

## **Introduction**

### **Muslim-Jewish Dialogue: Moving Forward**

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To many observers of the world today it would seem that the great divisions among people - and the dominating sources of conflict – are located in the religious sphere. Jewish, Muslim and (neo-) Christian societies appear to be characterised by interactions that reflect more than a little distrust and lack of accommodation between faiths and cultures. Religious radicalism (defined as an extremist, and zealous religious outlook, which contains a deep discontent with the present, and expresses a vision of some ideal state of affairs and conviction as to the need for a basic change in the society) threatens to silence public discourse and increase divisions. Secular culture has found attacks from certain strands of militant, fundamentalist religion threatening or offensive, and has effectively and robustly resisted them.

In such a climate of mutual recriminations, relations between Muslims and Jews have become increasingly strained, pushing tensions between these communities to new levels. All around the world, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, in wider society as well as among Muslims and Jews themselves, is poisoning relationships and any chance of mutual tolerance. Indeed, in the recent past Jews and Muslims have become strangers to each other even when they occupy the same space. Take Jerusalem at the turn of the twenty-first century: Jews and Arabs use separate blood banks, telephone directories, hotels, cinemas, schools, and buses. Likewise, social services and most government establishments are separate. At Hadassah Medical Centre, the hospital's director general is reported to have assured the public that Jewish hearts would not be transplanted within Arab bodies, nor the reverse! One might argue that Jerusalem is not the same as the rest of Israel. However it cannot be denied that even in a reasonably 'well-integrated' city like Haifa there is a high degree of residential segregation and significant socio-economic differences rooted in the specific social trajectories of the different communities.

Among Jewish and Muslim diasporic communities too, relations have deteriorated, particularly since the events of 9/11. The on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict has further clouded these relations: as commentators have noted, "the promotion of anti-Semitism by the Arab media and by Islamist organisations worldwide is having a significant effect on the attitudes of Muslim communities around the world towards the Jews." In Britain, for instance, extremist Islamic groups are reported to have been behind anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues and Jewish graves: "there is reliable evidence from the police to prove that an increasing number of incidents are committed by sympathisers of the Palestinians and Islamists." (Prominent Jews targeted by Muslims and the far Right, Rajeev Syal, 15/02/2004). Jews, on the other hand, are often portrayed as viewing Muslims as misogynistic, intolerant fanatics involved in violent global terrorism, who have to be subdued and 'civilised' at all cost. For instance Jewish intellectuals such as Bernard Lewis and journalists such as Melanie Phillips are known to espouse stereotypical and hostile views of Islam and Arabs. A poll conducted last year by an Israeli research institute found widespread mistrust of the Arab population in Israel. 41% were in favour of segregation, 63% believed Arabs to be a "security and demographic threat" to Israel, more than two thirds would not want to live in the same building as an Arab, 36% believed "Arab culture to be inferior to Israeli culture" and 18% felt hatred when they heard Arabic spoken (The Guardian, 24 March 2006). Differences of perceptions and fixed positions reduce the possibility of any chance of mutually harmonious living.

Today it seems as though all possible roads to mutually respectful relations have reached their various dead ends. For many observers, this represents an extremely dangerous and damaging state of affairs, something that urgently requires the formulation of effective strategies with the aim of bringing about better understanding between these communities. A "culture of dialogue", in other words, needs to be created to promote peace and prevent conflict. In this endeavour, the importance of reflecting on Jewish-Muslim history in the post-9/11 world cannot be overstated. Such reflection can surely teach us many useful lessons. If interactions between Jews and Muslims are explored

historically, and if the extent to which these communities have influenced each other in the past is considered, then it may be possible to identify resources - theological, cultural and political - that can be used to stem the rising tides of mutual antipathy and bridge the resulting divides.

Few religions arguably have as much in common in terms of structure, jurisprudence and practice as Islam and Judaism. They not only have the same origins, but the formulation of the ethical teachings of Islam resembles in many ways the Judaic teachings of the Hebrew Bible.

The Torah and the Qur'an share much religious narrative as well as injunctions. Sharia and Halachah are strikingly similar. The same genealogical and scriptural authorities underpin both faiths. Muhammad, on his migration to Yathrib (or Medina), had high hopes of living co-operatively with its Jewish clans. Initially he adapted his new religion to bring it closer to Judaism as he understood it. He prescribed a fast for Muslims on the Jewish Day of Atonement and commanded Muslims to pray three times a day like Jews, instead of twice as hitherto. Muslims were to greet each other in the Jewish manner (Salam/Shalom), cover their heads in prayer, and perform similar ablutions. They could marry Jewish women and observe some of the Jews' dietary laws. Above all, Muslims were instructed to pray facing Jerusalem like Jews and Christians already did. Muhammad joined Medinan and Meccan tribes together in a new *ummah* (community) of which Jews were equal members who enjoyed full cultural and legal autonomy. Jews were not required to pay any extra taxes, nor was there any clause demanding their subjection. They were bound by the same duties as other parties to the contract. Respect for Jews can be seen to have expanded as the Muslim realm grew in size and strength. In 638, the caliph Umar, for instance, authorised the return of Jews to Jerusalem, interceded on their behalf against those Christians who were strongly opposed to Jewish resettlement, and personally supervised the cleansing of the Temple of the Mount when the first Jewish families returned to the Old City. In the Qur'an, Jews and Christians are not advised to renounce but to heed their own scriptures.

Sadly, however, as is the case today, political and religious differences soon led to Muhammad's rejection as a leader of the community, and as a prophet of revelation, by most of the Medinan Jews. Muhammad, understandably angered by rejection of his message and the perceived treachery and political conspiracy of the Jews against him, decreed punitive measures against them. The Jewish clans of Bani Qaynuqa were expelled from Medina; the Jews of Khaybar were besieged, and the adult males of Bani Qurayza were put to death. However, even then, at the height of violent confrontation, Muhammad maintained that not all Jews had fallen into error and that in essence all religions were the same. While the Qur'an, like the New Testament, inevitably includes some material which denigrates the Jewish people, it does accept both Moses and Jesus as messengers of God, and that their revelations were divinely inspired. The Qur'an's core message is that Islam is not a new religion but the reaffirmation of God's original covenant made with man through Abraham. Jews, through Jacob, are Abraham's people. Muhammad too, it is believed, through Ishmael, descended from Abraham, and Jews recognized that his message resonated that of Moses. Arguably, the pluralistic vision is at the heart of Islam - that God has guaranteed the existence of more than one religion for as long as the world lasts (Qur'an, 22:67). Indeed, many Muslims would argue that religious diversity is divinely ordained and that Muslims are bound to respect other spiritual paths ("We Believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which has come down to you; our God and your God is one and the same (Qur'an, 29:46)), that not only Muslims but every good and God-abiding person can go to heaven (Qur'an, 2:62 and 6:52) Muslims are expected to be not only tolerant but respectful of other religions ("There shall be no compulsion in matters of faith" (Qur'an, 2:256); "We should not ridicule the beliefs of others" (Qur'an, 6:108).

Within Jewish theology, too, one can find both exclusivism and a range of attempts to accommodate Islam. For Judah Halevi (1075-1141) and Moses Maimonides (1135/8-1204), while Islam was in error, it could be accommodated as part of the divine design to bring nations gradually to God. The Jewish neo-Platonist Netanel ibn Fayyumi (d. c.1164), leader of the Jews of Yemen, went further. Using the culture-boundedness of revelation as part of his argument, he accepted the possibility of the plurality of authentic

revelations and, hence, the authenticity of the prophecy of Muhammad as revealed in the Qur'an. Later, Jewish theologians such as Moses Mendelsshon (eighteenth century), by adopting the Covenant of Noah and drawing on the universalist element in Judaism which preceded its rabbinical formulation, sought to create an inclusive and ecumenical "theological space" within which people of other faiths could be accommodated, declaring that "the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come".

Thus, when one approaches Muslim-Jewish relations from the perspective of their long history of interaction, and seeks to draw constructive lessons from it, what emerges above all is its extreme complexity, and context becomes highly relevant in making sense of it. Muslim-Jewish history is, of course, studded with not only periods of peaceful coexistence but also conflict. There are negative examples as well as positive ones – relatively stable coexistence as well as periodic persecution of Jews by Muslims and of Muslims by Jews since 1948, as well as exploitation of Muslims by Jews under the protection of Christian regimes.

We should not overlook the fact that there were many occasions following the inception of Islam when Jews and Muslims succeeded in living side-by-side, and, despite differences and sometimes hostilities, nourished a complex culture of tolerance. Yet, in order to find ways for mutually-respectful living, while one can choose to emphasize the positive, it is also important to acknowledge and deal with the dark side as well.

For instance, until relatively recently, historians tended to paint a rosy picture of Jewish-Muslim symbiosis in medieval Spain – highlighting the presence of a cultural synthesis between Jews and Muslims which created literature, art and architecture of high quality as well as significant advances in philosophical thinking. From the eighth to the eleventh centuries in Spain, Jews were often courtiers and viziers, trusted advisers and military generals for local Islamic rulers. Arabic became their mother tongue. Andalusian Jews assimilated into the Islamo-Arabic culture at the same time as remaining a devout and practicing religious community. However, in the twelfth century, when the fanatical Almohades conquered Spain, Jews there were offered the alternative of conversion or expulsion. They suffered humiliation and massacres. Then, in the fifteenth century, after

the expulsion of Jews from Christian Spain, Islamic Turkey offered refuge and a place of honour for those who left. But refugees were also subjected to violence, extortion and degradation. While Maimonides chose to move to Muslim Egypt and became a high ranking advisor to Saladin, in his *Epistle to Yemen* he insisted that “no nation has ever done more harm to Israel [than that of Ishmael]. None has matched it in debasing and humiliating us”. So, it seems that harmony existed on the basis of Jewish acquiescence in their subordinate citizen status as a religious minority and under Muslim power and patronage. Interactions between Jews and Muslims, in these circumstances, were generally governed by Islamic law, which treated Jews and Christians as protected minorities (*dhimmi*s) in return for payment of the *jizya* (poll tax), socially inferior to Muslims, but tolerated as long as they knew their place and engaged in no public confrontation with the ‘true’ faith.

The conquest of large parts of Muslim Spain by Christian armies created the unusual situation in which both Jews and Muslims found themselves in lands where Islamic law did not reign supreme – Christians were the arbiters. Muslims found themselves competing with Jews for authority over their own communities. Jews now without any loyalty to the Islamic polities and perhaps because of their dependence on Christian rulers were seen as trustworthy. This combined with their bilingual and other skills qualified them to be appointed to positions of power as tax collectors and magistrates. In the performance of their duties they were perceived by Muslims to cause them ‘to suffer the most cruel vexations’, ‘humiliation’ and ‘punishment’. Jews were able to compete with Muslims much more openly than was possible under Muslim rule. On the other hand, Christian overlords were able to manipulate Jews and Muslims against each other in pursuit of their interests and ideological hegemony, in the process damaging Muslim-Jewish relations. Thus, the political context here is relevant in offering an understanding of why current Jewish-Muslim relations have reached such a nadir. Put simply, whenever Muslims and Jews have found themselves in competition under the hegemony of other communities, suspicion has arisen and relations have declined. In the modern era, the Jews have been perceived as agents of colonial powers, and Zionism and its political embodiment, Israel, denounced as an imperialist conspiracy.

Since the mid-twentieth century, Jews and Muslims have turned their backs on one another. At the heart of this Muslim-Jewish animosity lies the question of Palestine, and the competing claims of Arabs and Jews to Jerusalem. The establishment of Israel, an independent Jewish state, was a traumatic event for some Muslims as it was seen as a form of Western domination in a different guise. One response to the 1948 Arab–Israeli war was an outbreak of anti-Jewish persecution and expulsions in different parts of the Islamic world. Another consequence was the adoption by Islamic propagandists of traditional Christian anti-semitic stereotypes. The medieval Christian Blood Libel, the conspiratorial Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the Holocaust denial, have recently become, at least to some extent, part of the Islamic lexicon. Witness the fiercely anti-semitic articles that have appeared in recent years in some of the local Arabic presses. In Britain, the radical Islamist organisation, the Hizbut Tahrir, insisted that no normal interaction was possible with Jews [‘There can be no peaceful relations with the Jews: this is prohibited by the Sharia’...the only legitimate encounter permissible between Jews and Muslims is on the jihad battlefield’]. Al Muhajiroun likewise adopted a militant posture towards Jews, reflected in its provocative posters distributed on university campuses catching the attention of the Union of Jewish Students and Board of Deputies of British Jews. Al Muhajiroun also spoke of a ‘bloodthirsty Western conspiracy’ behind the creation of Israel, whose establishment was alleged to be part of the wider Judeo-Christian strategy for seeking revenge on Muslims for punishments inflicted by the Prophet on the Jewish forefathers in Medina (HuT leaflet, 27 Sept. 1991). It denounced negotiations and peace with Israel as ‘a heinous crime...against Muslims, God and humanity as a whole. More recent polls suggest that Muslims regard the British Jewish community and its links with Israel with suspicion. It is seen as displaying no sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians and exercising much influence over British foreign policy.

To be sure Islamism has its counterpart among Jews too, many of whom have absorbed the prejudices and stereotypes of Muslims, as monolithically intolerant, authoritarian, violent and opposed to modern values, prevalent in wider society. Anti-Muslim

extremism is not absent from Jewish communities. In Israel, Rabbi Meir Kahane's ideology, suffused with hatred and revenge, has espoused an equally essentialist and separatist political agenda. For his movement, Kach, Israel's creation was part of God's plan for Jews to live without any foreign intrusion. Hence, all Arabs who had 'usurped' Palestine had to be made to leave. The militant Jewish leadership of Meir Kahane and Gush Emunim regarded Jews as a community besieged by Muslims and often took the form of anti-Arab Zionist chauvinism. "We can achieve peace only ... by removing all the Arabs from Israel" [Meir Kahane, They Must Go]. This ideology inspired a Kahanist, Baruch Goldstein, to murder twenty-nine Muslims at prayer in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron on the Festival of Purim on 24 February 1994. Since 2000 and the wave of 'suicide bombings', anti-Arab and anti-Muslim feeling in the Jewish population has been exacerbated hugely and several Jewish politicians have made blatantly racist statements that have not prevented them from holding seats in the Knesset or even office in government.

It is clear from the above that Jewish-Muslim relations are extremely sensitive. The question is what can be done to start the process of healing to bring these two people together in a spirit of respect and friendship? One beginning that could be made might be to develop a framework in which misunderstandings are removed about each other and common values and interests are recognized. This course of action, however, can only be made possible if and when people and communities learn about each other, by reading their common histories and by talking about their present conditions.

In this endeavour, the dialogue approach becomes particularly pertinent. Effective communication is recognised to enhance comprehension of each other's insights, and results in the identification of common ground on which to move closer towards each other. To be sure, dialogue does not always lead to productive outcomes. Research suggests that dialogic encounters between groups in a situation of structural inequality and domination may solidify essentialist discourses of culture and identity and reinforce self and other essentializing strategies (Monologic Results of Dialogue: Jewish-Palestinian Encounter Groups as Sites of Essentialization). In Jerusalem mutual exposure



has even deepened animosities (Living Together Separately: Arabs and Jews in Contemporary Jerusalem). So, the character of and the conditions for such dialogues, the quality of their content, becomes relevant in the achievement of positive outcomes. For a dialogue to be productive, there needs to be agreement about “travelling together” on the basis of the ‘mutual recognition that we are in different “places” without anyone of those places being specially privileged’ (Norman Solomon, Towards a Jewish Theology of Trilateral Dialogue). The starting point of such a dialogue could simply be the disclosure to ourselves and to each other what these places are. And then if the dialogue is to be creative:

1. There will be openness to the diversity within each tradition
2. There will be discussion of relationships, including frank acknowledgement of past hurts, with the aim of fostering mutual trust.
3. There will be recognition of common problems arising from the confrontation with modernity. This will include not only the theological issues about God, revelation, redemption, and the like, but also social and political issues. When the problems are seen as shared, we can explore them together, drawing critically on the resources of all our traditions.
4. There will be recognition of the contributions made by different groups, and establishment of shared norms for coexisting and cooperating.

As Jews and Muslims find themselves not only fearful and threatening towards each other, fostering positive dialogue, understanding and reconciliation between both communities represents an increasingly urgent imperative. Many Muslims, of course, would argue that, for them, reconciliation is required by their faith. The pillars of Islam assume and express a close relationship between Islam and Judaism, between Muslims and Jews. The Qur’an, for instance, encourages dialogue with other faiths: “Do not argue with the followers of earlier revelations otherwise than in the most kindly manner” (A History of God, p.178). By encouraging people to cross religio-cultural bridges, a more peaceful engagement becomes realisable. The premise from which we must start in order to make such inter-faith dialogue productive, however, is that no one religion

monopolises the truth. Such an approach demands empathy with the perspectives and truth claims of others. It requires that, in this case, Muslims and Jews be prepared to abandon their absolutist claims and become more ecumenical in their religious outlooks. Jews and Muslims, rather than feeling uncomfortable, threatened and reluctant to participate in a dialogue, must embark on a journey of self-discovery and a discovery of “the other” through dialogue.

The essays in this collection are a modest attempt to contribute to this process of knowing about each other. Taken en masse, they address some of the challenging issues that Jewish and Muslim people face, especially those communities living along side each other as minorities in different countries, which are in need of urgent resolution. The answers are often tentative and partial, which befits the complex nature of the questions and the preliminary nature of the attempt to answer them.

The collection arose out of a workshop on the comparative study of Jews and Muslims held at Royal Holloway, University of London, on 22-23 April 2006. The gathering was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and organised by Professor Humayun Ansari and Professor David Cesarani, with the assistance of Ms June Jackson. It formed part of a larger AHRC funded project on the study of Jewish-Muslim relations and grew out of the common interests of members of a university department with an unusual concentration of expertise on Jewish history and the history of Muslims. Both Professor Ansari and Professor Cesarani have also been actively engaged in the formation of public policy with respect to Jews and Muslims in the UK and this engagement, too, played its part in the initiation of the project. It combined scholarly aspirations with the sense that there was a pressing need to address questions regarding the place of, and the relations between, Jews and Muslims in civil society in the UK, throughout Europe, and in North America.

The papers presented here begin, appropriately and necessarily, with essential Islamic texts. Roger Abdul Wahab Boase sets out to explain the sources for religious pluralism that can be found in the Qur’an. But before he can do that he has to clear away some

basic misconceptions about Islam. He addresses the Muslim *religion*, not the political creed sometimes labelled Islamism and often confused with theology. Having cleared the way to examine the original texts he finds five bases for adherents of Islam and Judaism to meet on ground delineated by the Qur'an. Inherent to Islam is the conviction that it inherited the monotheism pioneered by the Hebrew patriarchs and the scriptural overlap between the two faiths. There are common or similar beliefs and practices. There is the story of Medina that, for a while, offered a model of a plural society. Indeed, Boase argues that the 'Constitution of Media' posits a form of religious pluralism and he is able to find strong textual endorsement of interfaith dialogue.

Farid Panjwani moves from an examination of pluralism in societies that were essentially religious to scrutiny of secular, modern states. He notes that there is a growing tension between the universalist and non-religious tenets of the state and the religious loyalties of faith-based communities. This tension is increasingly expressed in the public sphere. He maintains that unless faiths recognise their own internal plurality, there is little chance that they will be able to function in conditions in which acceptance of difference is *de rigueur*. He sees this as the challenge facing Islam today. If Muslims wish to enter the political arena and to press their interests, they will have to do so by means of reasoned argument and not simply by insisting that their tenets of belief must be recognised unconditionally by non-Muslims.

The papers now shift from theology to history, representing the step from essential beliefs to the contingent conditions in which faith becomes practice. Anne Kershner describes the origins and development of the Jewish and Muslim communities in the East End of London. This area is almost the perfect laboratory for examining how the members of the two faith groups have adapted over time to the contexts in which their adherents have found themselves. But Kershner, too, has to begin by clearing away misconceptions. She points out that Jews and Muslims are not monolithic groups and that even within this small district there is variety, not to mention the differences between this and other centres of settlement where Jews and Muslims are located.

On the surface the Jews, historically, and the Muslims of the East End today appear to be much alike. The Jews migrated into the area in significant numbers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, escaping economic immiseration and intermittent religious persecution in Eastern Europe. The Sylhettis, from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh, arrived from the 1950s onwards, although there were settlers in east London much earlier. Both communities assembled around places of worship, often humble and improvised. Both set up welfare institutions to help deal with the effects of poverty that were a symptom of the marginal, seasonal trades into which they moved on arrival. Both faced opposition to their immigration, ranging from violent racism to political agitation for their complete exclusion. Yet there are also salient points of divergence. Jews entered a monocultural society and came under immense pressure to assimilate and to demonstrate their loyalty to the state. In this they largely succeeded, which is why they are held up as a model for Muslims to emulate. But, thanks to the timing of their arrival, Muslims from Pakistan/ Bangladesh came to enjoy much greater freedom to preserve their ethnic and faith characteristics under the benign auspices of official multi-culturalism. The British state, like many other governments, has since reversed away from multi-culturalism but the genie cannot be shoved back in the bottle. This has created a situation for which the Jewish experience actually offers little guidance.

Moving from London to Manchester, Mohammed Siddique Seddon examines another singular location in which immigrant communities of Jews and Muslims in 19<sup>th</sup> century Manchester flourished side by side, enjoying quite lengthy periods of cooperation. Both Muslims and Jews experienced racism and discrimination, however the two were highly differentiated and experience contrasting trajectories. Seddon vividly describes the great diversity within the two groups. With the Muslim communities there were poor lascars, the more apparently assimilated Levantine Ottomans and the Moroccan traders who sought employment with British companies. Within the Jewish communities, there were initially Ashkenazim migrants and Sephardim Jews, these latter amongst the first original Jewish settlers allowed by in to England after their expulsion from Spain.

Seddon charts the development of Muslims and Jews, from early individuals and small groups through to established communities with their own places of worship, which in turn gave rise to reticence from the indigenous population. He also shows how they were historically articulated into global politics, often with problematic outcomes. Despite the cooperation of the early days of settlement and the common experiences of racism, prejudice and xenophobia, Seddon points to international politics as leading to fractures between the two groups.

We stay in Manchester for Pnina Werbner's penetrating examination of the function of memory for the two communities. Werbner starts with the controversy over the decision of the Muslim Council of Britain on successive years not to attend the annual Holocaust Memorial Day commemorative events in the UK. She shows how important memory of the Nazi genocide against the Jews is to the Jewish communities in Britain, an importance that is recognised by the government and much of the population as a whole. However, while the commemoration of the mass murder of Europe's Jews may have a universalistic resonance, to Jews it is an affirmation of their Diasporic status and it links them profoundly to the Jews of Israel. The Pakistani community in Manchester also has a memorial day: Quaid-i-Azam day, which takes the birth of Jinnah as an occasion to reflect on the founding of Pakistan and the trauma that accompanied it. In other words, both Jews and Muslims recall past catastrophes that bind them to another polity and, at the same time, symbolise their marginal status where they reside. Memory serves as a keystone for a Diaspora identity and underpins a sense of apartness that is important for the continuity of community.

The centrality to Jewish identity of the events known as the Holocaust makes any questioning of their veracity enormously provocative to Jews. Yet, Werbner argues, Jews in Israel and their supporters abroad have also *manipulated* the Holocaust to legitimate the policies of the Israeli government and to downgrade the suffering of the Palestinians. It is this that has made denial of the Holocaust so attractive to anti-Zionists and states hostile to Israel. Iran exemplifies this trend. In his paper Rahmin Jahanbegloo lays bare the state-sponsored Holocaust Denial practiced by the authorities in Teheran. The validity

and gravity of this charge is underlined by the fact that the very same Teheran authorities arrested him and held him without charge for several months in 2006 because he persisted in expressing these views.

The collection has now made the transition from theology, via history, to conflict and conciliation between Jews and Muslims in the world today. The last two papers examine the extent of the conflict and the possibilities of conciliation. Karen Leonard charts the growth of the now embattled Muslim communities in the USA from the first self-taught African-American converts to the waves of immigration of Muslims from South Asia and then the Middle East. By the 1970s there was a growing convergence between the communities, but it was rudely halted by the events of 9/11 and their aftermath. African-American Muslims now sought to distance themselves from Muslims of Arab origin. The US administration aggravated internal divisions by patronising groups, notably Sufis and Ismailis, who had until then been marginalised by the dominant Sunni and Shia sects. The specific radicalisation of young Muslims was compounded by the effect of the ‘war on terror’, US policy in the Middle East, and arguments over Israel. Leonard’s study of campus development at the University of California, Irvine, gives a graphic, empirical insight into what has unfolded since September 2001.

Yet it would be unfortunate and wrong to end on a note of conflict. It is welcome, then, that the collection can conclude with a paper by Brie Loskata and Reuven Firestone that surveys the challenges and the possibilities of *positive* dialogue between Jews and Muslims. Loskata and Firestone show that exchanges of this kind have been underway for decades, usually sparked by a Middle East crisis. Numerous initiatives have flowered, such as the Children of Abraham project, that have provided participants and observers with valuable experience of best practice. Courageous individuals such as Akbar Ahmed and Judah Pearl have provided inspirational examples of dialogue. On the basis of their extensive evaluation of various techniques, Loskata and Firestone then detail the pitfalls as well as the successful methods for bringing Jews and Muslims into conversation and sustaining the sort of contact that alone can ameliorate friction between these Diasporas

and, perhaps, contribute to resolving the stubborn aggravation that perpetually threatens to poison their relations.