

On the blank check God did not give

Chosen to do what?

Palestinians dehumanized, Israelis sold



REUTERS

International Desk

PERSPECTIVE

The world has seen its fair share of people calling themselves “chosen” or in covenant with God(s). That is not something new. Some even developed communities that were isolated from the rest of the world and, as such, ruled themselves and other non-believers in their vicinity, whether legally or not. However, none were as extremist as Zionists in Israel are, both in their ideologies and their conduct. Granted, Zionists did not invent the idea, but they sure did take it to ridiculous, supremacist extremes. The idea that the ancient Isra-

elites were chosen by God is found most directly in the Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, but that can be taken to have a more positive implication for Jews. Some scholars have cited Genesis 12:2 as the part where God clearly vows to turn Abram’s descendants “into a great nation” but also tasks Abram in Genesis 12:3 and Jewish prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 49:6 to be “a blessing unto all nations” and “a light unto others,” respectively. Ignoring such contradictory or explanatory verses and cherry-picking other verses that justify their inhumane desires is a pattern with Zionists. Being chosen by God,

whether you be a prophet or a nation, is not a free, generous gift to anyone who is born to Jewish parents. This is, first and foremost, a task and a heavy responsibility to make the world a better place for “others”. In this sense, Jews are expected by the Lord to take the well-being of others into consideration, naturally more if they are within reach. This much is typical of a merciful Lord if one submits to Him. Robert Gordis, an American leading conservative Rabbi and biblical scholar, wrote, “Few beliefs have been subject to as much misunderstanding as the ‘Chosen People’ doctrine. The Torah and the Proph-

ets clearly stated that this does not imply any innate Jewish superiority. In the words of Amos (3:2), ‘You alone have I singled out of all the families of the earth — that is why I will call you to account for your iniquities [=sins].’”

We should take a closer look at the verse cited from the Book of Amos, as it deals another heavy blow to the ethnic supremacist reading of God’s covenant with the Israelites. Amos, one of the Twelve Minor Prophets who preached in the northern Kingdom of Israel, reminds Israelites that they have sinned and are no less guilty than gentile (non-Jewish) nations, and that God is free to judge whether to redeem Israel. God clearly reminds his “chosen people” that their status is not eternal and instead rests on the accomplishment of the aforementioned duties and their being god-fearing. If they fail, the verse reads, “I will punish you for all your sins.” The current state of Israel surely resembles a punishment from God. We like to think that God has stopped punishing whole nations because of living prophets or other reasons, but He promised in Isaiah 2:12, “For the Day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.” We also know from the Qur’an that “Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends ill for a people, there is no repelling it.” (Surah Ar-Ra’d 13:11)

The Jews of Israel have

squandered the opportunity that was given to them by God, and it’s hard to imagine a way back from the massacre of Gazans that they are passively or actively supporting. As we’ve seen, the fall from grace did not happen overnight. While Israelis were patting themselves on the back for being chosen and taking it for granted, their cabinet committed one atrocity after another, not even worried about admitting their inhuman practices of targeting civilians and driving people away from their homes into humiliating refugee camps.

Israelis, by and large, have bought in to the idea of being chosen, immune to judgment from the Lord or the Gentiles, and free to do whatever they want. This is not an outlandish claim. Many god-fearing or simply observant Jews and Israelis have pointed out the delusion. The current prime minister of Israel doesn’t mind spouting racist, supremacist, and contra-Biblical doctrines if it pulls the wool over the eyes of his constituents and feeds his hunger for power.

Gideon Levy, a senior columnist for the Israeli Daily Haaretz, noted how “the systematic dehumanization of Palestinians enables us Israelis to live in peace with everything.” In his short but impactful address at the National Press Club, which was repeatedly greeted with cheers of approval from the audience, he highlighted the reason why the question of human rights is never brought up in the mind of almost every Israeli. It’s because Palestinians

are not considered “human beings like us” Israelis.

That’s shocking to hear, but what other conclusion can an independent-minded journalist like him draw from seeing Israeli soldiers playing games in their tent while a Palestinian bleeds out in an ambulance outside the city of Jenin during the Second Intifada? “I once wrote that we treat Palestinians like animals, and I got so many protest letters from animal rights organizations, rightly so,” he said, to an uproar of bitter, affirmative laughter.

Benjamin Netanyahu anticipated that his heartless plans would cause a repulsion, at best, and a revolt, at worst, from Jews worldwide and the people of Israel. So, he indoctrinated the notion that being God’s chosen people means that they are humans, while others, especially Palestinians, are not. This was, more than anything, a manipulative attempt at providing a mental shield for Israelis.

The worst defense of any kind for committing crimes against humanity is “we have been chosen, so whatever we do is, by definition, the right thing to do”. It was politically wrong when George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan did it, citing the Unitary Executive Theory as the reason why they, as the highest elected officials of the US, can’t be told what to do as whatever they do is law, and it is wrong here, too. However, one was easier to digest than the other. Not to mention that in the case of Israelis, the defense is based on a skewed, cherry-picking reading of the Old Testament.

Iranian Jewish MP: Israel doesn’t represent all Jews

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Israeli regime considers itself the representative of Jews everywhere. How much does this claim hold true? Do all Jews approve of the acts and positions of the regime over the past few decades? Do its plans and performance line up with those of Judaism? We asked these questions of Homayoun Sameh Yah Najafabadi, the representative of the Iranian Jewish community in Iran’s Parliament.

Born in Tehran, he now holds a seat in the Parliament’s Health Committee.

The Israeli regime thinks it represents all the Jews in the world. As a follower of Judaism, how correct do you think this claim is?

If Muslims could ever ac-

cept that the terrorist group Daesh truly represents Islam, then Jews worldwide could deem Israel to be their representative. Since no one believes Daesh stands for what Islam stands for, no one should admit that Israel speaks for the Jews.

The Israeli regime consists of a bunch of extremist people and views, none of which have any agreement with the teachings of Judaism in deeds or words, as they contrast sharply. In a historically and geographically critical location of the world, that is, the land of Palestine, the Israeli regime seeks its interests, which can’t be further from Judaism, in the name of Jews everywhere.

Does that mean that Israel is abusing Jewish teachings to achieve its political goals and justify its excessive demands?

That is so. The Israeli re-

gime only cares about its goals but decides to hide behind Judaism. In fact, Zionists are exploiting the Jewish creed to create legitimacy for themselves. Unfortunately, there are some throughout the world who have been manipulated to buy in to the lies of the Zionists, who, in no way, represent Jews. Of course, everywhere you look, there are extremists who link their extremist acts to a religion, just as Daesh falsely contends that their inhumane moves are Islamic. We even have Zionist Christians.

As a follower of Judaism, how do you feel about the massacre of the people of Gaza by Israel in the last two months?

The crimes that the regime has committed in Gaza are painful to watch for anyone, regardless of faith, ethnicity, or race. All of us, however different we are in

our beliefs, can fathom the depth of the Israeli regime’s atrocities if only we were to put ourselves in the shoes of the innocent civilians of Gaza, and our own children in the shoes of the innocent children there.

Unfortunately, the world doesn’t seem to be showing any kind of sensitivity toward this mass killing. International organizations are all talk and no action. They don’t make any meaningful, practical moves to stop the massacre and the bombings. The people of Palestine are under the most brutal attacks, and that moves any human.

In various parts of the world, followers of different religions, each from a different race, coexist peacefully. In Palestine itself, Jews, Christians, and Muslims often lived peacefully together throughout history, but it seems like the excessive demands of

Israel have disrupted this historical order.

Yes, the Israeli regime has sabotaged that peaceful coexistence. Of course, the overextending of Zionists is not related to Judaism. They have incorrect understandings of the teachings of Judaism.

We here in Iran live peacefully alongside followers of

other religions. Imam Khomeini, the founder of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, and the Leader Ayatollah Khamenei have always stressed domestic unity. They do not only mean unity between Muslims or Shias in Iran. They mean unity among all Iranians, regardless of their religion or ethnicity.

Regrettably, in the past

few decades, we have seen attempts at making rifts among Palestinians, which, I believe, is the evil legacy of the British. Still, I think, just as the Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution put it, even though thousands of Palestinians have been martyred, hundreds have joined the resistance movement to pick up the torch.

