

How can religious obstacles be overcome (2/3)?

A Judaism

- **Justice is an important value of Judaism**

Palestinian inhabitants have been living on the West bank, in Gaza and in Israel for generations before 1948. Judaism requires peace with justice, God requires his people to seek **Justice**.

Deuteronomy 1,16, Isaiah1,17, Levitic 19,15 and Psalm 37, 29: « The righteous will possess the land ».

"It is not a mistake of God that Palestinian people were living here when the State of Israel was created. We are not doomed, but fortunate to live together" Chief Rabbi Michael Melchior at the Forum.

"It is not the right time for Jews to live here in Hebron, because there are other people living here" Rabbi Nava Hefetz at the Forum.

- The land **belongs to God**. « *The land is a **gift of God** and a sign of blessing* ». "You are only foreigners and guests" (Lev 25,23 ; Jos 9,3 ; 1 Chr 29,15 ; Ps 39,12).
- "The concept of Nation-State is alien to the Tanakh and the borders have no religious justification" Peta Pellach at the Forum.
*"The land is important for Jews but regardless of the **sovereignty with a Jewish government**"* Hervé Elie Bokobza.
- The land is a tangible sign of the loyalty of God only **with conditions: a duty to be accomplished by Israel**. *"The government of the land, in compliance with the Law of the Covenant, in a sincere and faithful love to God, will maintain the right of Israel to its possession and its blessings"*, Dt 12,16.
- Wars of conquests are forbidden by Halakha. God asked for **wars of conquest** up until the time of David only (circa - 1.100 BC) but not after (Boukoba quoting Maimonides¹).
- *"Judaism is a **rooted in a text**, not in a land. Law has been given in a desert, this is no coincidence"*, Lévinas.
- [According to Hervé Elie Bokobza, taking the example of the Emperor Cyrus allowing Jews to rebuild the Temple, the establishment of Israeli Territory must be made in agreement with the nations of the world as written by Levy Heler². All participants did not agree on this].
- The Jewish community included **foreigners** like Rahab (Jos 6, 22 : the Book of Joshua has probably been written in the 6th Century BC). « *You will **respect** the foreigner who lives with you because yourself were a foreigner on the land of Egypt* » Dt 10,19
- No Jewish current requests that Israel extends itself to Euphrates (covering parts of Jordan, Syria, Iraq, etc) even if this is actually written in some parts of the Tanakh. That leaves the possibility to for compromise also on other territories mentioned in the Tanakh like in the West Bank.

Conclusion: Jewish texts do not prevent the sharing of the land with Palestinians. Consequently, a solution is possible with a Palestinian State and East-Jerusalem as its capital.

B Islam

¹ Maïmonides Mishneh Torah laws of Trumot, offerings.

² Rabbi Yom Tov Ha-Levy (1576-1644): Tossafot Yov Tov on Mishna Eiduyot (8,7).

On Islam and interpretation:

- Islam allows **interpretation** of the texts with *Taawîl* and *Ijtihad* with strict and rigorous rules that have been established throughout Muslim history with ulamas and that have their origins in the time of Muhammad's companions. These are 'Ulûm Al-qur'ân, the sciences of Koran.
Texts are composed of what is *constant* and what is *variables*. The discipline of Fiqh (jurisprudence) is based especially on the **contextualization** of the variables and the observation of the 5 main objectives of the Islamic Law: to preserve religion, life, reason, filiation and goods.

On the land:

- On dar al-Islam: a country can be considered as Dar al-Islam when Muslims are **free to live as a Muslim**, to practice and preach their religion, when the 5 calls to prayer per day can be made and when mosques can be built.
- Once in Medina, which was the 1st Muslim State, the Prophet established the **1st Charter of Medina** which recognized that Jews and Christians are part of the community of believers, gave them **religious freedom** and **respected their places of worship**.
- According to the Sira (biography of the Prophet), when a delegation of Christians came to Medina, **the Prophet** invited them to say their prayers on one side of the Mosque and Muslims on the other side³.
- *"Moses said to the sons of Israel: "inhabit this land!"* Koran 5,21.

On Jerusalem:

- **Caliph Omar's Pact**: *"The churches and crosses of Jerusalem will be preserved. All inhabitants will be completely free to follow their religion. They shall not undergo discomfort or disorder"*, al-Tabarî.

On Haram al Sharif-Al Aqsa:

Muslims should have an **easy access to the Western Wall** which is also a holy place for Muslims, according to Muslim tradition, Prophet Muhammad tied his mare to the Western Wall.

In the long term, when political peace is achieved and the situation is calmed, non-Muslims could be allowed to bring religious books and to **pray on what they call the Temple Mount**, without a special authorization.

On "living together"

- **Prophet Mohammed**: *« He who hurts a Dhimmi (Jew, Christian) will find in me his enemy on the day of Judgment"*, Hadith by Abou Dawoud.
- *« He who slays a soul, unless it be in punishment for murder or for spreading mischief on earth, shall be as if he had slain all mankind; and he who **saves a life** shall be as if he had given life to all mankind »* Koran 5,32.
- *« Do not argue with the People of the Scriptures except in a way that is best »* Koran 29,46.
*« Cooperate in **righteousness** and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression »* Koran 5,2.
- *« O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may **get to know one another** »* Koran 49,13.
- The role of the individual is paramount. *"Religion can be both an obstacle and a solution to peace. It depends on **the singer**, not the song. If the singer has a golden heart, a heart of flesh, the religion will be one of tolerance, peace and coexistence... Personally, I see what brings up*

³ Sira of Ibn Ishâq and see Nûr Al yaqîn.

together, I see the values we share. There are verses which are harsh and others which are meek. I drop the harsh ones and keep the peaceful ones”, Mohamed Dajani Daoudi at the Forum.

- **Moderation** (Wasatia) is promoted by many religious leaders including in Israel and Palestine.

“Whoever makes peace process fail does not understand scriptures, applies them on a wrong way to advance its own interests”. “Revenge is not a value in Islam. Peace is the most fundamental value, the real value for human beings and for Islam”, Dr Leïla Abedrabo at the Forum.

“If others move towards peace, accept it and do the same”, Koran 8,61.

Conclusion: Muslim texts do not prevent the existence of the State of Israel and a Jewish government in a part of Jerusalem.

C Christianity

Jerusalem is very important for Christianity, see paragraph on Jerusalem.

In 1949: United Nations declared Jerusalem an **international city** “corpus separatum” and a Holy City for 70 nations.

Since 1967, by realism, the Holy See does not request “an international status” for Jerusalem anymore, but a **“special status with international warranties”**.

On the land, for the **Catholic Church**: *“the Bible is not a cadastre” (land registry). The Jews are the people chosen by God and His promises remain irrevocable”. “The land is entrusted by God to Jews, in order to live the Covenant, a moral, an ethic, including rights and justice to live in peace with a balance between all”.*

For some **Protestants currents**, including some Evangelical currents, Jews need secured borders and a peace in justice. These Protestant currents *“do not agree in principle with all the policies of the Israeli government: there should be no behavior against biblical ethics and no oppression of a people or of individuals”* Pastor Jean-Paul Rempp for the Forum.

Christians, who are a small minority (< 2% of the population), can help establish bridges between Jews, Muslims, Christians and non-believers. They already exist and could be strengthened.

Conclusion: Christian texts do not prevent but can encourage the sharing of the land between an Israeli and a Palestinian State with Jerusalem being the capital of both of them.

D For the three Abrahamic religions

The three religions think that **land** belongs to God and that people are the caretakers.

Religions believe that human beings are created in **the image of God**. Human life is sacred.

“He/she should not do to the other what he/she would not like that the Other does to him/her”.

“Whoever saves a life of another person, saves humanity”.

On Revelations:

The revelation to the Jewish people was the 1st one in the history.

Then, Christianity arose and “integrated” the Jewish heritage into its own. It may be later than Judaism but this is not a reason to nullify the revelation to the Jewish people (Nostra Aetate clarified that for Catholics.).

Then, Islam arose and it, too, “integrated” some of the Jewish and Christian heritages. Its later arrival need not nullify earlier revelations.