

## 1. The Seed

After the massacre by Hamas of civilians and the kidnapping of mainly civilians in South Israel on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, I became very sensitive to the way facts were presented, mainly in my French newspaper "Le Monde"; Le Monde which had been my reference for forty years or so.

I shall describe the process which allowed me to drop a life long misconception of what Israel is and to now embrasse this country, mainly for its community spirit.

In 2022 I discovered [The Free Press](#) (not sure precisely how) and started to listen to the Honestly podcast. I believe that listening to the interview of Matti Friedman on his book "Who by Fire" about Leonard Cohen going to sing to soldiers during the Yom Kippour war of 1973 is the seed of the quest I am writing about today. I then read this fantastic book and have the front cover picture on my desk (cf this [link](#) for instance).



Leonard Cohen in the Sinai Desert, 1973 ISAAC SHOKAL

In Spring 2023 I read the book written by Benjamin Netanyahu: Bibi, my story. Reading this book, after having listen to a couple of interviews of B. Netanyahu (by Bari Weiss on Honestly on 30.11.2022, by Jordan Peterson episode 311 of December 2022) brought to me a new perspective on Israël, its foundation, its history since 1948, its neighbours, its size and its enemies.

Just today, September 9<sup>th</sup> 2024, I listened to this podcast episode of Call Me Back where Dan Senor interviews Douglas Murray: my two best tutors on my journey from October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 to admiring the Israel spirit. Really worth listening to these two fantastic gentlemen: well worth listening to this.



At any moment, if Hamas, the attacker, surrenders and releases the hostages the war will be over. Why is the frequent way to look at the situation is assuming that the Palestinians has no agency ?

## Attaque du Hamas, en direct : Israël impose un « siège complet » à la bande de Gaza

« Pas d'électricité, pas d'eau, pas de gaz », a précisé le ministre de la défense israélien Yoav Galant. Quelque 2,3 millions de Palestiniens vivent dans la bande de Gaza, un territoire densément peuplé et éprouvé par la pauvreté, sous blocus israélien depuis 2007.

## Guerre Israël-Hamas, en direct : l'Etat hébreu impose un « siège complet » à la bande de Gaza

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Two consecutive titles of the *Live* of the newspaper *Le Monde* on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2023.

## 2. My path

The massacre by Hamas fighters and civilians from Gaza of more than 1200 babies, children, men and women, the kidnapping of 251 hostages from 6 months to 80 years old, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 has, for a reason I do not explain, triggered a wish to try to understand better how such a slaughter could happen. I am about the list here the documentation I have read and mainly listened to since the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. Also how I have run away from the Newspaper which I thought was a pillar of serious information: *Le Monde*.

I live in France, I am French. Though I have lived in the English speaking world since the 7th of October 2023, reading, listening, watching information from Israel, USA and UK. So I write this piece in English first and shall later translate it to French.

### 2.1. The 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2023

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October I listened to the podcast *Honestly*, where Bari Weiss interviews Michael Oren ([link](#)), former Israeli Ambassador to the US.

### 2.2. The 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2023

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of October I saw this title of the “Live” of Newspaper *Le Monde*. Mon sang n'a fait qu'un tour (My blood went round only once) and I phoned the newspaper to resign my 20 years old subscription. I talked to a lady to whom I exposed my vision that after the horrendous attack by Hamas onto Israel, the title implied that Israël was guilty. The lady on the phone sort of understood what I meant, said she was going to report the the writers and proposed to me to maintain my subscription at half the price; offer which I took. A few minutes later the title has changed slightly ..... A few weeks later I phoned again, talked to the same lady who remembered my previous phone call, and cancelled my subscription. *Le Monde* was not doing any serious reporting, was taking an a priori point of view. I suddenly realised that this team was writing to say that Israël was the culprit.

I wrote this email to Le Monde:

“En réponse à l’éditorial du 9 octobre:

Dans le document fondateur du Hamas il est écrit que l’existence d’Israël est illégitime; cela n’apparaît pas dans votre éditorial. Les accords d’Abraham, effort de paix initié en Israël, ne sont pas non plus mentionnés. Le Hamas est une organisation terroriste. Israël est une démocratie. Je suis abonnée au Monde depuis vingt six ans; il est temps pour moi de quitter ce navire en péril. Je pensais que les lecteurs du Monde méritaient mieux que votre relativisme.”

### 2.3. October-December 2023

I engaged into trying to remove, from my instinct, layers and layers of false knowledge, or rather of implicit knowledge which I had never worked on: “the Palestinians were victims of Israël”, “Israel is blockading Gaza”; “Israel is responsible for what happened because of the history”; Israël took Palestine away from the Palestinians”; I could go on and on and on. When I started my PhD, in 1983, I was wearing a keffieh (which was appreciated by members of the laboratory) and refusing to buy avocados produced in Israel; not that I was a militant; it was cool and in the air (I believe the scarf is still somewhere in a cupboard in my house, 40 years later)

- **Israel left Gaza in 2005!**

I do wonder who, among those in France, UK, US who criticise Israel know about it. I certainly did not know. In 2005, Israel unilaterally left Gaza; all Jews had to leave; some of them were forced to leave their home by the police; it is not safe to be a Jew in Gaza. Hamas was elected as the ruler of Gaza in 2007 and has remained in power since, without election since. Hamas has built hundreds of kilometres of tunnels to protect itself and hide its terrorist activities; while keeping the population on the ground, to shield them. Do you ever read this in “Le Monde” ? Please send me a link.

- **Gaza’s south border is with Egypt**

Egypt does not welcome civilians from the Gaza to take refuge on their soil; why ?

- **The United Nations: such a let down!**

See this photograph of the head of UN... I cannot trust this man. Here is what is said in November 2023: “We are witnessing a killing of civilians that is unparalleled and unprecedented in any conflict since I have been secretary general.”

In answer to this lie, here are two examples of massacres since this man became head of UN in 2017: 600000 killed in East Africa between 2020 and 2022, 85000 in Syria since 2017 (500000 since 2011); these are UN numbers.



And this list of UN resolutions; how is it possible that this has never been a headline in Le Monde ?

“From its creation in June 2006 to June 2023, the Council has adopted zero resolutions on serial human rights abusers such China, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Zimbabwe and Cuba. It adopted 2 condemnatory resolutions on Sudan, 3 on Venezuela, 12 on Eritrea, 14 on Iran, 16 on North Korea, 42 on Syria — and 103 on Israel.” This information is part of a comprehensive report dealing with the United Nations’ long-term hostility toward the Jewish state — given by Hillel C. Neuer, Executive Director of United Nations Watch, to the U.S. House of Representatives —.

It was a shock to me (not to say that I could have known earlier if I wanted to) to see how corrupt the UN is. More below on UNRWA....

- **Palestinians ? There has NEVER been a Palestinian state**

As I evolve in the course of the last couple of years, and mainly since the atrocities perpetuated by Hamas in Israel on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, I have understood that the label "Palestinians" is a fraud. There has never been a state called Palestine and there is no Palestinians spirit. My current understanding is that the word Palestinians is an invention to be able to define a sort of group of people who are portrayed as the *victims* of Israël. De facto, there has never been a community of people who lived in a Palestinian state. In the remaining of this text, I keep using the word Palestinian though I believe it is wrong; I shall write is in Italic to remember. May find a way to avoid it.

- **Number of *Palestinians* killed since 1948**

Talking about number of killed people in a conflict is very delicate and can easily lead to misleading assertion. The point I make here is that, in my mind, and in the mind of many of my friends and people I know, the number of *Palestinians* killed by Israel since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 is enormous. Before going into numbers, I remind myself and potential readers that: Any death is a tragedy; people are killed during wars.

Before you, reader, possibly continue to read, I ask a question: How many *Palestinian* civilians have been killed by Israeli since 1948 ?

What I learnt in the course of this investigation is that the number of *Palestinian* civilians killed since the creation on the state of Israel in 1948 is around "so many" (\*) (see the bottom of the file so that your eye do not catch the answer before you possibly answer the question).

- **The *Palestinians* do not want a state**

This is probably the most "bring me home" fact of the journey towards my admiration for Israel. I shall not list all the facts that I have learnt reading and listening to my Tutors (see below). I shall just write two facts:

- In 1947, UN made a proposal where there would be a state for the Jews (though very small) and a state for the Arabs (larger); the Jews accepted the proposal; the Arabs refused it. UN voted the proposal with 33 votes in favour and 13 against. Israel became independent in 1948.
- In 2000, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak offered to withdraw from 97% of the West Bank and 100% of the Gaza Strip in a final settlement. In addition, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his successors offered to withdraw from virtually all of the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria. These offers were rejected.

*The Palestinians appear not to want a state.*

My current understanding is that the organisations which pretend to represent "*The Palestinians*" want to destroy Israel while the bosses are getting VERY rich.

## 2.4. 2024

- **The destruction of all Jews is in the Hamas charter**

Is not this enough ?

- **UNRWA**

I was shocked to learn about the corruption at the UN and in particular with UNRWA. "We" are pouring billions of euros to this organisation which support Hamas and indoctrinate *Palestinian* children. It is sickening to watch. This money (mainly from US, Europeans tax payers) has been converted to hundred of kilometres of tunnels to protect Hamas leaders and gunmen; and leave the civilian population on the ground. (several Future Circular Colliders could be built with this money). The UN watch organisation is providing facts and information at this [link](#). In particular the information collected at this [link](#) is distressing. Not only did some UNRWA members participated to the the attack in Israel on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023; they also teach children from Gaza about killing Jews.

- **Number of non combatant per combatant killed**

Israel informs the population in Gaza that an attack will soon take place and ask them to move away. Have you ever heard of such a procedure in any war? The so called ministry of Health in Gaza, under Hamas control, provides some numbers of dead or lost people in Gaza since the attack; this number does distinguish between warriors, gunmen, civilian. I have listened to two very informative podcasts about this number and the way Israel has to fight a war where civilians are used as human shields: Interview of Professor Abraham Wyner on Call me Back (episode 210 10.04.2024) and John Spencer from Urban Warfare on Making Sense (episode 366 on 07.05.2024).

The number to remember is this ratio of 1 to 2 dead civilians for 1 combatant killed. From documentation I seeked, this is an unprecedented low number, in particular in the conditions where Hamas is hiding underground, using the population of Gaza to shield them.

- **The people in Israel**

I have become in love with the Israeli society. Just look at the photographs of the soldiers who fight for their country. The people in Israel have a purpose in life it seems to me.

- **Why don't Campus protesters go to Gaza to help the people ?**

- **Hamas broke a de facto ceasefire on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2023**

If Hamas releases the hostages, puts down its guns and rockets and comes out of its tunnels, the war, which Hamas started, is over.

### 3. My tutors

(though they do not know I am one of their student).

I list here the names of the people from who I have learnt facts, from whom I have discovered the Spirit of Israël, who speak both from their hearts and with incredible knowledge.

**Dan Senor** with his fantastic podcast "Call me Back" and for his book "The genius of Israel - The surprising resilience of a divided nation in a turbulent world"

**Douglas Murray** for his wonderful speech, frankness, courage; Douglas Murray spent about six months in Israël from October 2023. I wish I could go and see Douglas Murray live events "Save the West tour" in USA this Autumn ([link](#))

**Bari Weiss** for The Free Press ([thefp.com](#)), Honestly, and her beautiful laugh.

**Noam Weissman** for his profound podcast "Unpacking Israeli History"

**Sam Harris** for the "Making Sense" podcast; who in particular included the interview of Douglas Murray on Call me Back on 12.12.2023. Episodes 338, 351, 366 of the Making Sense podcasts were particularly eliminating for me. Episode 2 from 2014 "Why don't I criticise Israel ?" is a must ([link](#))

**Ben Shapiro** from Daily Wire for his profound knowledge; the episode from his "Facts" series on the history of Israel is illuminating

**Mitchell G. Bard** for his book "Myths and Facts: a guide to the Arab-Israeli conflict" available as a PDF file at this [link](#).

**Mosab Hassan Yousef** for this book "Son of Hamas"; his speech at the UN in November 2023 ([link](#)); about Nakba at this [link](#); and the interviews with Douglas Murray at this [link](#).

**The Times of Israel** to which I subscribe to beginning of 2024.

**Michael Oren** for his Clarity, an illuminating letter

**Haviv Rettig Gur** who is a frequent guest of the Call me Back podcast; I like they way he describe the Israeli spirit and assumes Palestinians have agency.

**Matti Friedman** for his book "Who by Fire" and for his article in The Free Press ([thefp.com](#))

And more:

**Sheryl Sandberg** Scream before silence: A documentary film on the sexual violence committed by Hamas on October 7, 2023 at this [link](#)

#### 4. The arrival

The process which allowed me to drop a life long misconception of what Israel is and to now embrasse this country, mainly for spirit of community.

What I feel, is that my historical newspaper Le Monde has given up! It only tells story which are predictable; it is like it has lost any wish to give me data to make up my mind. It is like it feeds me baby food, without attempting to cook a good dish to make me grow.

I have developed feelers for researched information, for well spirited attempts to describe the reality and detect those who are parroting a well established line of thoughts.

I cannot yet realise how much the road I have described here has separated me from my friends and family. Stating that Israel has the right to exist, that Hamas is the criminal, is perceived wrong. Very often, I hear that as we know Russia is wrong to have attacked Ukraine, Israel is wrong for the ongoing war Hamas started. Somehow, I loose my stability when I hear or read such an insanity. It is like we (me in the past, many people in my close friends and people I meet) have a twist in the brain.

At the end, I do not even know what a Jew is. How does one recognise a Jew ? I do not know. I have learnt in this process, that most of the Jewish people have an incredible wish to learn; and then to argue. I love the spirit which emanate from the discussion between Jewish people. Though I am completely excluded from it.

(\*) "so many": around 50 000 *Palestinian* civilians have been killed by Israel since 1948. Getting this number right is close to "mission impossible"; though the order of magnitude this this.

Modifications since the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024

- o 07.10.2024 Add my name in the header
- o 07.10.2024 Typo corrections that I notice as I am translating to French
- o 07.10.2024 Add [theft.com](#) link in the intro
- o 07.10.2024 Correct 252 to 251 hostages taken by Hamas on 07.10.2023