



What does this choice or being chosen imply? Are the supremacist interpretations held by some Jews living in occupied territories based on such religious statements?

This chosen status does not have racial implications. While the core of Judaism or followers of Prophet Moses are indeed the Children of Israel, as stated in the Torah, many Egyptians who were not part of the Children of Israel also believed in Moses due to Pharaoh's oppression and tyranny. They joined the Children of Israel and Moses in leaving Egypt. According to the Torah, this superiority or chosen status of the Children of Israel has two perspectives. One is through relative connection and link of the Children of Israel to great personalities and prophets like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In essence, this superiority refers to the lineage and descent of the Children of Israel. However, the prerequisite for enjoying this privilege is that the Children of Israel or followers of the Jewish faith must behave, act, and believe like those great figures or continue their path.

The other aspect of this superiority revolves around the fact that the Children of Israel or followers of Judaism are the first community to unanimously become monotheistic. This matter is also mentioned in the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims. Therefore, by virtue of being the first in monotheism, they are considered chosen. However, this chosenness is not a carte blanche. As stated in the Torah, the Children of Israel are the chosen people on the condition that they execute divine commandments. Therefore, being chosen does not imply superiority or racism.

You mentioned divine commandments. The Ten Commandments, all call for a peaceful coexistence with others and worship of the Lord. They emphasize values such as "thou shalt not kill." Unlike what is observed in Zionist behavior, it appears that the teachings of Judaism advocate compassion to-

ward others, even adversaries.

Yes, that's right. When Judaism emerged, other nations were generally idolatrous. Judaism, as outlined in the Torah, does not even encourage the elimination of idol worshippers. Prophet Solomon, who was both a prophet and a king, made peace treaties with many neighbors who were idolaters. Judaism is not fundamentally a proselytizing religion that seeks to make everyone Jewish. Throughout their history, Jews living alongside different religions or nations have mostly coexisted peacefully. A notable example is present in Iran itself. The presence of Jews in Iran dates back to before the formation of Iran, to the time when the Medes and Persians were settled. In the Book of Kings, Volume 2, it is mentioned that when the Assyrian king brought some Jews into captivity, he settled them in the cities of Media (western provinces of Iran). The Torah itself states that you were strangers in the land of Egypt and experienced life in bondage, so do not treat others as captives.

During World War II, Jews themselves became victims of the ideology of superiority and racial supremacy. The supremacist behavior adopted by the Israeli regime for followers of Judaism should be a subject of contemplation.

In one of the protests against Israel's aggression toward the people of Gaza in Britain or the United States, an elderly Jewish man said, "I am a survivor of the Holocaust. My parents were killed in that incident, and I understand the pain and suffering of the people in Gaza." Every political party or regime has its own propaganda machine and narratives. The Israeli regime, by referring to certain events or claims, advertises a kind of victimhood for itself and labels any opposition to Zionism as opposition to Judaism, creating a dichotomy between Jewish-Arab or Jewish-Islamic relations. However, the roots of this propaganda go back to the divisions and discords fomented by Britain in Palestine. Before the

establishment of the Israeli regime, Jews lived peacefully alongside Muslims and Christians in Palestine. Some policies by certain countries have also fueled Israel's propaganda. For instance, the government of Iraq expelled Jews living in the country at one point, providing a platform for Zionist propaganda that claimed Jews were not safe anywhere in the world except in Israel. Or they claimed that Arabs and Muslims were all united against Jews and wanted to annihilate them. Zionists aim to create a sense of victimhood for themselves and encourage Jews worldwide to migrate to Israel through such propaganda.

In the past couple of months, events occurred in some countries that Israelis interpreted as anti-Semitic. For example, attacks on synagogues in Europe, which were, of course, reprehensible acts. Those who attacked synagogues are either truly against Judaism, or they are unaware of the distinction between Judaism and Zionism. However, Israel's propaganda machine and its supportive media worldwide brand any opposition to Zionism as anti-Semitism. Therefore, it is essential to differentiate between Zionism and Judaism. As seen in the Islamic Republic of Iran, emerging from an Islamic revolution, in the very first year after victory, Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, emphasized that Zionism is separate from Judaism as a religion. Ayatollah Khomeini, the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has continued this policy, preventing Zionists from taking advantage of Judaism.

In your view, as a follower of the Jewish faith, does the level of violence, destruction, and killing of people in Gaza over the past two months justify with any rationale or perspective?

Causing harm to civilians, destroying public and non-military places, and killing non-combatants, even in war, have no justification whatsoever. The goal of the Israeli regime has been to evacuate the

entire Gaza Strip of non-Jewish or non-Zionist residents. The October 7 attack by Hamas served as a pretext to operationalize this objective. Perhaps if Operation Al-Aqsa Storm did not happen, a similar situation would have occurred under a different pretext in the near future. Israelis claim the right to defend themselves against what they characterize as Hamas's violent actions in attacking occupied territories. However, under this justification, they aim to empty the Gaza Strip of its Muslim and Arab inhabitants.

You mentioned that various groups of Jews are opposed to Zionism. Don't you think the formation of a global union or confederation of anti-Zionist Jews could contribute to better clarity and enlightenment in distinguishing between Judaism and Zionism?

One of the ancient Jewish groups opposed to Zionism is Neturei Karta. Representatives of this group came to Iran a few years ago, and during the recent trip of Iran's president to New York to attend in the United Nations General Assembly, some rabbis from this group met with him. They had previously aligned themselves with the Palestinian Fatah movement. In Israel itself, there is an active group of Jews called Peace Now, advocating for peaceful coexistence with Palestinian Muslims. However, within the political and parliamentary structure, they do not wield significant influence. There is also a group of Jewish scholars residing in Islamic countries who almost share the same idea of promoting peace and peaceful coexistence. The formation of such a union would undoubtedly have more power and cohesion.

Based on the teachings of Judaism, what solutions can be proposed to end the oppression of the Israeli regime against the Palestinians?

No monotheistic religion, including Judaism, accepts that anyone or a group should be subjected to oppression simply because some desire to maintain their fa-

vorable situation. One of the fundamental beliefs is not to steal or seize. Politically, both sides are attempting to eliminate the other, yet neither has succeeded so far. Therefore, practically, there is no solution other than coexistence and tolerance for each other. The proposed solution, as suggested by the leader of Iran's Revolution, is to hold a free and nationwide election there, which could be a viable solution. If all residents of the occupied territories and Palestinians think in a way that we all live in this region, and for a better situation, the appropriate path in the initial stage is to tolerate and coexist with each other, a suitable foundation could be laid to end these decades-long wars. Of course, coexistence and fair living mean not having some with more privileges and others facing significant restrictions. A free and inclusive election based on the understanding that everyone has the right to life might lead to a positive outcome. War and conflict are undesirable anywhere in the world, especially in a land sacred to all religions. Peace in Palestine might bring tranquility not only to the region but also to the entire world.

So, you believe in the solution of one state with two peoples based on holding free and inclusive elections where everyone has equal rights and privileges?

Yes. There must be a fair framework that ensures the interests and rights of everyone.

The prelude to this solution or any other solution is the immediate establishment of a cease-fire in Gaza and the cessation of the killing of people.

Yes, absolutely. Right now, there is senseless bombing and massacre happening in Gaza. It's unacceptable that, under the pretext of the possibility of some members of Hamas being there, they bomb the place and kill innocent people. War itself has its framework and laws. They should not kill defenseless and civilian individuals. Cease-fire is the top priority.

