

**Blog Title:      *Zionism, Anti-Semitism, Atheism, and  
Mysticism: A Refreshing Dialogue***

**Introduction:**

What you are about to read is a series of highly spirited, intelligent, and enlightening letters exchanged during a two-months period between Dr. Mitra and her friend of many years, Dr. Hooshang Meshkinpour. Their courteous yet lively dialogue touches upon such interesting and controversial topics as the roots of human violence, Religious Fundamentalism, Atheism, Zionism, Mysticism, and anti-Semitism. There is something here for everyone, and it gets more and more fascinating as you read on.

**Copyright Notice:**

Parts of the material included in this blog are from an upcoming book and are copyrighted. Permission must be acquired for quoting any part of this blog.

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 19, 2008 8:06 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*Have you heard of this book and its claims about Jewish nationhood? It seems to me, from what I read in this article, that the author is subject to a big fallacy: It might be true that Jewish nationalism did not exit until a century ago, but this is true of most “nationalism” in general!*

*Please let me know what you think.*

*Many Thanks,*

*Mitra*

<http://www.antiwar.com/orig/cook.php?articleid=13569>

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 19, 2008 9:23 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

Dear Mitra,

I have not read the book, but after reviewing the attached interesting article, I can sense the message he is trying to convey. As you pointed out, Jewish nationalism is a fairly new concept about hundred or so years old and it has been copied from the concept of European nation-state which is probably two centuries old. Zionists of those days, by inventing "Jewish Nation" proposed that only by having a national identity for Jews the Jewish issue will be solved. Today we know that the theory was not correct. The concept of Jews as a nation is not correct and as it has been pointed out in the article, Jews throughout almost 20 centuries have lived in different geographic condition and have been brought up under different cultural influence; the only thing they have in common is only their way of worship and religious practice(although a lot of diversities can be pointed out even for that aspect). There is very little common between Yemenise Jews and Ashkenazi Jews. For instance, Yemenise Jews have more in common with Yemenise Muslim than Iranian Jews. This is one of the messages I got from the article. I should order the book and read it, then we can communicate better.

Sincerely,

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 20, 2008 11:41 AM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Thanks Hooshang jaan.*

*It seems to me that Jewish nationalism grew out of anti-Semitism. So the question is what can be done about anti-Semitism, and does having a country of their own help Jews in any way in times of anti-Semitic uprisings?*

*Appreciate your thoughts as always,  
M.*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang

**Sent:** Thursday, November 20, 2008 3:31 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

**Dear Mitra Khanoom,**

**It is correct that in late 19th Century a national identity for Jews was presented as a remedy to anti-Semitism which had covered Europe and beyond. The Zionist expected once a Jewish State was established all Jews would migrate into Israel and segregation of Jews in their own state means the end of anti-Semitism. This obviously did not happen. Today, close to 70% of Jews living outside of Israel and are probably enjoying more security in the world of "Goy" than their correligionist in Israel. The reason they are enjoying that level of security, in my opinion, is not because of State of Israel, it is because of Separation of Church and State in the west. This is not to say that the efforts of Zionists had no positive impact. Indeed, the establishment of State of Israel for one thing changed the image of Jews in the world. Before that Jew was described as a passive, money collector with inferior moral values; after that Jew is seen as an individual with great capacity and potential, strength and weakness similar to others; and this is a very valuable achievement. Again, in my opinion, once the wall that separates church and state is knocked down we are going to see anti-Semitism not very different from what we had in Europe.**

**Have a nice afternoon. I think I wrote too much.**

**Hooshang**

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 20, 2008 6:32 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Well put dear Hooshang. Your argument makes sense for many instances of anti-Semitism, and definitely the separation of Church and State is a pre-requisite. However, in Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany it was not the Church that caused the problem of anti-Semitism. How do we account for what happened there?*

*Thanks so much for allowing this exchange of ideas,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 22, 2008 2:16 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

**Dear Mitra,**

**You often have very well thought questions. In case of German Nazis the answer is very simple. Nazis were deeply intangled with Protestant Reformation. Many historians believe the many aspects of Nazis agenda in fact can be found in the Luther,s teachings. Indeed, some have even argued that the concept of extermination camps for Jews have been adopted from Luther's writing. I just quote this short paragraph from my book "...Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we cannot tolerate them if we do not wish to share in their lies, curses and blasphemy...First, their synagogues should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread with dirt so then no one may ever be able to see a cider of stone of it..." In esence, Lutheranism was a prominent factor to persuade the public German opinion to accept the Holocaust. Incidentally, through 12 years of Nazis reign, Church was categorically silent.**

**Soviet Union was atheist only in words. To give you an example, Leon Trotsky who was probably one of the brightest among Bolsheviks and was the one who structured the Red Army, was often ridiculed by his comrades because he was a Jew. Among the Bolshevik leadership, who were supposedly the cream of the crop, religion and anti-Jewish sentiments**

were so strong that on occasions Lenin warned them he could no longer tolerate. Stalin had a different view of Jews who certainly reflected in his decision makings though decades of his dictatorship. You realize that Molotov's wife was a Jew and she was arrested and disappeared once she showed up to welcome Golda Meir in her visit to Moscow. In my opinion, there is big difference between separation of church and state and a Government who is only atheist in slogan.

I wished there was a way to have these communications in you website so other interested people would have access.

Sincerely,

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 24, 2008 11:27 AM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,  
Thanks so much for your response. It is very thoughtful and contains some valid points, but I am not convinced, and here is why: Religion by itself is not the main storehouse of anti-Semitism. It is a particular ingredient in the religious fundamentalist outlook and even atheistic outlook that ignites this malady. Look to India and China where Jews have lived without any incident of hatred amongst very religious people. There are several branches of anti-Semitism today some of which are religious, while others are totally atheistic. Today there is anti-Semitism in Japan where most people have never even met a Jew! Look at the brutality with which the atheistic Mao treated the people of China during the Cultural Revolution. Theism, atheism, nationalism, communism, fascism, capitalism, and scientism can all be extremely intolerant of the "Other" when they are tainted with the virus of Dualism (Us. vs. Them) and Authoritarianism (My Truth is the Only Truth and must*

*be imposed on all). The question as to why it is the Jews who are most singled out for hatred and animosity, this is a **multi-faceted mystery** that I am working on for my upcoming book. I am always open for fresh perspectives on these issues.*

*Wonderful to exchange ideas with you as always,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Monday, November 24, 2008 9:20 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

**Dear Mitra,**

**Surprisingly, I did not see "mysticism" or "spiritualism" among the "isms" you had listed. If you recall this discussion was initiated by questioning 'Jewish Nationalism' as a possible remedy for anti-Semitism. My position is that separation of church and state has been instrumental in protecting the rights of religious minorities in the West among them Jews. This has nothing to do with the way atheistic Mao treated the Chinese people. Cultural Revolution in China had nothing to do with anti-Semitism; it was only a class struggle. With regard to anti-Semitism in Japan, one could have a wrong understanding about a people without having had contact with them. The Modern anti-Semitism is structured around the wrong understanding that Jews are behind a conspiracy for the "world domination". In order for a Japanese to believe in this it really does not require him to know Jews or have lived with them. Incidentally, Jews are not the only people singled out for hatred and animosity. Throughout history minorities have been repeatedly subject of intimidation by the powerful. However, some of us like to believe it has been only us. That is not true. The most recent examples are Rhonda, Serbia and many more.**

**Sincerely,**

**Hooshang**

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [mailto:tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 25, 2008 8:24 PM  
**To:** 'Meshkinpour, Hooshang'  
**Subject:** RE: Dear Houshang: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*I could not include “mysticism” among the “isms” that I had listed because mysticism is predicated on the harmony of dual opposites, experiencing Oneness, and ultimately transcending duality. Mysticism views all dual opposites as complementary to one another and stemming from one Unified Source. In the words of Rumi,*

مثنوی ما دکان وحدت است  
غیر وحدت هر چه بینی آن بت است  
در من و ما سخت کردی دو دست  
هست این جمله خرابی از دو هست

*We are both in complete agreement that the separation of Church and State has been instrumental in reducing hateful agitation against all minorities and preventing anti-Semitic uprisings as well. My intention for mentioning Mao’s Cultural Revolution was to elevate the discussion to a higher level which includes the general issue of man’s inhumanity toward his fellow men. Anti-Semitism is only a sub-category of this malaise. My point was that atheism in and of itself is no guarantor of elevation of human character and reduction of senseless aggression between races, religions, or economic classes.*

*As you have pointed out, Jews are by no means the only people singled out for hatred and animosity. But from an epidemiological point of view, when looking to understand the factors behind intergroup animosity, just as with any other dis-ease, it helps to consider the patterns of prevalence and the statistics of incidence. Jews are not the only ones who are targeted by those who suffer from the dis-ease of animosity and hatred, neither are Jews the only ones who get Tay-Sachs disease or achieve the Nobel Prize, but they sure have a much higher incidence of these phenomena. Studying the reasons for this higher incidence with objectivity and with no regard for anything but the truth, might surprise us with some hitherto unknown factors.*

*As we both know, truth is very elusive, and today's truth often becomes tomorrow's folly. So the best we can do is to have an open mind, a compassionate heart, and a sense of humor. Whether we find the truth or not, at least we can have a great time looking for it!*

*I always look forward to hearing your intelligent and challenging arguments with the greatest joy.*

*Cheers,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 26, 2008 8:59 PM  
**To:** tree.1@cox.net  
**Subject:**

Dear Mitra Khanoom aziz,

Today I lost all of my emails, not understanding why. In any way, as I understand your comments, I think you are entering into a contradiction. The moment you and I call ourselves Jew we have lost that "oneness". The same can be said for Muslims and Christians or other groups. You do not include "mysticism" among other "isms" claiming that "mysticism" is different and represents "oneness" but you call yourself a Jew which deeply undermines the "oneness". If you really believe in true "oneness", don't you think that you should free yourself from Jewishness? In the real world, you may not believe in it,

religion of every kind have undermined the "oneness" and categorically have been **divisive**. As you are well aware, mankind has paid dearly about this through history. If we really believe in "oneness" we must raise above **religious divisiveness** and only promote "human values".

If I did not understand your comments correctly please educate me. Incidentally, I sent the link to the bestseller book published in Israel to a friend, with "higher education" background and his response was *those who read this book are anti-Semites!*

Have a very pleasant Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 02, 2008 9:18 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** Re: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*Finally, I got a few minutes to respond to your latest comments regarding the contradiction that you have perceived in my previous email. This is a very common perception and dispelling it requires a detailed clarification. So please bear with me.*

*This contradiction arises only when we **confuse the distinction between Essence and Form**. The mystical idea of unity and the experience of Oneness refer to the **Oneness of the Essence of all things** while at the same time recognizing that this **One Essence manifests itself in a myriad of diverse forms**. This is easily observable in the natural world: Ice, snow, water, and steam all have the same essence, but their different forms must be also recognized and their unique properties must be respected. If you throw a gallon of water at someone's head, the result would be much different than if you threw a one-gallon piece of ice at him! In the same vein, male and female, Black and White, Jew and non-Jew, young and old, rich and poor, etc. are all diverse*

*manifestations of the same One Essence, and their different forms should be respected.*

*The problem is that the majority of humanity is totally ignorant of the Oneness of Essence and therefore identifies completely with forms, believes one form to be superior to others, gives it more privileges and more power over others, and even seeks to destroy other forms. This is why the mystics maintain that ignorance is at the root of all evil. Would we be able to inflict so much injustice, pain, and violence on one another and on Nature if we truly understood that despite appearances, everything and everyone is of the same essence and we are all completely related and interdependent? How can we not love what is in essence ourselves? As Rumi says, the many beautiful colors we see around us are all manifestations of the same colorless essence, but as soon as we forget this oneness of essence and become prisoners of form, conflicts and wars begin.*

تا که بیرنگی اسیر رنگ شد

موسیقی با عیسوی در جنگ شد

*As history has shown, those who try to reduce human conflict and violence by establishing a uniform sameness of language, class, culture, and religion, are actually committing another form of violence by not respecting the diversity of forms. Nature and Life apparently take joy in diversity and so should we. Once we realize that Oneness does not mean Sameness, and that unity of Essence exists alongside the diversity of Forms, the contradiction is resolved, and we can now move toward the most creative and exciting of all possibilities, which is Unity-in-Diversity. A person who achieves this level of consciousness does not identify with any form, but respects the form in which he or she has been manifested as much as all other forms.*

*There is a reason that one is manifested as male or female, Jew or Muslim, etc. and one of the main reasons is for us to clean up the container, help perfect the form in which we are born, or even change it dramatically. If you and I identify with our Jewish form (or male and female form, etc) and we forget that our true identity is not the form but the One Essence, then we cause more opaqueness to the form we were born in and only add more darkness to this world. But if we study and respect the form and illuminate it from within with the knowledge of the Oneness, we add to it luminosity and can use it to bring more Light into the world. Therefore, it would seem that throwing away, ignoring, or denying the form (e.g., our “Jewishness”) is not perhaps the best answer, but perfecting it, relating it lovingly to other forms, and using it wisely could be more beneficial.*

*As for the divisiveness and the tragic wars that religion has caused for humanity, you and I both agree completely. But as psychological experiments have illustrated, it is not religion that is divisive, it is the mental aberration embedded in our lower animal/reptilian brain (and possibly also our mammalian/emotional/limbic brain) that causes us to abuse religion, race, class, gender, (and even eye color or height!) It is this part of our brain that needs to be properly trained and restrained. What we need to focus on is how to educate our brains properly so that it can avoid the destructive aberration of conflictive dualism and recognize the Oneness underlying all forms. We must help one another to **Re-Member** the Oneness. This is why in so many mythologies, a terrible **dismemberment** is the cause of all human and cosmic misfortune and in the Sufi tradition they have the practice of “Zikr” or remembrance.*

*In the words of Saadi, **we are all the members of the One Body** and our lofty position as human beings is only achieved once we recognize the “beloved” (the One Sacred Essence) in all forms.*

رسد آدمی به جایی که به جز خدا نبیند

بنگر تا به کجاست مقام آدمیت

*Most Lovingly,*

*Mitra*

*PS. Your “highly educated” friend who called the book “anti-Semitic” without even reading it is a good illustration of the fact that academic education alone cannot eliminate the mental aberration mentioned above. We need another kind of education. For a great example of one Harvard scientist’s transformation and her sudden experience of Oneness due to a brain stroke, see: <http://www.ted.com/talks/view/id/229>. Would love to hear your comments after you watch this revealing clip.*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 04, 2008 10:15 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makhbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

Dear Mitra,

I am not sure the analogy you advanced is thoroughly applicable to our subject of interest. Nonetheless, I understand your point that Christianity, Judaism, Islam and ... are representing "forms" which are diverse and are all structured on a "common" or "single" "essence". You are however short of saying what is the essence; narcissism, selfishness, divisiveness, hatred for women and children? At least, these are what their history of almost four millennia have shown. The Old Testament, the New Testament, Quran and ... are loaded with those stuff and you are well aware of them. In none of them you see anything to suggest "oneness of Essence". The entire humanity has been indoctrinated by these documents and if they are **totally ignorant of the Oneness of Essence** is because there is nothing in these books to suggest or preach "oneness". We must look for "**the Oneness of Essence**" somewhere else, not in these books. You probably going

argue with me that I do not see that because there are symbolic interpretations for these stories that I have not paid attention. In the Book of Deuteronomy, there is a verse where God spells out that Torah has been written in such a manner that does not require any interpretation; one must accept it literally. In my opinion, people have a comfort zone with their religion but more sophisticated people do not make any sense of the stories and teachings in these Books; therefore they try to sugarcoat them with symbolic meanings and interpretations. Obviously, there are going to be infinite interpretations for every story and everybody believes his or her version is correct and others are wrong.

I sincerely admire your humane, compassionate, friendly and positive teachings, but your aspirations are not found in these books.

Sincerely,

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 12, 2008 8:00 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*First, let me thank you for your kind words and assure you that the sentiments are mutual. We both share the vision of a humanity free of religious, economic, and political despotism and slavery. This, along with our mutual respect for one another, is what enables us to carry on such an illuminating and spirited dialogue.*

*You are absolutely right about the narcissism, divisiveness, selfishness, hatred, and bigotry with which all religious scriptures have been tainted. I have described this at length in several published articles—some of which you can find reprinted in my book ChelCheragh. You are well aware of the degree of animosity religious fundamentalists feel towards me personally for having exposed their deceptive lies for the past three decades. However, I totally disagree with your assertion that these sacred books contain nothing of universally agreed upon inner meaning and that*

*we should throw them in favor of rational atheistic human values. Here are my reasons:*

- 1) The harmful distortions, bigoted additions, and literal misinterpretations of sacred scriptures have been produced and promoted by redactors, scribes, and priests for the mental and emotional enslavement of the masses and the empowering and the enrichment of the clergy. But **they have nothing to do with the unified mystical essence** of these scriptures. The mystical core, no matter the era or the culture in which it has expressed itself, invariably teaches liberty, love, compassion, harmony, unity, balance, and justice. These are difficult principles to follow for that part of humanity which has barely left the jungle and still believes in the bloody struggle for the survival of the most powerful. But we must not condemn a valuable instrument just because in the hand of abusers it can be lethal. We do not abandon hammers, saws, knives, rifles, and atomic energy just because they have been abused with devastating results. Neither should we abandon sacred mythologies.*
- 2) As I have illustrated previously, it is not only religion that has been shamelessly distorted and abused for selfish gain and violent control of the masses. **Marxism was abused by atheists like Stalin, Mao, and the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia in the most horrifying fashion resulting in the torture and death of millions of people.** Should we ban all Marxist writings? Scientific rationalism has been distorted and abused by materialists who have sought to ridicule, shun, and censor anyone who dares speak of intangible, unseen forces operating in our universe. For example, they made life a living hell for Semmelweis and Louis Pasteur who were the first to speak of intangible, unseen causes of disease—the microbes and viruses. It has become evident that scientific fundamentalists are just as vicious and intolerant as religious fundamentalists are when faced with ideas and theories that they find threatening to their entrenched world*

*view. Should we abandon all science because of these abuses? Darwin's theory has been abused by politicians who translated it into "social Darwinism" where the survival of the fittest justifies all abuse of power. Should we do away with Darwin's books?*

- 3) *It would seem that your totally negative view of "religious theism" and your totally positive view of "rational atheism" stems from an unfair bias. Let me remind you once again that **Communism, Nazism, and Fascism** were all atheistic secular movements with totally "rational" justifications for their demonic aggression. We must get away from any and all biases if we are serious in our search for the causes of and solutions to human violence. The fault, my friend, does not lie with religion, philosophy, ideology, or science; it lies with the ignorant animalistic consciousness of the people who distort these things and abuse them for their own egotistical purposes. The man at this low level of consciousness will distort and abuse Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Communism, Nationalism, Zionism, Science, etc., and bring disaster to the world. Yes, even mysticism is often abused by unscrupulous self-promoting charlatans:*

حرف درویشان بدزدد مرد دون

تا بخواند بر سلیمی زان فسون

از هزاران تن یکی صوفی اند

مابقی در سایه او میزیند

- 4) *You cannot get rid of sacred myths. The mystical tales contained in the world's tainted scriptures are rooted in inspiration of the first order, have been in turn sources of inspiration for the greatest art and literature, and they carry extremely valuable insights and blueprints for the inner*

*spiritual and psychological evolution of human beings. If we get rid of all them today, these inspired mystical myths will reappear again tomorrow. **How do I know this?** The same way that Dr. Carl Jung (Freud's chief disciple and opponent, and the pioneer of Jungian Psychology) came to know it: through both personal experience as well as academic research. Jung not only had mystical dreams which contained elements very similar to the various symbols in the world's sacred myths, he also **noted the identical similarity between the symbolism of Mitraism and the utterances of one of his patients** who had never come into contact with this archaic ancient mystical system. As for me, ever since early childhood years, before I could even read, I have been experiencing dreams containing unequivocal mythic symbols (and even entire mythic stories!) which many years later I discovered their exact replica in Hindu-Buddhist, Judaic, Christian, and Egyptian sacred mythologies. I have also had non-Jewish students in my Kabbalah classes who were startled by mythic dreams identical to the stories in the Torah without any prior knowledge of these biblical stories. This is why Jung posited that these sacred myths are the eternal products of the "Collective Unconscious" or the vast inspirational reservoir which can be accessed by anyone at any time. Jung and Rumi both agree that these sacred myths cannot and will not die because they carry an eternal inner truth:*

اي گروهی	تا قیامت میزند قرآن ندا
	جهل را گشته فدا
تخم طعن و	که مرا افسانه می پنداشتید
	کافری می کاشتید
که شما فانی	خود بدیدید آنک طعنه میزدید
	و افسانه بدید

قوت جان	من کلام حقم و قایم به ذات
	جان و یاقوت زکات
لیک از	نور خورشیدم فتاده بر شما
	خورشید ناگشته جدا
تا رهانم	نک منم ینبوع آن آب حیات
	عاشقان را از مامت

- 5) *Without any in-depth scrutiny of relevant sources and thorough investigation of the available data, you have surmised that any attempt at deciphering the symbolic meaning of sacred scriptures is bogus, and that there can be an infinite number of such interpretations. Mystics have always maintained that there are several levels of interpretation of these stories all of which can be valid and serve a positive purpose. The only harmful interpretation is the literal. Also, when it comes to the highest mystical level of interpretation of symbolic myths, things are not as inconsistent and haphazard as you have claimed. There are dictionaries of symbols to be consulted, cross-cultural references to consider, consistency guidelines to follow, and issues of internal validity that must be adhered to. There are accredited universities that now give degrees in the art of interpretation and understanding of myths and dreams. Remember that even medicine and psychiatry are still considered by some to be “arts” and not exact sciences. This does not diminish their value.*
- 6) *Just as with scientific theories, symbolic interpretations of sacred myths can build upon one another and reveal an ever increasing level of complexity. They can also be proven wrong. (See for example my expose of the invalidity of the interpretation of King Xerxes as God/King of the Universe in the story of the Book of Esther in my articles published in Rahavard Journal).*
- 7) *It is unrealistic and harmful to abandon the sacred scriptures in favor of rational atheism. The strong resurgence of*

*religion and spirituality in both China and Russia indicates that Man cannot live by rational thinking alone; the human soul thirsts after something deeper and higher. If it cannot find pure water, it will drink the polluted water. Instead of throwing out the baby with the bathwater, we should be salvaging the inspired mystical parts of these scriptures and providing them to the masses in the most entertaining and educational manner possible. Why not do as Persian mystics such as Rumi and Jewish mystics such as Cordoba have suggested?*

8)

ما ز قران مغز را برداشتيم  
پوست را بهر خران بگذاشتيم

ابلهان گویند که آين افسانه را

خط بکش، زیرا که دروغ است  
و خطا

قصه ای برادر همچون پیمانہ  
ایست

معنی اندر وی مثال دانه ایست

“Woe to the wicked who say that the Torah consists of ordinary tales, and they see only this garment and no more. Fortunate are the righteous whose gaze penetrates to the inner meaning of the Torah, as is proper. Wine is kept in a jar, and so must the Torah be contained in an outer garment. It is for this reason that we must penetrate to

what is beyond the garment.  
Thus we say that all these  
tales are only garments.” (*Zohar*  
III, 152a, referenced in Bokser, *The Jewish  
Mystical Tradition*, 1993, pp. 122-123.)

*If you taste this wine even once, you will know its value, and you will no longer risk losing the wine by throwing away the sullied jar.*

*Sorry again for the delay and the wordiness of the response. Here is wishing you and yours a very Happy Holiday Season.*

*Cheers,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Monday, December 29, 2008 2:43 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makhbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

Dear Mitra,

Happy Holidays with best wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year for you and family. I am sorry that I get back to you with some delay on this subject.

I have always admired your well-desired humanism along with your courage to speak out when most of us 'opportunistically' prefer to keep quiet. In my opinion, you have great aspiration to reduce the human pain and suffering, but these aspirations are neither found in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, nor Quran. I am sorry, they are not there, no matter how hard you may try to 'symbolically' interpret them and extract their 'mystical essence'. Just as an example, I wonder how can you get a humane meaning out of the following "sacred verses" and what is the mystical essence here; "*And Moses said on to them, have you saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Ba-laam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of pe-or, and there wa a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with*

*him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves, (Numbers 31:15-18).* The Holy Books, as we know them, are full of statements like these which promote violence. And let's not forget that as long as we have **Holy Books** we are going to have **Holy Wars**.

Nonetheless, you and I have common interest in the well being of the mankind. Therefore, we can keep our differences to ourselves and we can focus on the areas where we have common understandings that may be inductive of something good. Some times ago, I sent you the "**Modern Ten Commandments**" that for example could be a platform around which we can communicate and educate the public to our capacity.

Again, with best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 11, 2009 3:15 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang; Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*There is a famous saying, "A man convinced against his Will, is of the same opinion still." We seem to be going in circles my good friend. No matter how much evidence I produce to indicate that atheists are just as guilty of dualistic black and white thinking and just as capable of violence as fundamentalist religious folks, you keep on insisting that religions and "Holy Books" are the root of all human violence and should be discarded. It seems that the best we can do at this point is to agree to disagree and focus instead on our common goals. I know you to be an extraordinary human being whose heart beats for the good of all, and this is the most important thing in my book!*

*As for the mystical meaning of the seemingly horrific Biblical passage you have cited, I am most grateful and delighted that you have challenged me to decipher the symbolic meaning of the*

*Balaam story. I learned much that is valuable and profound as I searched for the inner meaning of this troubling passage. After consulting various esoteric dictionaries and other sources on biblical symbols, here is what I have gathered:*

*First, it is interesting to note that while in this passage Moses is ordering the total annihilation of the Midianites, Moses' own wife **Zipporah was a Midianite** and he held his Midianite father-in-law, Jethro, in the highest esteem and consulted with him in managing the affairs of the Israelites as they journeyed thru the desert. How could this be then that he so ruthlessly orders the mass killing of the Midianites? This contradiction cannot be resolved if we look upon this fable as literal history! But the mystical interpretation resolves the contradiction beautifully and meaningfully.*

*From the mystical viewpoint, the **“Egyptians,” the “Moabites,” the “Midianites,” and the “Seven Deadly Nations”** (who were supposedly subjected to genocide at the hands of the Israelites), do not represent historical realities but **symbolize various levels and types of inner obstacles and harmful psychological complexes against which the human soul (=the Israelites) must struggle on its way to the Promised Land (=Higher State of Being and Higher Spiritual Consciousness).** Some of these inner obstacles such as the **“Seven Deadly Nations”** are so antagonistic to the ascent of the soul that they must be completely eradicated—just as the Seven Deadly Sins must be eradicated in Christian mysticism, the Seven Chakras must be purified in Hindu mysticism, the Seven rungs of Mithraic Ladder must be climbed, and the Seven Khaans (adventures) of Rostam must be successfully undertaken in Persian mysticism.*

*Now, **“Balaam the non-Israelite soothsayer & false prophet”** represents that advanced part of our mental faculty which has achieved considerable psychic powers and abilities, but it is still enamored of worldly prestige and riches. Balaam is psychic and*

receives communication from God, but he is a foreigner to the true *“Israelite Consciousness”* –i.e., a state of Consciousness where the human Soul strives toward Divine Love, Wisdom, Truth, Unity, Compassion, and Justice and does not violate these spiritual values by succumbing to worldly riches as Balaam did. This *“Israelite”* state of consciousness is not the property of any people and is available as a potential to all human beings regardless of race, religion, or gender. The word *“Israel”* means *“God will reign,”* and *“Israelites”* represent the higher aspirations of the human soul in its effort to establish the reign of the *“One God”* (=unity) and spiritual values (Wisdom, Love, Truth, Justice, Compassion, Harmony) within the individual and everywhere on earth.

Enticed by worldly honors and riches, the Balaam part of our psyche puts its exceptional powers in the service of *“the Moabite King Balak”*— a highly destructive part of our being which favors materialism, sensuality, and sense perception, and the Midianites who were the *“enemies of the Israelites”*. The Balaam part of our being discerns the superiority of Spiritual forces (=the *Israelites*), so it cannot openly fight against them. Thus it resorts to deceptive methods to undermine, adulterate, and destroy the *“Israelites”* and eliminate the Spiritual tendencies of our being.

Just as the Serpent in the Genesis story tempted Eve first in order to corrupt Adam and managed to separate these masculine-feminine parts of our being from the Oneness/unity (God), Balaam counseled the *“enemies of the Israelites”* to lead the *“Israelites”* into idolatry and fornication (= selfish greed and overindulgence in the sensual world of materiality) thru the Moabite and Midianite *“women”* who offered them sex, wine, and entertainment. (Numbers 24:1-3)

Now, *“woman”* represents the feminine element or the material/physical/emotional parts of our being. Notice that it is

*exactly this part of our being that all savvy commercial advertisers and politicians appeal to in order to influence our behavior! The dire economic, social, and political plagues we are experiencing in the world today are a great illustration of Balak and Balaam's machinations and the enticements of these "anti-Israelite women" within us driving us more and more into sensual overindulgence and materialistic greed. This is why the Kabbalists maintain that the true evolution of mankind will only take place thru the transformation of "women"—i.e., the material and emotional tendencies of our being.*

*This is also why, in the passage that you have cited, Moses is decreeing the complete annihilation of the "adulterous women" who sought to turn the "Israelites" away from God. Moses—our inner spiritual guide—is aware of the danger that these "adulterous women" pose to our spiritual evolution by their physical and emotional enticements pushing us toward excessive greed for material things and leading us away from spirituality. Thus, Moses orders their eradication. The "anti-Israelite Midianite men"—i.e., our treacherous, selfish, and wild carnal thoughts and actions—must also be eliminated because they war against our spiritual evolution. Rumi gives the same exact rendition in his poem regarding Balaam and the killing that ensues in this passage:*

بلعام بأعور را خلق جهان

سغبه شد مانند عیسی زمان

پنجه زد با موسی از کبر و کمال

آن چنان شد که شنیدستی تو حال

صد هزار ابلیس و بلعم در جهان  
همچنین بودست پیدا و نهان  
این دو را مشهور گردانید اله  
تا که این باشند این دو بر باقی گواه  
جمله حیوان را پی انسان بکش  
جمله انسان را بکش از بهر هش  
هش چه باشد عقل کل هوشمند  
هوش جزوی هش بود اما نژند  
عزت وحشی بدین ساقط شدست  
که مر انسان را مخالف آمدست  
خر نشاید کشت از بهر صلاح  
چون شود وحشی شود خورش مباح

*The only “Moabites and Midianites” to be spared are the “virgins” –i.e., those physical and emotional parts of our being which are pure and innocent and are not antagonistic to our spirituality. In the Kabbalistic view, the moderate enjoyment of worldly pleasures and material things are not antagonistic to spirituality. To the contrary, when these “pure virgins” such as “Zipporah the Midianite” and “Ruth the Moabite” marry an “Israelite” like Moses or Boaz—i.e., when our refined and purified materiality is coupled with our spiritual aspirations—this can give birth to noble offspring such as those represented by “King David” (=Love) and “Solomon the Wise” (=Wisdom) who were the descendents of “Ruth the Moabite” and “Boaz the Israelite”.*

*In other words, when the moderate enjoyment of material pleasures is coupled with higher consciousness and sublimated by spiritual awareness, enlightening and redeeming states of higher consciousness marked by greater degrees of Love and Wisdom can result.*

*The cross-cultural validation for the above interpretation can be found in such universal stories as that of the Buddha (=Enlightened One) being born of a virgin mother, Christ (=Savior Light) being born of the Virgin Mary, and Mitra or Mehr (Savior Sun) being born of the Virgin Anahita, and many more...*

*Note that right after carrying out this all-out war with the Moabites and Midianites, the Israelite warriors are instructed to engage seven days in purification rites before entering the camp (Numbers 31:19). Now look at the similarity of meaning between the above biblical passage and this poem of Rumi:*

حیلت رها کن عاشقا،  
دیوانه شو، دیوانه شو  
وندر دل آتش درآ  
پروانه شو، پروانه شو!  
رو سینه را چون سین ها  
هفت آب شوی از کین ها  
وانگه شراب عشق را  
پیمانہ شو، پیمانہ شو!

*In short, the story of Balaam and its aftermath are symbolic representation of what mystics and alchemists call the process of*

*Spiritualization of Matter and Materialization of Spirit. This is the key to understanding almost all Biblical stories. This key is also represented by the symbol of the Star of David, a universal symbol which signifies the state of the perfected human being in whom Spirit and Matter, Masculine and Feminine, and all other opposites have been thoroughly and creatively harmonized. This is the state of "Holy Jerusalem" (=Light, Wholeness &Peace) where the inner war has ended and true inner Peace reigns.*

*"Shalom" in Hebrew means Wholeness and Peace; so let us end this discourse by wishing one another and all of humanity*  
**SHALOM.**

*Most Lovingly,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2009 9:00 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makhbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

**Dear Mitra,**

**If atheists are capable of provoking violence, historically they have not done so. They have been usually the victims of violence. Throughout history the theists have exercised to violence remarkably more than those who did not believe in the revealed religions. Just look what goes on in Middle East today. But I agree with you that we should just respect each other different viewpoints and move on. Have a very pleasant evening.**

---

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2009 3:12 PM  
**To:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*We must be reading two different histories... let me remind you one last time that the extremely violent Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Khmer Rouge were all atheists! The destructive "black and white" Dualistic mindset can be found among fundamentalist religious folks and atheists alike.*

*Nonetheless, it has been truly a pleasure exchanging ideas with you and I look forward to our continued cooperation on matters that we both agree on and feel deeply about.*

*Cheers,  
Mitra*

---

**From:** Meshkinpour, Hooshang  
**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2009 11:31 PM  
**To:** Mitra Makbuleh  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

Dear Mitra,

I do not agree with you, but you know I always respect for your opinion. Let's focus on common issues where we have common understanding.  
Sincerely,

Hooshang

---

**From:** Mitra Makbuleh [mailto:tree.1@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 18, 2009 12:42 PM  
**To:** 'Meshkinpour, Hooshang'  
**Subject:** RE: Israeli Bestseller Breaks National Taboo

*Dear Hooshang,*

*Yes, intelligent people can agree to disagree. As before, we will focus and cooperate on what we both agree on. Let's get together*

*soon and discuss these topics of interest to both of us over lunch or a cup of coffee. It has been some time since our last get together!*

*Lovingly,  
Mitra*

---