

Flickering Israel

With nothing to fear from demographics, Israel should exchange peace for peace, claims former Shiloh mayor David Rubin

• ALEXANDER ZVIELLI

Sparks are usually brilliant, but die quickly. The truth and frequent pain found in David Rubin's daily impressions of this difficult world and his observations on Israel's challenges in it, as detailed in *Sparks from Zion*, are too serious to be dealt with lightly.

Rubin, raised in Brooklyn, New York, is a former mayor of Shiloh, a new Israeli town in the center of Samaria, the biblical heartland of ancient Israel also known as the controversial West Bank. He is also the founder of the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund, dedicated to healing the traumas of children, victims of Arab terrorist attacks, to whom he has dedicated all proceeds from the sale of this book.

A pioneer of the successful Israeli settlement from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean, Rubin firmly believes in the relentless Jewish drive to settle in the so-called disputed territories. He is also the author of *The Islamic Tsunami - Israel and America in the Age of Obama*, *Peace for Peace - Israel in the New Middle East* and *God, Israel and Shiloh - Returning to the Land*.

There is always a certain fear that the urge to convey strong messages may turn them into propaganda, a one-sided expression of convictions in which facts are frequently adjusted to promote certain concepts. But while it is true that Rubin believes in his ideas with all his heart and wishes to share them with us, he is still most persuasive due to convincing arguments that deserve wider attention.

Many of his ideas first appeared as a collection of articles, in his regular blog or as op-eds at Israel National News (Arutz 7). They grew very popular as more and more Israelis, frustrated by growing Palestinian enmity and the world's lack of understanding of Israeli predicaments, started to look around for new solutions to old, painful problems.

The book opens with Rubin's introductory news glossary (on politicians and terms specific to Israel), then offers his first practical suggestion. The author posits that after 30 years of Middle East peace summits and conferences - with tens of millions of dollars wasted, over 1,600 Israeli lives lost in terrorist attacks and tens of thousands of others injured in the past

20 years alone - one is justified in asking: Why not try something new?

Why expose ourselves to dangerous negotiations, instead of proposing and attempting to implement our own peace plan, fair to everybody including Palestinians?

Rubin believes that the peace process has always failed, and will continue to disappoint us and the world at large, until we base our negotiations on biblical principles, historical justice and, above all, common sense. The "land for peace" formula has chipped away at Israel's concrete peace assets, a part of the Arab strategy aimed at the weakening of the Jewish state, the eternal sovereign inheritance of the Jewish people - which at this time (after Jordan was cut out of Mandatory Palestine) should consist of territory from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

Israel will extend its hand to unconditional peace and cooperation, peace for peace, to all its neighbors - including those Palestinians who live within its borders in Judea and Samaria. Rubin believes that, according to recent studies, Israel has nothing to fear from demographics.

Rubin writes well, and is concise and directly to the point on the most important developments, day after day; each comment is accompanied by a series of convincing arguments.

The book contains almost 100 short articles written during the recent tumultuous years. The variety of subjects are preceded by Isaiah's call, "Nations will walk by your light and kings by the brilliance of your shine." That was Rubin's call, with his practical enthusiasm and Shiloh experience.

He might be right in his frequent criticism of the Israeli government, of the Oslo tragedy and of American policy, but what may be easy for him to write may be much more difficult to reach for our responsible national leaders. They are still crossing a minefield of international and internal dissension, and Arab enmity - which demands wise and careful consideration.

We may wholeheartedly agree with him in regard to Kulanu MK Michael Oren's peace plan for unilateral withdrawal from Judea and Samaria - which in Rubin's opinion would be national suicide. The writer asks whether the esteemed former ambassador to the US really wants to turn the strategic hilly communities of Samaria into Hamas missile pads. Haven't we learned the lessons of the Gaza disengagement?

We may dispute his conclusion that the two-state solution is a recipe for the destruction of Israel, but most of us would agree that it would be foolishness to agree to such a solution at the present time.

Rubin's natural reaction to the kidnapping and murder of the three yeshiva students last summer, and his demand that



"Now is the time not just to surround Hebron and arrest Hamas terrorists... Now is the time to shut down Hebron completely. Shut off electricity, shut off water" may be well understood, but could hardly be followed by a responsible Israeli government.

Rubin proposes that former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton, who aspires to be the next American president, should be able to answer three test questions: "What was the national anthem of that country named Palestine? Who was the first elected leader of the country? What was the monetary currency of that country?" He also offers his services in furthering her badly needed educational process. A lovely idea, but hardly practical.

He quotes Winston Churchill's appeal: "Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be - for without victory, there is no survival." Rubin is right in claiming that vacillation brings defeat. This is how he lives and wants us to live, but in real life, victories are often likely to become a burden too heavy and too costly to bear.

Many readers will enjoy Rubin's book for its sheer enthusiasm, Jewish message and the gleaming lightness of solutions, comments and perspectives he offers. His call and appeal add another dimension to the promotion of ideas and appeals for practical achievements, on the long road to Israeli statehood and independence. ■

HAVEN'T WE learned the lessons of the Gaza disengagement, asks the author. (Reuters)

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