken excerpts from these two documents. But I encourage any of you to read them in their entirety, side by side. I encourage anyone in the world who wants a little bit of clarity beyond all the headlines, beyond all the news clips, and beyond all the propaganda to just read what Hamas is all about and what the State of Israel is all about. To be a Zionist does not mean that you have to agree with every policy of the sitting Israeli government. To be pro-Israel does not mean that you have to support everything the State of Israel does. Remember Prager's mantra: "I prefer clarity to agreement." So in the spirit of honesty and clarity ask which of these parties—Hamas or the State of Israel—deserve support, recognition, and encouragement of the free world... And which of these parties are a pretext to more war, more death, and more extremism. We don't have to always agree, but we must always insist on clarity.

***Am Yisrael Chai!***