

Using Tools From the Past to Help Guide the Future

Peace is a foreign concept to people who live in a world that is surrounded by constant violence. Many times when placed in this environment people can lose sight of what life really is, and slip into a hazardous hole that eats away at them. These types of people are the Palestinians and Israelis. While these two parties struggle to reestablish peace between them, they both are fighting for reasonable causes. The Palestinians main goal is to establish their own state, while the Israelis just want to protect their own territory without it getting taken away from them. In an effort to help restore peace to both groups of people, a Quartet made up of the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia, have drawn up a document entitled, The Roadmap to Peace, to try and help cure the violent tendencies between the two parties. Although the Roadmap is a thoughtful gesture, it leaves out many suggestions that could be applied to this situation. Such helpful suggestions can be found in an essay entitled, "Waiting for a Jew" by Jonathon Boyarin. His essay provides many tools from his past that illustrate ways to establish a peaceful community and therefore can help guide peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. These tools include creating portable landscapes, learning to live together, and focusing on the future instead of dwelling on the past. The tools, when applied to the Roadmap, will guarantee that the Israelis and Palestinians gain a peaceful tolerance for each other.

A major issue that the Roadmap to Peace fails to address is the issue of who will claim the holy city of Jerusalem as their own. Both the Palestinians and the Israelis consider Jerusalem to have major religious associations, and with out a doubt both sides will want to keep Jerusalem as their own. The only suggestion that the Roadmap offers in solving this problem is that the " GOI reopens Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and other closed Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem based on a commitment that these institutions operate strictly in accordance with prior agreements between the parties"(A Roadmap to Peace 3). Although this clause implies that the Israelis and the Palestinians share Jerusalem, it puts stipulations on how the Palestinians run their institutions. Instead of the

Palestinians sharing Jerusalem with stipulations, Boyarin conveys, "any marginal group in mass society may be subject without warning to the loss of its cultural landscape, and therefore those who are able to create portable landscapes for themselves are the most likely to endure" (149). If the Palestinians were able to apply Boyarin's suggestion in creating a portable landscape then they would be able to realize that land is just land, and that they can take their religious beliefs and recreate them elsewhere. Also, this way the Palestinians would be free to live as they please without having to worry about following certain guidelines, and therefore would not have anymore conflict with the Israelis on how Jerusalem should be ran.

The Road Map to Peace also lacks the simple statement that both the Israelis and the Palestinians will need to compromise with one another. Instead, the Roadmap focus's on "ending violence and terrorism, when the Palestinian people have leadership acting decisively against terror and willing and able to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty" (A Road Map to Peace 1). This focus should not be the main priority. The main priority should be that the Israelis and Palestinians learn to compromise and understand each other so that they can live side by side peacefully. Similarly, Boyarin states that, "one must give the impression, whether implicitly or explicitly, that he or she is likely eventually to accept their standards in all areas of life" (157). Once the Israelis learn about the Palestinian ways, and vice-versa, they no longer have to feel threatened by each other, yet feel secure with one another's tendencies.

The main problem with the Road Map to Peace is that the Palestinians or the Israelis did not draft it. Instead, the Quartet took it upon themselves to help create what they thought would be a reasonable approach to creating peace within the two feuding parties. By doing this, the Quartet is not taking into effect what really upsets the Palestinians or the Israelis. In effect, it may be more productive for the Israelis and the Palestinians to come together and try to reach some sort of understanding in the name of peace. According to Boyarin, the two parties should not spend time "realizing the fragile illusions of wholeness

which was destroyed" (163) the two parties should rather, " attempt to understand what it is they miss and need" (163). As of right now the Israelis and Palestinians feel so much contempt towards each other because of the numerous violent attacks done by both sides, that it almost seems impossible for either side to forget the past. If Boyarin's suggestions could be incorporated into the Road Map to Peace, the two parties could be asked to focus on things that need to change in order to stop the violence, instead of dwelling on all the harm that has already been done.

The main goal after the Roadmap to Peace is applied is that the Israelis and Palestinians will be able to be a unified community and live together peacefully. This idealistic thought can be compared to Boyarin's sense of community. " If the shul survives, it will be because of its very marginality, because of the many individuals who have recognized the creative possibilities of a situation that demands that they create a new unity while allowing each of the to retain their otherness" (Boyarin 164). This statement is the exact attitudes that the Palestinians and Israelis need to adopt in order to form their peaceful societies. Once they are able to except each other's otherness, they will then have formed a livable environment with endless possibilities.

People often say that history repeats itself. Keeping that in mind, a practical method in solving the world's problems today would be to look at the past and learn from it. One such past is the past of Jonathon Boyarin. Through his essay, "Waiting for a Jew," he provides many suggestions from his experiences with life and communities. These suggestions are specific keys that were left out of the Roadmap to Peace. When included with his suggestions, the Roadmap could be a life-changing document to many people.