

OCCASIONAL PAPERS · 5
THE TWENTY-FIRST
SACKS LECTURE

*Acceptance of the Other:
Liberal Interpretations
of Islam and Judaism in
Egypt and Israel*

SHIMON SHAMIR

With an Introduction by
HRH PRINCE EL HASSAN BIN TALAL

Oxford Centre for
Hebrew and Jewish Studies

THE SACKS LECTURE SERIES

Dr Samuel Sacks and his wife, Dr Elsie Sacks (the first woman gynaccologist in Great Britain), celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1972. They asked their friends to donate to a fund rather than give them presents, and Dr Meir Gertner suggested using this fund to establish an annual Sacks Lecture at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. The present lecture is the twenty-first, and the last, in the series.

PROFESSOR SHIMON SHAMIR

is the Kaplan Professor in the History of Egypt and Israel at
Tel Aviv University



OCCASIONAL PAPERS · 5
THE TWENTY-FIRST SACKS LECTURE

*Acceptance of the Other:
Liberal Interpretations of
Islam and Judaism in
Egypt and Israel*

SHIMON SHAMIR

With an Introduction by
HRH PRINCE EL HASSAN BIN TALAL

Oxford Centre for
Hebrew and Jewish Studies
2003

Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
Occasional Papers · 5
ISSN 1363-7770

Published by the
Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
Yarnton Manor, Yarnton, Oxford OX5 1PY, England
Registered Charity No. 309720

© Shimon Shamir 2003
© HRH Prince El Hasan bin Talal

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form,
or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of the
Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

Printed in Great Britain by
Alden Group Limited, Oxford

INTRODUCTION

by

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal

In his Sacks Lecture, Professor Shimon Shamir has most powerfully analysed the concept of ‘the acceptance of the other’ with reference to present-day Jewish and Muslim thinkers who have tried to address problems of interfaith relations and current world affairs through recognition, dialogue and solidarity.

People of different religions can indeed agree on shared goals, agenda and activities towards social betterment while respectfully disagreeing on the specifics of theology or metaphysics. Many notables among Jews, Christians and Muslims have maintained as much for decades, their arguments more or less neglected by the mainstream media. The theme of dialogue between the adherents of the faiths had not, unfortunately, become fashionable before 11 September 2001. Since then, it has received unprecedented attention. Professor Shamir’s longstanding contributions to this field are all the more valuable in that they draw on many years’ experience. His lecture illustrates that today’s interested parties are in a position to build upon previous solid work.

Accepting that the existence of ‘the other’ is not an inherent threat to one’s own existence is a skill or habit of mind which we need to promote. It is a necessary and perhaps even a sufficient condition for finding a peaceful solution to any problem based on perceived differences between people. It acknowledges some inherent human similarity underlying superficial differences, and is a concept expressed in one form or another in all traditions—including the scriptures of the great world religions.

At the same time, writings, being fixed and passive, do not deny us the possibility of actively reading intolerance, oppression or violence towards ‘the other’ into our scriptures as divinely sanctioned precepts. The gift of free will and individual power of choice between a right path and a wrong one is very powerfully expressed as a foundation or

beginning of the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As Professor Shamir has put it:

Devious and misconstrued as the terrorists' interpretations of religion may be, the fact is that they derive their doctrines from their religious heritage, imbue their adherents with religious zeal, and have no great difficulty in finding religious authorities to explicitly or implicitly endorse their radical objectives and methods.

At this point in history, humanitarian interpreters of scripture have it very hard. Perhaps this has always been so. Yet records have been handed down to us of times and places in which the adherents of different faiths and the members of different tribes and races not only coexisted in peace but furthermore inspired each other to great heights of excellence in the various sciences and arts.

The communities of Jews, Christians and Muslims living today are plagued by the conflict in the Middle East. Justice and security are all too painfully lacking, while uncertain international gestures fail to mitigate the ruthless fixed ideas still being implemented by extremists—both state and non-state actors. More broadly, we all worry about international terrorist movements devoted to destroying our global civilization in the name of one or another rigid vision of what is proper human culture. We fear the unintended consequences of addressing conflict or terrorists with military or economic force alone. While acknowledging these pressures, I would like, with Professor Shamir, to 'turn our attention from the threat projected by the radicals to the promise implied by the liberals'—while noting, again with him, that 'radical' and 'liberal' are not here intended as political labels.

For many years, the 'liberals' have argued for universal common values based on the idea that one can and should cultivate an ability to accept different ways of achieving similar human goals. Towards that end, I myself as a Muslim have called for efforts towards regional cooperation, individual liberties, democratic participation, pluralist civil society, multicultural media content, cross-border citizens' conferencing, global compliance with humanitarian norms, and a new international order in which politics graduates to anthropolitics, i.e. politics of human welfare. All such efforts are governed by the conviction that all human beings are equally subject to an identical principle

marrying individual rights and freedoms with responsibilities towards 'the other'. Thus, individuals fulfil a positive role with regard to the supporting community, the human race, the natural environment and God.

This conviction appears to me to be characteristically Muslim. The fact is that, through dialogue with others from other faiths, I may also perceive it as characteristically Christian and characteristically Jewish. It is characteristically humanist, in the tradition of eighteenth-century European Enlightenment humanism; it is characteristically Buddhist, and, equally characteristically, belongs to Sikhs, agnostics, Hindus, Jains, Shintoists and to any number of adherents of other faiths.

Our current technology of communications makes us one community worldwide in terms of the effects we can have on each other. None of us can be isolated, even if we desire it. Since 11 September 2001, our responsibilities to each other as nations and regions have formidably increased. Yet actions for the common good do not seem to be following suit. Perhaps there is insufficient realization that 'the common good' now includes everybody among the six billion people presently alive, along with the many billions to be born who will inherit whatever we leave. Misery anywhere today threatens prosperity everywhere.

Not for the first time, I suggest that we stand at a division of the ways. The choice is simple but stark. Either we move towards tolerance and a greater understanding of what constitute the similarities between us in order to work together for shared goals; or we move further apart, isolating ourselves from the threat of 'the other' whom we must attempt to annihilate or neutralize.

In the first case, I suggest, we become increasingly involved with bridge-building activities in inclusive civil societies. The key concept of mutual interdependence emerges alongside the conscious cultivation of mutual comprehension and mutual trust. In the second case, by contrast, a sort of 'international apartheid' emerges. We will experience ever greater isolation, polarization of attitudes, ignorance and fear of the unknown, leading to more unpredictable violence.

The immense challenge facing us all is whether we can manage the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. The Qur'an repeatedly calls on us to observe 'the perpetual change of winds', 'the alternation of day and night', 'the variety of human colours and

tongues' and 'the alternation of days of success and reverse among peoples'—to contemplate our place in the totality of creation and to accept that it is beautiful for its diversity. We have to understand the cultures of others and respect them. This includes a fundamental grasp of the 'anthropology of suffering'. We must become sensitized to the fact that we all carry psychological and historical baggage that has to be addressed and acknowledged if we are to make true peace with one another.

Perhaps, too, we must be prepared to face the 'fear of peace'—the fear of abandoning an ancient *status quo*. It will take courage to leave behind, without regret, all the ideologies that have justified their approach in terms of superiority and cultural domination. Putting into practice a belief in the basic equality of all mankind means major changes in behaviour and policy at all levels. As the Holy Qur'an exhorts: 'Truly, God does not change the plight of people until and unless they change what is in themselves' (*Surat ar-Ra'd* (13):11).

As Professor Shamir makes clear in his lecture, the aim of dialogue is not to obliterate differences but to render them productive of good. Nor is it enough only to acknowledge that 'the other' exists without some recognition that the other exists validly—has, indeed, the same rights of existence that one possesses oneself. Dialogue between the adherents of the faiths moves on from an exchange of information to a willingness on both sides to accept both the similarities and the differences inherent in their positions. This in turn allows us to enter into a partnership of common purpose in which we understand ourselves and our goals more clearly as different equals on the same earth.

It is my earnest hope that this lecture will find a wide and responsive readership. Aristotle advised that everything about humans, at a fundamental level, is a question of ethics. If globalization is about a world to be bettered for all human beings, global governance means nothing without global ethics and a global code of conduct which can be contributed to and willingly practised by all. Right action has to have its roots in right knowledge. Let the knowledge and wisdom made available to us by Professor Shamir inspire not only individual contemplation but also individual actions towards an age of sanity in which we may build not only a new world order, but a new world attitude.

Acceptance of the Other: Liberal Interpretations of Islam and Judaism in Egypt and Israel

SHIMON SHAMIR

Terrorism emerged as a formidable threat to civil societies at the turn of the millennium, casting a long shadow over present realities and prognoses of the years to come. Terrorism, of course, is not a new form of violence: in various embodiments and on behalf of diverse causes it has manifested itself throughout history. What makes the present wave of terrorism unprecedentedly fearsome is its linkage with modern technologies and the instruments of globalization. Terrorists nowadays can spread their word rapidly and extensively through the internet, expand their activities world-wide through the highly developed network of commercial airlines, finance their operations through sophisticated international banking systems, and experiment with devices of mass destruction. This threat generates anxiety, wariness and a sense of crisis.

Muslims and Jews have today an additional concern. They are faced with a disconcerting aspect of terrorism in the Middle East: its inherent connection to their respective religions. Devious and misconstrued as the terrorists' interpretations of religion may be, the fact is that they derive their doctrines from their religious heritage, imbue their adherents with religious zeal and have no great difficulty in finding religious authorities to endorse, explicitly or implicitly, their radical objectives and methods. The following are a few notable cases in point.

Osama Bin Laden's conviction that his actions are God-ordained has been consistently proclaimed. 'By God's leave,' he declared in a *fatwa* issued in 1998, 'we call on every Muslim who believes in God, and wishes to be rewarded, to obey God's command to kill the Americans ... and their allies, civilians and military.' This unequivocal

appeal to Muslim religiosity, which appeared in his 'Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders',¹ is manifestly at the core of al-Qa'ida's doctrine. The 11 September operation, as we learn from the letter left behind by the hijackers, was conceived as a religious rite. The perpetrators were instructed to renew their covenant with God as they embarked on their mission, to recite a chapter from the Koran, to invoke the known Supplications, and to purify their bodies and souls.² In Saudi Arabia several popular preachers endorsed the Qa'ida campaign—notable among them Sheikh Hamud al-Shu'aybi who also issued a *fatwa* calling for a Holy War against the Americans.³

In Egypt, Islamist movements such as *al-Jihad* and *al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah*, which were responsible *inter alia* for the tourist-bus massacres in Cairo and Luxor, the assassination of President Sadat and the attempt on the life of President Mubarak, have been inspired by Islamic writings on the *jihad* imperative. Notable among their mentors and leaders were 'Abd al-Salam Farag, author of *Jihad: al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah* ('The Holy War: The Missing Precept'); and Sheikh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, who supervised the drafting of *Mithaq al-'Amal al-Islami* ('The Charter of Islamic Action'). (Farag was executed after Sadat's assassination and the blind Sheikh 'Umar is in prison in the United States.) In their view Islam demands the elimination not only of the foreign 'crusaders', but also of local politicians and intellectuals guilty of 'un-Islamic' actions and thoughts. 'There is no doubt', Farag wrote, 'that the idols of this world can only be made to disappear through the power of the sword'.⁴

Similarly, the religious nature of the Palestinian Hamas movement is explicitly proclaimed. The Hamas Charter lays down this motto: 'God is the movement's goal; its leader is the Messenger [of Islam]; its constitution is the Koran; its method is Jihad; and its most coveted desire is death for the sake of God' (art. 8). Hamas also defines itself

¹ Published in *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 23 February 1998, and discussed in Bernard Lewis, 'Licence to Kill', *Foreign Affairs* 77/6 (1998) 15. The signatories, in addition to Bin Laden, were Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Yaser Taha, Mir Hamzah and Fazlul Rahman.}

² Translation in *Los Angeles Times*, www.latimes.com, 28 and 29 September 2001.

³ Died on 19 January 2002, aged 77.

⁴ Art. 4 of Farag's manifesto, translated in Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty* (New York 1986) 161.

as an international movement, linked to the global *jihad* network (art. 7).⁵ More than other Islamist movements, Hamas developed the doctrine of martyrdom as sanctioning suicide bombing of civilian populations. Controversial as this may be in Islam, there are several prominent Islamic authorities who rule in favour of suicide killings—including the influential Egyptian-Qatari Sheikh Yusuf al-Qirdawi and the former grand Mufti of Egypt Dr Nasr Farid Wasel.

The rationalization of terror in religious terms exists on the Jewish side as well. Kakh, the notorious terrorist movement in Israel (banned in 1994), was led by an Orthodox rabbi, Meir Kahane, and almost all its members came from the religious sector. Kahane based his movement's programme of forcefully expelling the Palestinians from the Holy Land on his reading of the Torah. He often quoted from Numbers 33:55, 'If you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as pricks in your eyes.' (This last phrase inspired the title of his programmatic book, *Le-sikkim Be-'eynekhem*, 'As Pricks in Your Eyes'.) The book clearly spells out his attitude to others. 'The world?' he asks scornfully, 'the nations, united or divided?—What importance do they have before the Almighty?'⁶

Dr Baruch Goldstein, who committed a mass murder of Muslim worshippers in Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs, was a religious person, close to the Kakh movement. Preaching to young people he would dramatize his radical message by holding a gun in one hand and a Torah in the other. He was mourned by several rabbis. One of them, Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, wrote in praise of Goldstein's act and sought to justify it on halakhic grounds, using for the title of his book the biblical phrase 'Blessed is the Man', which in Hebrew (*Baruch Ha-gever*) alludes to Goldstein's first name.

The assassin of Prime Minister Rabin was also the product of such a religious environment. Before embarking on his mission he apparently consulted certain radical rabbis, hearing from them about the validity of the halakhic rule of *rodef*. According to them, this rule, which gives the right to kill a person pursuing another in order to murder him,

⁵ 'Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement of Palestine', in Hisham H. Ahmad, *Hamas* (Jerusalem 1994) 136, 134.

⁶ *Le-sikkim be-'eynekhem* (New York n.d.) 245.

may be applied to Rabin because he endangered the lives of Israelis by making concessions to Palestinians. Prominent rabbis have ruled that relinquishing territories in Eretz Yisra'el was a violation of Jewish law.

To be sure, this juxtaposition of Muslim and Jewish manifestations of religiously motivated violence does not suggest a simplistic symmetrical relationship. There are obvious differences between the two cases, in both scale and prevalence. What merits attention, however, is that in essence an intrinsic common denominator exists between all the cases mentioned here and the many that could have been added to them. All are anchored in a perception of the Other that denies his humanity. The propagators and perpetrators of these acts of murder and destruction could not have committed their cruelties had they not first dehumanized their victims. To accomplish this, they drew on the vast reservoirs of their religious teachings and cultural traditions, whose richness and diversity inevitably include themes that can be manipulated to fit terrorist agendas.

However, as Scott Appleby, one of the heads of the Chicago Fundamentalism Project, pointed out in his *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, whereas religion can generate formidable destructive violence in some of its adherents, it can also produce redemptive power and a will to embrace humankind.⁷ Indeed, notable thinkers, both Muslim and Jewish, diametrically opposed to those self-appointed prophets of xenophobia and militancy, step forward to propose a different reading of their religio-cultural heritage, and to uphold a system of beliefs and values that converge on the acceptance of the Other.

It is with these thinkers that this paper deals. The scope of their influence is difficult to gauge and they are often regarded as being outside the mainstream. Whatever attention they attract cannot compete with the newsmaking repercussions of the extremists' menace. Yet it might be worthwhile, in these troubled days, when international terror looms so large and intercultural tensions intensify, to focus on the alternative: to turn our attention from the threat projected by the radicals to the promise indicated by the liberals.

This paper refers to them as 'liberals' even though most of them do not relate explicitly to liberalism as such. Many concur with the liberal belief-system only selectively and some even disassociate themselves

⁷ As cited in the *CSIS Preventive Diplomacy News*, 1 October 2001.

from it altogether, in most cases because of its secular or extraneous nature. Accordingly, this term will be used here merely as a matter of convenience.

What is meant by the phrase 'acceptance of the Other'? The literature on Self and Other and the relationship between them is, of course, too vast to refer to here. The concept is embedded in such disciplines as philosophy, social psychology, cultural anthropology, literary theory and, increasingly in recent years, the sub-discipline of conflict resolution. It is prominent in the writings of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, and of post-modernists such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

As a simple working definition of 'Otherness' for our context—namely interactions on the plane of collectives—I would suggest looking at it as a set of attributes attached to ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic or other socially-significant entities, in order to differentiate them from the identity and the self-view of an in-group. Because this differentiation serves to enhance that in-group's internal cohesion and solidarity, its perception of the Other is always intimately linked to its perception of the Self—often in diametric opposition to it, especially in situations of latent or open conflict. Since the image that a society has of itself is almost universally laudatory, it would naturally incline, in such situations, to project negative qualities onto its mirror image, the excluded Other, and view it not only as inferior, but sometimes even as illegitimate. 'Acceptance', therefore, is a disposition or resolution to downgrade these negative attributes of the Other and to develop a mode of peaceful and positive co-existence with it.

For the purpose of our discussion it might be useful to distinguish between two levels of attitudinal 'acceptance'. On the lower level, acceptance would mean a recognition of the legitimacy of the Other's existence, yet without changing the disapproving conception of the nature of this Other. On the higher level, acceptance would go beyond this recognition to what is implied by the term 'pluralism'—namely, the acknowledgement of the Other's intrinsic value, creating a certain parallelism or common ground between the two sides, albeit without adopting the truth of the Other and without ceasing to see him as different. In a way, this distinction corresponds to the difference between *toleration*, which usually applies to an objectionable Other, and *tolerance*, which—at least in the rendering of some dictionaries—

implies a measure of sympathetic indulgence.⁸ Some writers on the subject go even further and maintain that the higher level of acceptance requires an active interest in the Other, whereas acceptance on the lower level is essentially indifferent.

On the lower level of acceptance, Judaic and Islamic orthodoxies readily accommodate other religions, including each other. In quite different ways, each acknowledges that there are 'others' besides itself whose existence is theologically legitimate. The reasons for this recognition emanate from the particular properties of Islam and Judaism.

Islam defines itself as a universal religion, the ultimate monotheistic creed whose origins go back to Abraham, the first *hanifi*. Other monotheistic religions, notably Judaism and Christianity, are conceived as historical stages toward the culmination of pure monotheism in the form of Islam. With all their imperfections, it is maintained, the other monotheistic religions are still part of the chain of divine revelation, handed down through their prophets, and therefore the legal status of these 'peoples of the book' within the system of *dar al-islam* is recognized and protected. Although this does not apply to Jews and Christians living outside this system, nor to infidels in general, the acceptance in principle of the legitimacy of Judaism and Christianity is firmly established.

Judaism recognizes others for precisely the opposite reason: not because it is inclusive but because it is exclusive. As a religion bestowed on and embraced by one people, it does not seek universal expansion. Consequently, the existence of 'gentiles' cannot be temporary or illegitimate but, by necessity, a constant part of the natural order of things. While Judaism severely denounces pagans (*'akum*), it prescribes recognition and respect of the rights of all who abide by the 'seven commandments of Noah'—namely the fundamental rules of universal morality—and who acknowledge their divine source. Christian and Muslim peoples can fit into this category.

It appears clearly, even from such brief characterizations, that the Other, whether for Jews or for Muslims, is not defined only by faith. Broadly speaking, Judaism and Islam employ both ethnic and religious categorizations. The Koran says, on the one hand, *wa-ja'alnakum shu'uban wa-qaba'il* ('we have made you nations and tribes', *Hujurat*

⁸ See e.g. the Webster dictionaries.

13) and, on the other, *lakum dinukum wa-li dini* ('unto you your religion and unto me my religion', *Kafirun* 6). Judaism distinguishes itself from others both by ethnic criteria, as in *she-lo samanu ke-goyey ha-aratzot* ('he hath not made us like the nations of other lands', the *Siddur*), and by faith, *ki kol ha-ammim yelkhu ish be-shem elohav vanachnu nelekh be-shem Adonay elohenu* ('for all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God', Micah 4:5). In Judaism the two criteria merge into one, whereas in Islam the distinction is sometimes valid and sometimes blurred.

Another categorization of the Other relevant to this discussion is determined by the Other's relative political status. Islam distinguishes between the following types of relationships: first, with the non-Muslim communities living within the realm of Islam, who have the status of protected *dhimmis*; second, with the non-Muslims outside *dar al-islam*, with whom the relationship is polarized; and third, with non-Muslims who rule over Muslims, a theologically problematical situation that emerged in modern times with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the advent of Imperialism. Similarly, Judaism differentiates between several situations: first, non-Jews living under Jewish sovereignty, a major halakhic issue in the biblical era which has reemerged with the establishment of the State of Israel; second, gentile entities facing the Jewish state, which is a theologically-relevant political relationship; and third, non-Jewish politics ruling over Jews, which has been the context of Jewish thought throughout the two millennia from the Talmud to modern *haskalah*. Any systematic discussion of Self and Other in Judaism and Islam should have been sub-divided according to these categories, but this would be impossible within the confines of the present paper.

We have seen that on the lower level of acceptance, Judaism and Islam have accepted each other. What about the relationship on the higher level?

Clearly, a great variety of themes scattered in Judaic and Islamic traditions may be taken to signify a measure of parity in the perception of the Other. Primarily, both hold the concept of the creation of the first man in God's image, rendering all his descendants essentially equal and bestowing on every man the same dignity and sanctity. Other themes that signify a high level of acceptance may be found in various *ayat* in the Koran and *pesukim* in the Hebrew Bible, certain

sections in the oral traditions of the two religions, some judicial rulings of the *halakhah* and the *shari'ah*, certain aspects of *sufi* and of *kabbalistic* mysticism, some (but not all) of the ideas expressed by such theologians as the *mu'tazilites* in Iraq and Maimonides in Egypt, and, of course, in the actual historical experience of Jews and Muslims, notably in medieval Spain-Andalus-Sepharad. However, the validity of pluralistic positions remained controversial in the orthodoxies of the two faiths and was consistently challenged by the canonical authorities, especially when, under pressing historical exigencies, these became increasingly defensive. Nevertheless, pluralistic positions remained entrenched in the cumulative religious literature of Islam and Judaism as 'bricks' from which systematic liberal constructs would be elaborated in modern times.

The trigger that set off the search for greater openness to the Other was the encounter with the ideas of the Western Enlightenment. This took place in Judaism first, because Jews were present where the Enlightenment occurred. The most prominent name at the inception of this *haskalah* movement in Jewish life is, of course, Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), the German philosopher, biblical scholar, Hebrew poet and observant Jew. Responding to the challenges of Emancipation he developed a philosophy of interfaith tolerance based on the existence of a common denominator to all religions. He maintained that they all share a universal religion of reason which provides their ethical code without depending on divine revelation. The particular historical religions are all built on this foundation, each with its own traditional version of the revelation, be it through the books of Moses, the Gospels or the Koran. God reveals himself to each people, Mendelssohn said, according to its historical circumstances. While the adherents of one religion need not accept the subjective traditions of another, he concluded, they must respect them because their foundation in that universal religion bestows on them perfect legitimacy. Thus, persons of all religious persuasions must coexist peacefully, in conditions of civil equality, within the common framework of the state, which should be separated from religion. Referring to rabbinic sayings to the effect that the righteous of all the nations of the world have a share in the World to Come (see e.g. *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:2), Mendelssohn argued that Judaism regards the moral imperative and the reward for righteousness as applying to all mankind.

Mendelssohn was followed by a long line of Jewish thinkers, inspired by the philosophers of the Age of Reason, who sought to redefine their Jewishness and its relation to other religions, especially Christianity, in terms of tolerance and dialogue. One who merits particular mention is Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929), who discovered the depth of his Jewish identity on the brink of conversion to Christianity. He perceived these two religions as mutually exclusive yet complementary, buttressing each other in the great life-adventure of humankind. Tolerance, he said, was a vital dimension of religion itself, because without dialogue based on mutual legitimation no religion can accomplish its mission and substantiate its teachings. In this, Rosenzweig closed a circle begun by Mendelssohn a century and a half previously.⁹

In Muslim lands attempts to reinterpret Islam and its relation to others emerged in the late nineteenth century when great upheavals shook the foundations of traditional Islamic life. The aim of Muslim modernist thinkers was to revitalize Islam; their source of inspiration was Western Liberalism and their chosen paradigm was *salaftiyah*, namely seeking guidance from the authentic models of Islam in its classical period. The origins of this school of thought are often traced to the renowned pan-Islamic mentor and activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897), although this is paradoxical because Afghani was far from being a liberal reformer. Yet his teachings were so multi-faceted that several intellectual and political trends, some diametrically opposed to each other, are regarded as his off-shoots.

In a remarkable response to Ernest Renan (1883) Afghani contemplates building bridges to Western civilization not through links between Islam and Christianity, but by transcending religion altogether. 'All religions are intolerant,' he says, 'each one in its way'. Religions put obstacles on the road to progress, philosophy and science. The obstacles placed by Christianity, he observes, were apparently not invincible, whereas 'Muslim society has not yet freed itself from the tutelage of religion'. He concludes: 'I cannot keep from hoping that Muhammadan [Islamic] society will succeed someday in breaking its bonds and marching resolutely in the path of civilization

⁹ Eliezer Schweid, 'Interfaith Tolerance in the Thought of Mendelssohn and Rosenzweig', in Eliezer Schweid, *Twentieth-century Breakthroughs in Jewish Religious and National Thought* (Jerusalem 1991), in Hebrew.

after the manner of Western society'.¹⁰ This argument is clearly a digression from his main line of thinking which idealized Islam and sought to defend it against the West. Yet it shows the potency of the thrust of European ideas, including even some notions of secularism. It also reflects the appearance of the idea of 'civilization', and the centrality of the image of that of the West, in the discourse of intellectuals in that region. This introduced a new conception of the Other, which was neither religious nor ethnic, yet connected to both.

The school of thought which appeared in Egypt, Turkey, India and other Muslim countries and became known as Liberal Islam did not go that far. It rather sought a synthesis with modern liberal concepts without manifestly transgressing the parameters of orthodox Islam. This could be achieved either by reinterpreting Islam as a liberal creed or by claiming that Islam left certain areas open to the discretion of evolving generations. Common to the thinkers of this modernist movement was a stress on the role of reason in the pursuit of truth, albeit while retaining revelation and prophecy as the supreme sources of knowledge. This was also expressed in the call for the 'reopening of the gates of *ijtihad*', namely renewing the authorization to exercise individual reasoning in matters of religion. Since these thinkers viewed as their mission the defense of Islam against the criticism and skepticism of the Westerners and Westernizers, they maintained a cautious posture vis-à-vis the Other, yet their liberal disposition sometimes expressed itself in notions of acceptance.

Thus Rashid Rida (1865–1935), for instance, the leader of the *Manar* circle of modernists in Egypt, argued that there is an essential unity in the beliefs of 'the people of divine religions'. God's promise applies without distinction to all those who have been exposed to divine guidance, regardless of formal religious affiliation. Belief in the prophethood of the Messenger of Islam is not a pre-condition for the salvation of Christians and Jews. Those who believe in their proper prophet and revelation, says Rida, merit the reward cited in the Koranic verse, 'Their wages await them with their Lord, and no fear shall there be on them, neither shall they sorrow' (*Baqarah* 62).¹¹

¹⁰ *Journal de Débats*, 18 May 1883, tr. in Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley 1983) 181–87; the quotations appear on pp. 183 and 187.

¹¹ *Tafsir al-manar* 1/336, cited in Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford 2001) 33–34.

The Judaic and Islamic liberal discourse about attitudes to the Other, whose beginnings in the modern age have been depicted here very briefly, continued throughout the twentieth century, taking different forms according to the varying circumstances of time, place and *Zeitgeist*. The definition of the Other also became more diversified. For Muslim intellectuals the Other was now associated predominantly with Western civilization, defined in non-religious terms. For Jews as well the Others were now regarded not only as religions, but mainly as the cultures and nations among whom Jews were scattered in the Diaspora and, later on, among whom the State of Israel had been established.

Deliberations about the acceptance of the Other intensified later in the century and their characteristics gradually changed. While Muslim and Jewish liberal thinkers are still engaged, like their predecessors, in scrutinizing their religio-cultural heritage for theological responses to the challenges of the great historical encounters their societies experience in modern times, their discourse reflects today the emergence of new concerns. These thinkers show a greater awareness of the threatening centrifugal forces both within and without their societies, forces that must be checked to safeguard integrity and stability. Hence, their writings have a certain defensive character, which often has political dimensions. If the first generations of exponents of the acceptance of the Other were inspired by Enlightenment, liberalism and modernity, the contemporary generation is motivated by the wish to reduce conflict and curb extremism, wherever possible, through tolerance and mutual acceptance. These new traits may justify referring to them as 'neo-liberals'.

In the Muslim camp such thinkers now face the challenge of the upsurge of Islamism, which seeks to impose a fundamentalist theocratic regime over all Muslims and to stir up a *jihad*-ist fervor that puts them on a collision course with the Western world. Neo-liberals strive to check these extremist trends by propagating the values of enlightened Islam in their discourse with the domestic public, and conducting a cross-cultural dialogue with the external world. By steering this course they unavoidably expose themselves to the wrath of militant fundamentalists. On the Jewish side the objectives are reconciliation with the non-Jewish world in general and the advancement of Israeli-Arab peacemaking in particular. For this purpose neo-liberals advocate openness, a search for common ground and empathy

with the Other. They too face resistance from their own co-religionists, in this case from the ultra-Orthodox and ultra-nationalist camps, who essentially reject the notions of dialogue and compromise.

Neo-liberalism is expounded both orally through dialogue forums, lecture halls and places of worship and in writings in journals or books. The exponents may be ulema or rabbis, or laymen, mostly Islamic or Judaic scholars. They may be divided roughly as follows: first, those Muslims and Jews who dwell in Western countries, express themselves in Western languages and articulate their views in the context of Western civil society; and second, those who live in Muslim countries or in the Jewish state, are involved in their societies and address their societies' critical issues, usually employing the local languages. Although the line between these two categories—diaspora and homeland—cannot always be clearly drawn, on the whole each has its own characteristics and particular merits. The two categories comprise a wide range of thinkers working in numerous countries. However, this paper will focus only on those of the second category who are active in Egypt and Israel.

A number of Egyptian thinkers have expressed themselves on these questions in the spirit of 'the acceptance of the Other',¹² but the intellectual who merits discussion at greatest length, because of the wide scope of his writings, his intensive participation in public discourse and the courage with which he handles the most sensitive issues, is Justice Muhammad Sa'id al-Ashmawi. His biography tells us that he was born in 1932 to a wealthy Egyptian family. On graduating from the Faculty of Law at Cairo University he embarked on a career in the Egyptian judiciary, where he rose to the positions of Judge in the High Criminal Court, Judge in the High Court for State Security and Chief Justice of the High Court of Appeals. He has published more than fifteen books and hundreds of articles, and has lectured extensively in Egyptian, American and European universities.¹³

'Ashmawi's method of inquiry is based on a semantic and etymological analysis of principal Islamic concepts, with the aim of establishing

¹² See my 'Liberalism: From Monarchy to Postrevolution', in Shimon Shamir (ed.) *Egypt from Monarchy to Republic* (Boulder 1995) 195-212.

¹³ The summary of 'Ashmawi's views in this paper is based on his *Jawhar al-islam* (Cairo 1984), *Usul al-shari'ah* (Cairo 1979), *Ma'alim al-islam* (Cairo 1989) and *Al-islam al-siyasi* (Cairo 1987).

their precise original meaning and tracing their development in time. He scrutinizes religious sources to identify the origins of various beliefs and practices, a method that has often yielded unconventional conclusions.

His major thesis is based on a reexamination of the term *shari'ah*. 'Ashmawi claims that it did not originally mean Islamic law at all, but expressed the concept of a path, way or method, namely the course that a true believer should follow. Only in the historical process was the term gradually expanded to comprise the cumulative body of legal rules, then jurisprudence, and finally the whole Islamic system. It is essential, says 'Ashmawi, to grasp the authentic meaning of this term, which derives clearly from the only verse in the Koran that contains this specific word (*Jathiah* 18): 'We have set thee on a clear road [*shari'ah*] of our commandment, so follow it'.

The *shari'ah*, therefore, is the path to the essence of religion which, according to 'Ashmawi, consists of two elements: faith in God and right conduct (*al-iman w'al-istiqamah*). There is only one religion, but the roads to it are many, Judaism and Christianity being merely different roads to the same goal. 'Ashmawi applies this to other creeds as well, such as Buddhism or Akhanaten's monotheism. Multiple paths are needed, he says, because cultures vary from place to place and historical conditions differ from one period to another. Thus, the messengers, prophets and teachers preach particular '*shari'ahs*' according to their specific circumstances, yet all belong to the same religion.

Each of the different paths has its own characteristics. According to 'Ashmawi, Judaism stresses rightness and the observance of strict laws, Christianity emphasizes love and forgiveness, while Islam preaches mercy (*rahmah*), which, in a way, is a synthesis of both and more humanly possible to achieve than the exacting ideals of both its predecessors. There is no contradiction between these different attributes, for all are aspects of the same religion. The Koran, he points out, designates adherents of all these faiths as Muslims. 'Ashmawi rejects the commonly held view that the religions preached by the prophets who came before Muhammad—Judaism and Christianity—were 'deficient' and had to be complemented by Muhammad's mission. 'God did not reveal any imperfect religion, the messengers and the prophets did not embrace an imperfect religion, and none of them taught, or proclaimed or called for an imperfect religion', writes 'Ashmawi.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Jawhar al-islam* 103.

‘Ashmawi draws support for his interpretation from the numerous verses in the Koran that accept the validity of the prophets and the faiths that preceded Islam. Such a statement appears, for instance, in *Baqarah* 136 (and similarly in *Aal ‘imran* 84): ‘Say: We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have surrendered’ (‘surrendered’ in the sense of being Muslims: *wa-nahnu laku muslimun*). Or *Ma‘idah* 69 (and similarly in *Baqarah* 62): ‘Lo, those who believe, and those who are Jews, and Sabaeans, and Christians—whosoever believes in God and the Last Day and does right—there shall come no fear upon them, neither shall they grieve’.

The problem with relying on these verses is that Muslim jurists have long declared them invalid, invoking the principle of *naskh*, which stipulates that a later verse in the Koran which contradicts an earlier one thereby abrogates the former. Accordingly, the verses that signify an equality between these religions have been superseded by the verse that says: ‘Whoso desires another religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him; in the next world he shall be among the losers’ (*Aal ‘imran* 85). Hence, Islam is seen by this orthodoxy as superseding all previous revelations and as the sole way to salvation. ‘Ashmawi, for his part, even though he does not renounce the principle of *naskh* itself, strongly opposes its application to this case, arguing that such a ruling is based on a misconception of the term ‘Islam’. Since Islam, in his understanding, is the generic name for the common religion of all the revealed faiths, the exclusion of those who ‘desire another religion than Islam’ cannot apply to them. ‘The Koran’, he explains, ‘distinguishes between the polytheists and infidels who believe neither in God nor in the messengers and who do not do right [on the one hand], and the Jews and the Christians of *ahl al-kitab* [on the other]’. Therefore, the unbelievers in the Koran are only the pagans and those Jews and Christians who do not abide by their own religion.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 106. It is interesting to note that Sachedina similarly attacks the notion of retrospective abrogation. ‘There is no statement in the Koran, direct or indirect’, he says, ‘to suggest that the Koran saw itself as the abrogator of previous Scriptures’.

'Ashmawi's openness to other cultures is systematically articulated in his works. In the early period of Islam, he says, the Muslims underwent a profound change and began to seek the essence of things. 'They opened themselves to every civilization, responded to every opinion, learned every science and were active in every field.' No wonder, he points out, that *ikhwan al-safa'*, the influential circle of Islamic authors at the time, defined the ideal Muslim in the following terms: He should be 'Arab in religion, Iraqi in literature, Hebrew in perception, Christian in method, Syrian in devoutness, Greek in science, Indian in insight, Sufi in conduct', and so on. In other words, concludes 'Ashmawi, 'the true Muslim was defined as a universal person'.¹⁶ In our times, he maintains, Muslims should show openness to modern civilization associated with the West. Contrary to what many apologists for Islam claim, Western civilization is not purely materialistic. Rather, it constitutes 'the accumulation of human achievements in arts and science', and in a way is a realization of Islamic ideals.

A great deal of 'Ashmawi's writing is devoted to polemics against those who represent in his view, the opposite of the openness he preaches. His main target is the entire range of fundamentalists, from militant Islamists to the ulema of the establishment, who rally around the call for *tatbiq al-shari'ah*—the implementation of Islamic law as they understand it.

In 'Ashmawi's mind, the greatest threat to the vision of enlightened Islam comes from what he calls 'political Islam', namely radical Islamism. The term was coined by the title of his book, *al-islam al-siyasi*, and it caught on widely as a possible designation of a phenomenon which to this day suffers from chaotic nomenclature.

The concept that must be defused most decisively, 'Ashmawi insists, is that of *jihad*, which is employed by the Islamists to ignite a

Sachedina attributes the emergence of this wrong supposition to historical circumstances: 'From the standpoint of social organization,' he explains, 'this exclusive claim was an effective tool of legitimation and integration, furnishing its members with practical means of asserting their collective communal identity'. The jurists thus resorted to the device of *naskh* in order to remove the obstacle of 'the ecumenical passages of the Koran that extend salvific authenticity and adequacy to other monotheistic traditions', *loc. cit.*, 22–28.

¹⁶ *Al-islam al-siyasi*, 134.

disastrous clash with non-Muslims. The authentic religious meaning of *jihad*, says 'Ashmawi, in the wake of many authorities before him, is a spiritual and moral exertion. This is what Islam calls the greater *jihad*. Under certain conditions, such as the Prophet's struggle against the Meccans, it may mean a Holy War, in the sense of 'the smaller *jihad*', but this is authorized only for the purpose of defending the Islamic community. *Jihad* cannot be applied to political wars, and certainly not to terrorist campaigns against governments, as the Islamists wish to have it. 'True Islam', wrote 'Ashmawi recently in an Egyptian weekly, 'does not seek aggression and quarrels; it does not infringe on rights, nor does it threaten bloodshed; it bears no malice to anybody and does not terrorize people; it does not exploit religion for political objectives, nor does it use *shari'ah* to serve the interests of a particular party.'¹⁷

As was to be expected, 'Ashmawi's unconventional views evoked strong reactions. Prominent personalities in the Islamic establishment came out with sharp critiques of his writings. They included (the former) Sheikh al-Azhar, the Minister of Awqaf (Religious Endowments), and several senior ulema and leading spokesmen of the conservative Islamic trend. Naturally, they could not accept a thesis that reduces the scope of revelation and undercuts the authority of the ulema. The vehement reactions of the Azharites may also have reflected their apprehension that intellectuals like 'Ashmawi might pull them away from their usual involvement with matters of Islamic law and practice to a risky discussion about the 'essence' of Islam.¹⁸ The Azharites banned his books and sought to remove them from the annual Cairo Book Fair. At one point a *fatwa* was issued which bluntly outlawed 'Ashmawi, compelling the authorities to post guards at his home in al-Gezira.

However, there were also supporters. While the government found it expedient to put distance between itself and nonconformist writers such as 'Ashmawi, in this case President Mubarak personally intervened to restore his books at the Fair and subsequently even recommended them publicly. 'Ashmawi's access to the media had ups and

¹⁷ *Ruz al-Yusuf*, 14 December 2001.

¹⁸ See Zayde G. Antrim, 'Renegotiating Islam: The Reception of al-'Ashmawi's *al-Islam al-siyasi* in the Egyptian Press', *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 1/1 (Amman), 15-33.

downs, but recently *Ruz al-Yusuf* magazine, which had drawn closer to Mubarak's line, has been publishing a weekly article by 'Ashmawi. A month after the attack on the World Trade Center the magazine bestowed its 'medal of honour' on him, commending his insight and visionary warnings against the menace of Islamist terrorism.¹⁹ To 'Ashmawi himself perhaps more important were the publications that defended him on the conceptual level. They were not numerous, but their writers included such prominent figures as the Nobel Prize winner Nagib Mahfuz, the historian and senator 'Abd al-'Azim Ramadan, and the outspoken writer Farag Fodah.

After 'Ashmawi, Farag Fodah could probably be regarded as the most notable contemporary liberal writer on Islam in Egypt. Born in 1945, Fodah was an agricultural economist, a businessman and active politician. He defined himself as a believing and observant Muslim, and his writings reflect indeed a thorough familiarity with the religious literature. Unlike 'Ashmawi, whose argumentation is based on legal analysis, Dr Fodah relied on deduction from historical records.

In his search for the core meaning of Islam, Fodah concluded that Islam is a religion of reason and that its proper method is accordingly *ijtihad*, intellectual exertion to reach the truth. The central theme in his thought is the concept of '*almaniyah*', secularism in the sense of the separation of religion and state. Islam and Muslims, he argued, are not the same thing. The thrust of Fodah's polemic is directed against those who demand the implementation of *shari'ah* as the law of the state. He drew on his vast knowledge of Islamic sources and his ironic eloquence to refute the claims of the Islamists and denounce their terrorist methods. Devoting one of his books to a rebuttal of the Islamist manifesto of *jihad*, 'The Missing Precept' (*al-faridah al-gha'ibah*), he sarcastically titled his own book 'The Missing Truth' (*al-haqiqah al-gha'ibah*).

Since his concerns focus on the domestic situation in Egypt, his call for pluralism and for acceptance of the Other applies mostly to the non-Muslim population of the country, primarily the Copts. Fodah dared attack the commonly held belief, an article of faith for every Muslim, that Muslim regimes have always been tolerant because tolerance is inherent in Islam. He maintained that the historical record is in

¹⁹ *Ruz al-yusuf*, 12 October 2001.

fact mixed, with periods of tolerance alternating with periods of oppression. It is a documented fact, he pointed out, that Islamic states institutionalized various discriminatory practices against the *dhimmis*, the protected minorities. A religious state and tolerance, he argued, are contradictory terms. Yielding today to the pressure for implementing *shari'ah* in Egypt would lead to the inevitable degradation of the Copts and the violation of their human rights. Equality is a principle of civilized societies, he said, not of religious states. It is a universal natural right, not a function of religious toleration. Religion should regulate the life of the individual, not that of the community.²⁰

All this was apparently too much for the Islamists. They declared Fodah an apostate and made several attempts on his life, once by trying to run him over in the streets of Cairo. Assassins finally succeeded, in June 1992, in carrying out a *fatwa* proclaimed from America by Sheikh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, and shot him dead. A list of other targets for assassination, found in the home of one of the captured murderers, included the names of Nagib Mahfuz, Muhammad Sa'id 'Ashmawi and Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi.

At first sight Tantawi seems out of place on this list. He is a highly respected Islamic scholar who taught in several universities in Egypt and Arab countries and had reached the highest positions in the Egyptian Islamic hierarchy. Yet for the Islamists he represented a dangerous challenge. It was not just the fact that he issued legal rulings denouncing extremism and violence, for in doing so he was merely following a long tradition of government-appointed Muftis siding with the authorities. What infuriated them most was his championing, right at the heart of the stronghold of conservative Islam, of liberal values that are anathema to them.

Actually, the beginning of his career was not very promising in this regard. His doctoral dissertation (eventually published in Iraq), which dealt with 'The Sons of Israel in the Koran and the *sunnah*', was written with a strong anti-Jewish bias.²¹ Yet with his appointment as Mufti in 1986 he became a frequent and assertive speaker in local and international forums, supporting such causes as equality for the Copts, women's rights, family planning, the depoliticization of religion, peace

²⁰ Farag Fodah, *Al-ta'ifiyah ila ayn* (Cairo 1987), 11-58, *Hiwar hawla al-'almaniyyah* (Cairo 1987), 21-24.

²¹ *Banu isra'il fi al-qur'an w'al-sunnah*, 2 vols (Basra 1968, 1969).

agreements with Israel and dialogue with the Other. He also became one of the leaders of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

I had the privilege of participating in such a forum, a three-day international conference held in February 1994, in Dar al-Ifta', headquarters of the Mufti's establishment. It was titled 'Conflict Resolution, Pluralism and Tolerance—How to Coexist with Different Points of View'. The participants were mostly academics (with psychology the dominant discipline) and Islamic religious scholars. In addition to Egyptians there were Saudi, Qatari, Jordanian and Palestinian participants. Ten came from Israel, including a rabbi from the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem (which will be discussed below).

Carefully selected verses from the Koran were recited at the opening ceremony: they were those referred to earlier which spoke of accepting all the prophets, making 'no distinction between any of them' (these words were later projected on a large screen in the auditorium). The forum chairman hailed in his opening remarks the coexistence between *al-dayanat al-samawiyah*, the three monotheistic religions.

Dr Tantawi, the honorary president of the conference, delivered the keynote speech. He said that Islam recognizes the fact that every man has his own nature and is entitled to his own opinions. There is no need for agreement on every question. Diversity is inherent in creation; wherever there is life, there are differences. He quoted two famous verses: 'And if thy Lord had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing' (*Hud* 118), and 'We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another' (*Hujarat* 13). Diversity is positive, said Tantawi, as long as it is guided by the search for truth and avoids hostility, destruction and all the evils that tear nations apart. The Koran has shown that the way to resolve conflicts is through the exchange of views (*tabadul al-ra'y*), constructive dialogue, and listening to one another with mutual respect and an open heart. After all, he concluded, men of knowledge do not differ on matters of essence (*jawhar*), but only on secondary issues (*far'iyat*), since all the divine religions were revealed by God.

The boldness of this statement did not go unnoticed. Angry protests against this 'affront to Muslim feelings' were soon voiced in Islamic and opposition circles and even among the officials of Dar al-Ifta' itself. But Tantawi held his ground.

When he was appointed Sheikh al-Azhar in 1996 his liberal endeavours became somewhat constrained by his Azharite colleagues. Still, he did not abandon this liberal thinking. In December 1997 he took the unprecedented step of receiving the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Israel Lau, and held a discussion with him that could not be seen as anything short of a high-level Jewish–Muslim dialogue. This move generated loud protests from Azharites and others, which diminished only after Tantawi presented a negative interpretation of the encounter to the media.

Tantawi has often condemned the killing of innocent people and terrorism against both Egyptians and others. He would often quote the Koranic verse (which has its Hebrew parallel in *Sanhedrin* 4:5, see below²²) ‘Whosoever kills a human being, for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso saves the life of one, it shall be as he had saved the life of all mankind’ (*Ma’idah* 32). Regrettably, with the escalation of violence in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict he withdrew his earlier reservations about suicide-bombers targeting civilians.²³

Recently another kind of Self-and-Other discourse gained prominence in Egypt: ‘the dialogue of civilizations’, namely the quest of

²² The Hebrew origin is acknowledged by the same Koranic verse, for it begins with the words *Min ajli dhalika katabna ‘ala bani isra’il annahu*, ‘We decreed for the Children of Israel the following’.

²³ On the emotionally loaded question of whether Palestinian suicide bombers who kill Israelis should be considered martyrs (*shuhada’*), Tantawi initially steered a middle course. Islamic religious authorities displayed differences, at least in emphasis, on this issue. Sheikh Wasel, the Mufti of Egypt (from 1996 until he was replaced in 2002), ruled that suicide operations in the occupied territories, aimed at liquidating the occupation, are perfectly legal and their perpetrators are martyrs. On the other hand, the Saudi Mufti ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Shaykh has proclaimed that suicide operations committed by Palestinians inside Israel against Jewish civilians have no foundation in Islamic law and cannot be regarded as martyrdom. Tantawi’s initial position was a combination of the two approaches: on the one hand he denounced the deliberate killing of civilians—innocent women and children—as violations of the *shari’ah*; on the other, he did not condemn suicide operations as such, and publicly rejected an appeal by the Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Bakshi-Doron, to do so. Tantawi expressed the opinion that if someone blows himself up among combatants, this should be considered self-defence. In later rulings (possibly under pressure from hard-liners) he pronounced suicide bombers who target Israelis, even if it results in the killing of women and children, to be martyrs.

Muslims and Arabs for a common language with the West. This is not a new theme in public discourse, of course, as intellectuals in this area have been engaged with it for over a century. However, interest in it has escalated in recent years and after 11 September it even acquired a sense of urgency throughout the region. The terrorist strike against the World Trade Center generated a double-faceted problem: on the one hand, there were concerns that vehement domestic anti-Western trends, nourished by Islamists and others, might get out of hand and harm vital national interests; on the other, there were worries that Islamophobia and anti-Arab fervour in the West might affect the image and standing of Muslim-Arab countries and harm their expatriates in Western countries. Accordingly, conferences in Egypt devoted to this issue have become more frequent, often sponsored by the authorities.

The most recent conference of this kind, entitled 'Civilizations: Dialogue not Confrontation', was held last November in Cairo under the auspices of the Arab League. Azharites and other Islamic personalities have been participating in these conferences, providing religious legitimation from the Koran and the *sunnah* for dialogue with the West.²⁴ Other participants have been discussing the issues of dialogue in inter-civilizational terms, calling for better mutual understanding, the elimination of prejudices, the fostering of mutual respect, the encouragement of self-criticism on both sides and the total rejection of the Huntingtonian notion of an inevitable 'clash of civilizations'.

The Israeli 'neo-liberals' come from a variety of backgrounds. Prominent among them are rabbis whose formative years were spent in Western democracies. A notable representative of this stream is Rabbi David Hartman, one of the most renowned contemporary Jewish theologians. Descending from a family rooted in conservative orthodoxy in Jerusalem, he was brought up in America, where he served as rabbi of a number of congregations. In 1976 he settled in

²⁴ See e.g. the interview with Sheikh Yusuf al-Qirdawi entitled 'Dialogue with the West is a Religious Duty [*furidah*]'. He gives his readers an idea of how he visualizes this dialogue: 'We should tell them, "we shall complete you, you possess material assets but have no spirituality; we have spirituality, a spirituality that does not deny the material". The distinctive attribute of Islam is that it can say to the Westerner, "I have the Message that can give you the spiritual without making you lose the material"' (*Al-Ahram al-Arabi*, 10 February 2001).

Jerusalem where he taught at the Hebrew University and founded the Shalom Hartman Institute, nowadays considered a leading innovator in the field of Jewish pluralistic thought and education.

Hartman supports interfaith dialogue on moral, philosophical and religious grounds.²⁵ On this point he differs from his mentor Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, who had approved of Jewish-Christian dialogue in every area except theology. Hartman regards that attitude as unduly defensive and isolationist. Jews are part of the world and should overcome their sense of vulnerability, he says. Instead he prefers to follow in the wake of the philosopher Abraham Heschel, who declared, in the title of a famous essay, that 'No Religion is an Island',²⁶ and who affirmed that the voice of God reaches man's spirit in diverse ways and different languages.

Hartman seeks to combine biblical faith commitments with a pluralistic religious outlook. Lying at the core of his philosophy is his reinterpretation of the Covenant in terms of a meeting between God and man as two autonomous entities. From here he derives the concept of human freedom, which is the base of every notion of pluralism. The Creation, which is renewed every day, signifies, in Hartman's view, the legitimization of humanity in its finite condition and the affirmation of its ontological worth. Hence the universal sanctity of life which stands above all other values. The Bible, Hartman points out, begins not with Abraham, but with Adam, who is said to have been created singly in order to signify that the sanctity of life applies to all human beings and may not be limited by considerations of race, color, nationality or creed.²⁷

This is the rationale of the Mishnah which predicates 'For that reason the human being was created singly; to teach you that he who destroys one person's life, it is considered as if he had destroyed a whole world; and he who preserves one person's life, it is as if he had preserved a whole world' (*ma'aleh 'alav ha-katuv ke-ilu kiyem 'olam*

²⁵ For an extensive discussion of Hartman's thought, see Avi Sagi and Zvi Zohar (eds.), *Renewing Jewish Commitment: The Work and Thought of David Hartman*, 2 vols (Tel Aviv 2001), in Hebrew.

²⁶ From S. Heschel (ed.), *A. J. Heschel: Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (New York 1997).

²⁷ See Hartman's essay 'On the Possibilities of Religious Pluralism from a Jewish Viewpoint', *Immanuel* 16 (1983), pp. 101-18.

maleh, *Sanhedrin* 4:5; this saying is paralleled by the Koranic verse mentioned above.²⁸ The same Mishnah adds that Adam was created singly to signify the essential equality of all human beings, 'so that no person can say to another "my father was greater than yours".' It also upholds the inherent value of every individual: 'God minted every person from the mould of the first human being, but not one is identical to another, therefore a person should say, "the world was created for me".' The Creation is thus seen as the foundation of a universal ethic.

Whereas Creation is universal, argues Hartman, Revelation is particular. Every religious community can have its particular revelation because this is God's gesture of love, the expression of His willingness to meet humans in their finitude—in their specific historical and social circumstances and through their own languages. Therefore, revelation should not be universalized, and no religious community should transgress the limits of its particular revelation. Accepting the Other in these pluralistic terms, says Hartman, leads to spiritual redemption.

Hartman calls for the acceptance of the Other in a spirit of humility. Uncertainty is inherent in the human condition, and this requires treating the beliefs and cultural norms of the Other with respect. "These and these are the words of the living God", he says citing a Talmudic pronouncement on rival schools (*'Eruvin* 13b).

Hartman applies this position to a wide range of issues, from the purely religious to the politico-religious. The 'Others' who should be accepted in this spirit fall into three categories. First, Christianity, Islam and other religions outside Judaism; second, the different schools of thought within Judaism itself, including Jewish secularism; and third, the Palestinian community vis-a-vis the Jewish state. On this third issue Hartman is clear: Jews should recognize that the land of their ancestors is also the home of another people, and that 'this people has now entered the Jewish story'. Concerning the Palestinians, he says that 'Ruling over them, making them live under the shadow of Israeli power, will sever any meaningful link between the best spiritual teachings in Jewish tradition and the contemporary State of Israel'. We should say to the Palestinians, he advocates, 'You

²⁸ See n. 22. The idea of man having been created singly has its parallel in the Koran: 'O mankind, ... your Lord who created you from a single soul' (*al-Nisa'*, 1).

are our brethren in creation, and we share with you the moral imperatives of the sanctity of life'. Thus, for Hartman, the resolution of political conflict is also a religious requirement.²⁹

Rabbi Hartman and his Institute are deeply involved in dialogue activities. In recent years, under the shadow of escalating conflicts, dialogue forums have proliferated in Israel (as in Britain, the United States and some other Western countries). The *Guide to Interreligious and Intercultural Activities in Israel, 2001* lists seventy-one organizations involved in this discourse, mostly with Muslim or Arab interlocutors, but also in Jewish-Christian dialogues. Noteworthy among these forums are those engaged in the joint study of Islamic and Jewish texts, such as the Madrasa/Beit Midrash project of the Yakar Center, and the Interreligious Study Sessions of the Israel Interfaith Association (originally founded by Martin Buber).

Among the individuals engaged in this dialogue mention should be made of Rabbi David Rosen. Rosen was born in Britain and ordained in Israel, where he taught Jewish studies in a number of institutions. He also served as Chief Rabbi of Ireland. Rabbi Rosen has filled leadership roles in a number of interreligious organizations (including the World Conference on Religion and Peace) and today, based in Jerusalem, he serves as the International Director of Interreligious Affairs, the American Jewish Committee.

Rosen's intensive engagement in interreligious dialogue is systematically conceptualized in his writings. He has been involved in dialogue mostly with Christian interlocutors, but quite often also with Muslims and, as he points out, Jewish-Christian interfaith discourse encourages the participation of Muslims and has been generating trilateral forums. Rosen shows that there is a fundamental asymmetry between Judaism, on the one hand, and Christianity and Islam, on the other: theologically, Judaism is not obligated to address Christianity or Islam in order to understand itself, while the other two religions have no choice but to address their predecessors. Yet, he argues, for Jews, the engagement in dialogue with the Other is not only a matter of expediency, but also an intellectually and spiritually enriching endeavour, based on the commonality of the tenets and values shared by the Abrahamic religions. He sees this idea reflected in the words of the prophet

²⁹ See Moshe Helinger's article in Sagi and Zohar, pp. 139–42.

Malachi: 'Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another; the Lord heeded and heard them' (3:16).

For a definition of the essence of this dialogue Rosen uses a quotation from a speech delivered in 1996 by Prince Hassan of Jordan at Leo Baeck College: 'Interfaith dialogue should not be seen as a dialogue between the faiths, but as a dialogue of believers in the faiths about issues of common human concern. Its objective is not to address the metaphysical beliefs that are particular to each faith, but to identify and share universal human values.' Accordingly, Rosen maintains, the aim of dialogue is not to obliterate differences. Isaiah's vision of the end of days, when 'nation will not lift up sword against nation' and 'all nations shall flow ... to the mountain of the Lord' (2:2-4), is a vision of continuing pluralism. The relation of Judaism to the Other, he concludes, is that of 'a special partnership—connected but apart, separate yet together'.³⁰

Rosen scrutinizes the traditional authorities to prove that Judaism definitely recognizes Christianity and Islam as belonging to the category of monotheistic religions. It was Maimonides who provided the famous responsum about Islam, which laid down that 'These Ishmaelites are not idolaters at all ... they affirm the monotheism of the Almighty correctly—with an unblemished monotheistic affirmation' (*yichud she-ein bo dofi*). Although Maimonides did not apply this view to Christianity, some Jewish authorities disagreed with him on this point. Rosen quotes Rabbi Menachem Hameiri, who lived in Perpignan in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to the effect that both Muslims and Christians 'are peoples bound by the ways of true religion'. Similar views were held by several other rabbinical authorities cited by Rosen, from Nachmanides in the thirteenth century up to our contemporaries.³¹

Rosen is aware that conservative Orthodoxy rejects many such liberal interpretations. Thus, the frequently quoted rabbinic sayings to the effect that the righteous of the nations of the world have their portion in the World to Come (*Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13:2), is seen by conservatives as having a more limited meaning than the universalist

³⁰ David Rosen, 'Why is the Search for a Common Religious Basis for Jewish-Christian Communication and Co-operation Necessary?', in *From Martin Buber's House* 20 (Winter 1992-93).

³¹ David Rosen, 'Ach 'Esav le-Ya'akov', *Deot* 9 (October 2000), pp. 16-20.

interpretation offered by the liberals. Similarly, Orthodox authorities seek to restrict the meaning of such precepts as those demanding the granting of equal rights to non-Jews living in the land of Israel—*gerim toshavim*—or to be charitable in mixed towns even to idolaters. For liberals, these precepts are cornerstones of Judaism's humane and pluralistic construct, but they cannot avoid facing the fact that many influential authorities see these rules differently. One of them is Maimonides himself, who—at least according to one interpretation—holds that benevolence to non-Jews is actually a defensive measure applying only to situations where Jews are powerless and vulnerable.³²

Jewish neo-liberals deal with such restrictive interpretations in a manner similar to that employed by their Muslim counterparts for rejecting the abrogation of the early 'pluralistic' verses in the Koran. The method is to adhere to the literal sense of the original texts and ignore later restrictive interpretations, justifying this choice by the congruency of the literal meaning of the texts with the broad value system of their contexts. They also have good authorities supporting their preferences. Thus, on the above-mentioned issue of the treatment of non-Jewish inhabitants, they can rely on the ruling of the past Ashkenazi chief rabbis of Jerusalem, Kook and Herzog, to the effect that Muslims and Christians living in Israel should be afforded, from the halakhic point of view as well, full civil liberties, equal to those of the Jews. A third chief Rabbi, Issar Yehuda Unterman, rejecting the above-mentioned interpretation of Maimonides' position, ruled emphatically that benevolence to every human being is not a defensive measure, but emanates from the depth of biblical morality which has clearly established that 'God is good to all, and his mercy extends to all His creatures' (Psalms 145:9).

Yet, the mainstream of conservative Orthodoxy regards the positions and activities of the neo-liberals with scepticism and suspicion. The complaint is heard among such conservatives that the liberal pluralistic trend has actually been inspired by Reform Judaism, or even by Christianity. Most Orthodox rabbis shy away from participation in interreligious dialogues and sometimes even denounce them openly. Rabbi Rosen recounts that following the conclusion of the

³² Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot 'Avodat Kokhavim*, 10:5–6. See the article by Menachem Fish in H. Deutsch and M. Ben-Sasson (eds), *Ha-acher* (Tel Aviv 2001), pp. 230–31.

Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, a large interfaith conference was convened in Jerusalem. Members of the Israeli Rabbinate were scheduled to participate, but under the pressure of *charedi* rabbis they cancelled one by one, including the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi.

This leads directly to our concluding remarks. Clearly, both Jewish and Muslim exponents of the acceptance of the Other fight an uphill battle. While the work of these neo-liberals certainly merits attention and serious consideration, in fact they confront in their own societies vehement opposition, emanating not only from fundamentalist groups, but from the mainstream as well. Their opponents strive to delegitimize and marginalize them and, on the Muslim side, also to harass them and threaten their lives.

The neo-liberals have indeed taken on themselves a formidable task. They challenge long-standing supremacist dogmas and triumphalist visions which have solidified in the historical process—often in defensive situations—to become part of religion itself. What they expect from their respective societies is not trivial: it amounts to nothing less than rewriting historical narratives, reexamining self-perceptions and doing away with prevalent images and stereotypes. They expect their faith communities to accept theological reinterpretations that shake the foundations of their traditional certainties and assurances, to link orthodoxies to universalist beliefs that transcend their particularity and to meet the Other in terms that are alien to their historical experience and difficult to absorb. ‘Every culture is haunted by its other’, wrote Derrida,³³ and, as we know, ghosts are not easy to dispose of.

A genuine acceptance of the Other requires overcoming grievances and vulnerabilities, which in the particular cases of Islam and Judaism is not an easy task. Muslims feel that they have been victimized and humiliated by the relentless onslaught of Western might which, in their view, has been striving in modern times to dominate them through a variety of paradigms, from colonialism to globalization. They regard Israel as the bridgehead of this assault, and Zionism—often identified with world Jewry—as its contrived instrument. Jews, for their part, carry the burden of cumulative historical traumas of victimization and dehumanization, culminating in the Shoah. In

³³ Jacques Derrida, ‘Deconstruction and the Other’, in Richard Kearney (ed.), *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester 1984).

Israel, Jews see themselves as existentially threatened by Arab neighbours and their Muslim supporters. The sense of alienation and suspicion generated by these perspectives has recently intensified, fuelled, among Muslims, by the wave of Islamophobia and demonization that is sweeping over Western societies, and among Jews by rising anti-Semitism in European and Muslim countries, accompanied by Holocaust denial and conspiracy theories.

Against this background, the aspirations of neo-liberals seem almost utopian. Governments, politically committed to the conservative orthodoxies of their communities, are reluctant to endorse neo-liberal thought and activity. Occasionally, governments may find it expedient to encourage dialogue forums, and sheikhs and rabbis of the Establishment may even join them, but such involvement is always subject to political considerations. Essentially, the search for mutual acceptance remains confined to voluntary organizations and individual activists, far outnumbered by their opponents.

Still, despite these constraints and limitations, the place of neo-liberalism in contemporary Jewish and Islamic life is firmly established. The fact that such a variety of thinkers, coming from diverse backgrounds and employing different paradigms, have elaborated similar ideational constructs and functional orientations shows that they are all responding to a real need which the present historical circumstances generate in their societies. The similarities between their arguments and propositions are indeed striking. Common to the thought of most of them, both Jewish and Muslim, are such themes as the equality of all men as prescribed by the Creation, the sanctity and worth of every individual's life, the multiformity of Revelation befitting different historical and cultural conditions, the parallel validity of all revelations, the inherent connection between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the harmonious coexistence of particularity and universality within every religion, the definition of religion in essentialist terms, the complementarity of revelation and reason, the universality of ethics, a reliance on liberal interpretations of the scriptures, the need to relate to the Other with mutual respect, tolerance and the acceptance of differences, the imperative of dialogue and reconciliation, and the rejection of fundamentalism, radicalism and triumphalism.

While the religious and intellectual leaders who engage in this quest for mutual acceptance remain a small minority, they may derive

encouragement from the fact that their circles are expanding and that civic activities devoted to pluralism and tolerance are proliferating in many places. Some would argue that in the life of a school of thought, trend is often more important than volume. The vocabulary of the acceptance of the Other is pervading public discourse even in the mass media. Recently published books in Egypt, Israel and elsewhere deal increasingly with the issues of relationships with the Other, a concern that is often stated in their titles.³⁴

Paradoxically, interest in theories and methods of dialogue seems to grow just when extremism becomes rampant. The escalation of worldwide terrorism, of protracted ethnic conflicts and of interreligious and intercultural tensions, which has become the sign of our times, dialectically generates efforts at pacification through the discourse of mutual acceptance. Precisely because the threats to regional and even global stability loom so large, more people are inclined to explore the potentialities of interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue for achieving at least conflict management, if not complete conflict resolution.

As I was completing the preparation of this Sacks Lecture, news of the convening of a major interfaith conference in Alexandria, with the participation of religious leaders from Israel, Egypt and Palestine, was being carried by the media. The religious personalities involved included several of the protagonists discussed in this paper. Atypically for meetings of this kind, the conference concluded with a consensus proclamation which received the blessings of Arafat, Mubarak and Sharon. Perhaps an appropriate way to conclude this paper would be to quote the preamble to the seven-point proclamation entitled 'First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land':

According to our faiths and traditions, killing innocents allegedly in the name of God is a desecration of His holy name and defames religion in the world. The violence in the Holy Land is an evil which must be opposed by all people of good faith. We seek to live together as neighbours, respecting the integrity of each other's historical and religious inheritance. We call upon all to oppose incitement, hatred and the misrepresentation of the other.

Rabbi Michael Melchior, one of the principal participants in that conference, explained in an interview the rationale of such enterprises.

³⁴ E.g. Hanna Milad, *Qabul al-aakhar* (Cairo 2000), and Deutsch and Ben-Sasson (sec n. 32).

'It is a fact', he said, 'that religious discourse is taking place today, while hardly any political discourse exists. And it is also a fact that this discourse receives substantial encouragement from both political leaders and men of religion. Indeed, there is more place for dialogue in the spiritual sphere than in the political world, because the former provides greater opportunities for situations of "win-win" rather than the latter's "zero-sum" games.'³⁵

³⁵ *Ha'aretz*, 22 February 2002. The same article also reported that meetings between participants of the Alexandria conference continued in its wake in other venues.

PUBLISHED LECTURES OF THE
OXFORD CENTRE FOR
HEBREW AND JEWISH STUDIES

A

Abramson, Glenda, *The Distant Self: Aspects of Alienation in Contemporary Hebrew Poetry* (1st Schreiber Lecture).

B

Balcombe, The Rt Hon. Lord Justice, *The Attitudes of the Law to Religion in a Secular Society*.

Baron, Salo W., *Ethnic Minority Rights: Some Older and Newer Trends* (10th Sacks Lecture).

C

Carmichael, Calum, *The Ten Commandments* (9th Sacks Lecture).

Cigman, Gloria, *The Jew as an Absent-Presence in Late Medieval England* (17th Sacks Lecture).

Cosgrave, Patrick, *The Origins, Evolution and Future of Israeli Foreign Policy* (6th Sacks Lecture).

D

Daiches, David, *The Valley of Tears and Dover Beach: Modes of Sadness in English and Hebrew Poetry* (1st Sacks Lecture).

Daube, David, *Ancient Hebrew Fables* (Inaugural Lecture).

Daube, David, *Esther*.

Daube, David, *Medical and Genetic Ethics: Three Historical Vignettes*.

Daube, David, *Witnesses in Bible and Talmud*; Carmichael, Calum, *Biblical Laws of Talion*.

DellaPergola, Sergio, *World Jewry Beyond 2000: The Demographic Prospects* (3rd Frank Green Lecture; Occasional Papers · 2).

E

Eban, Abba, *The Intellectual Climate in Israel Today* (2nd Sacks Lecture).

Eckardt, A. Roy, *Comedy versus Tragedy: Post-Shoah Reflections* (1st Maxwell Lecture).

F

Finstein, Israel, *Post-Emancipation Jewry: The Anglo-Jewish Experience* (7th Sacks Lecture).

Fishman, William J., *Morris Winchevsky's London Yiddish Newspaper: One Hundred Years in Retrospect* (2nd Stencl Lecture).

Frankel, S. Herbert, *Modern Capitalism and the Jews*.

G

Gilbert, Martin, *Britain, Palestine and the Jews 1891-1939* (3rd Sacks Lecture).

Goodman, Martin, *Who was a Jew?*

J

Jackson, Bernard S., *The Teaching of Jewish Law in British Universities* (2nd Jewish Law Fellowship Lecture).

Jacobs, Louis, *Objectivity and Subjectivity in Jewish Legal Decisions: The Debate on AID* (3rd Jewish Law Fellowship Lecture).

K

King, Robert D., *The Weinreich Legacy* (5th Stencl Lecture).

L

Levenberg, Schneier, *From Czar to Glasnost: Yiddish in the Soviet Union* (6th Stencl Lecture).

Litvine, Mordechai, *Translations into and from Yiddish* (8th Stencl Lecture).

M

Malamat, Abraham, *Early Israelite Warfare and the Conquest of Canaan* (4th Sacks Lecture).

Mandel, George, *Who was Ben-Yehuda with in Boulevard Montmartre?*

Maxwell, Elizabeth, *Why Should the Holocaust be Remembered and Therefore Taught?*

Mendelovitch, Bernard, *Memories of London Yiddish Theatre* (7th Stencl Lecture).

Mendelsohn, Ezra, *The Ambiguous 'Lessons' of Modern Polish-Jewish History* (1st Goldman Lecture).

Mendes-Flohr, Paul, *Jewish Philosophy: An Obituary* (4th Frank Green Lecture; Occasional Papers · 3).

N

Neusner, Jacob, *Max Weber Revisited: Religion and Society in Ancient Judaism* (8th Sacks Lecture).

P

Patterson, David, *A Darkling Plain: Jews and Arabs in Modern Hebrew Literature.*

Patterson, David, *Out of Bondage* (15th Sacks Lecture).

Patterson, David, and Uriel Tal, *Changing Approaches to Society in Nineteenth-century Hebrew Literature and Jewish Thought* (Inauguration of the Schreiber Fellowship).

Polonsky, Antony, *The Failure of Jewish Assimilation in Polish Lands and its Consequences* (3rd Goldman Lecture; Occasional Papers · 4)

Prawer, S. S., *A. N. Stencl, Poet of Whitechapel* (1st Stencl Lecture).

R

Ran, Leyzer, *Vilna, Jerusalem of Lithuania* (4th Stencl Lecture).

S

Schäfer, Peter, *Gershom Scholem Reconsidered: The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism* (12th Sacks Lecture).

Shapiro, E. Donald, *Birth, Law, Medicine and Morality* (11th Sacks Lecture).

Simpson, W. W., *Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: A Retrospective Prospect*
(13th Sacks Lecture).

Solomon, Joseph, *Jewish Rights in a Jewish Land*.

Sufott, Zev E., *Israel and the Diaspora: Roles and Responsibilities*
(Occasional Papers · 1).

T

Temkin, Sefton D., *On to America: The Great Migration and the Development
of Jewish Life in the United States*.

U

Ullendorff, Edward, *The Bawdy Bible* (5th Sacks Lecture).

V

Vermes, Geza, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Forty Years On* (14th Sacks Lecture).

W

Wasserstein, Bernard, *Herbert Samuel and the Partition of Palestine*
(16th Sacks Lecture).

Webber, Jonathan, *The Future of Auschwitz: Some Personal Reflections*
(1st Frank Green Lecture).

Wistrich, Robert S., *Antisemitism in the New Europe*
(2nd Frank Green Lecture).

