Guidelines for Critical Dialogue between Worldviews as Exemplified by the Need for Non-antisemitic Dialogue with Israelis?

Anthony Judge
Communications and Research
Union of International Associations
Belgium

Introduction

Critical comments on the policies of Israel in its handling of the crisis with Hizbollah (July-August 2006), or more generally with Palestinians, have evoked accusations of "anti-semitism". Both the criticism and the accusations have been characteristic of interaction with Israelis over decades – and, more generally, over centuries with regard to Jews. Considerable effort has gone into recognizing what constitutes the "anti-semitic" characteristics of such criticism. Although references are occasionally made to "non-anti-semitisim", and the need to demonstrate it, it is not clear that any effort has been devoted to clarifying what constitutes "non-anti-semitic" dialogue that is critical of Israel or of positions favoured by Jews in particular.

The situation with respect to Israel may usefully be considered as exemplifying a challenge with respect to the proponents of any worldview, whether those of other religions (especially including Islam and Christianity), schools of thought, academic disciplines, etc. In effect the situation with respect to Israel is considered here as isomorphic with other psychosocial conditions. These have the potential to offer more general learnings, as well as clues to how the challenge can be more elegantly and fruitfully handled.

What follows is an effort to determine whether there are any guidelines for critical dialogue with proponents of a worldview strongly held, possibly so strongly as to be intimately associated with the very identity of the proponents. Preferably the guidelines should be offered by those holding the worldview, rather than by those critical of its consequences – and seeking an appropriate window of opportunity through which to dialogue. If there is any implication that one may occasionally be "wrong", at least from some other perspective, it is useful to clarify the conditions under which others may point this out.

This exercise is not concerned with the much-explored question of "tolerance" – namely tolerat-

ing an alternative worldview and its associated practices – rather it is concerned with the guidelines for engaging critically with such a worldview where it is experienced as problematic. The practice of tolerance is commonly understood to be one which deliberately abstains from critical feedback – that may in fact be vital to the sustainability of any relationship. Cris Cullinan (1999) makes the point:

> *As long as some of us receive automatic presumptions of innocence, worthiness and competence and yet refuse to hear and understand that others do not share these benefits, we can do little to create a respectful and inclusive environment. This is not necessarily because we do not want to help create this kind of environment.*

Challenge of dialogue with an alternative worldview

What are the guidelines for criticizing those who use particular styles of dialogue to define themselves as beyond criticism – beyond the bounds of human behaviour considered acceptable from other perspectives? The corollary is that any who engage in such criticism are necessarily to be considered as acting unfairly, unethically, discriminatorily. Such critics may then, by their own choice, be seen to be laying themselves open to counter-measures – of which those criticized are the sole judge of appropriateness.

It might be expected that those subscribing to such a logical position would offer careful guidelines to others who might wish to offer criticism. This does not appear to be the case. The following is therefore a contribution to the extensive literature on critical thinking.

One focus of this exploration is the particular case of the much debated question as to whether it is possible to be critical of anything with which a Jewish person is associated, notably the State of Israel, without being automatically labelled as anti-semitic. To clarify the boundaries of appropriateness, some comparison is made with many other situations where people have well-established reasons to think of themselves as specially distinct from other human groups.

Isomorphs of the Israeli case: challenging parallels and distinctions

It is instructive to explore the following tentatively clustered, well-known cases where one worldview considers itself more developed, informed or appropriate than another – and, to that extent, "above criticism". They seem to have dimensions with a degree of isomorphism to that of the challenges of critical dialogue with Israel and Israelis. The key questions are then:

- whether and how to draw parallels or distinctions between potential isomorphs?
- what forms of criticism is a coherent worldview not "above" receiving?

The problem in the case of Israel is frequently framed in relation to the challenge of a "chosen people" – a people specially chosen by God and therefore necessarily "above criticism" (cf *The Peace Encyclopedia: Chosenness, The Chosen People, Superiority*; Paul Eidelberg, 1998; Dovid Gottlieb, *The Chosen People*). There are other peoples who have traditionally considered themselves to be similarly "chosen",

including the Chinese and the Japanese – and, much more recently, the Americans. But the special divine relation, and its associated responsibilities, is also commonly recognized amongst many indigenous peoples.

It is therefore potentially more fruitful to review the challenge, for the "unchosen", of appropriate dialogue with "chosen people" in terms of a much wider spectrum of situations in which variants of this condition obtain.

Religion: Those subscribing to a religious belief are typically faced with similar perspectives and must develop a mode of dealing with anti-religious dialogue, notably as characteristic of humanists and atheists. The lack of any faith, irrespective of the faith chosen, may be considered as extremely problematic, notably according to the views of Islam (regarding an infidel, or *kafir*).

Here the challenge is one of dialogue with unbelievers stigmatized as having an anti-religious attitude. The corresponding challenge is that for the "unbeliever" in dialoguing with a person holding a particular belief. Whilst religions give a great deal of attention to dialogue (on their own terms) with unbelievers, as part of the proselytizing process, none is given to the guidelines for unbelievers in engaging critically, for mutual benefit, with those holding a religious belief.

It is a characteristic of religious belief to consider the truths of the chosen religion to be more fundamental than those of other beliefs, thus making them preferable if not superior – offering a specially privileged understanding (and associated status). The challenge comes from any consequent constraints on dialogue. Examples include:

- **anti-Christian:**
  - ❖ **anti-Catholic:** criticism of the Catholic worldview and its associated practices dates back over centuries – notably resulting in the often violent relationships with "protestant" Christians stigmatized as "anti-Catholic" (as in Northern Ireland) and with Muslims (as in the period of the Crusades). It is however unclear that participation of Catholics in recent inter-faith dialogue initiatives has established guidelines acceptable to Catholics for critical feedback from those not subscribing to the Catholic worldview (whether other Christians, Jews or Muslims). Nevertheless the Pope has stressed that "We are in great need of an authentic dialogue between religions and between cultures" (2006). The situation is not facilitated by the Pope's typically strong views on the superiority of the Catholic faith above all others.
  - ❖ **anti-Protestant:** this situation is typically the reverse of the anti-Catholic situation. It is exacerbated by the fundamentalist beliefs of some Christian denominations, naturally convinced of the primacy of their worldview and their divine mandate – notably in response to the Muslim worldview. Again there is little evidence of the emergence of any guidelines from such groups on the appropriate form of critical feedback.
- **anti-Semitic:** criticism of the Jewish worldview and its associated practices also dates back over centuries – with many horrific consequences. Judaism is also characterized by a range of denominations with contrasting worldviews (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Haredi, Hasidic, Modern Orthodoxy, Reconstructionist, Karaite, Rabbinic, and Alternative). Given this variety, the question is what guidelines might be formulated by Jews for fruitful critical

feedback that could be usefully distinguished from "anti-semitism".

- **anti-Muslim:** the past decade has seen intensive debate on the Muslim world-view by other worldviews (whether religious or secular) – of which a major proportion is considered to be "anti-Muslim" by Muslims. The question for all concerned, as with "anti-semitism" in particular, is what guidelines might be offered by Muslims as to fruitful critical feedback – if any is admissible. The possibility is complicated by the quality of the critical "dialogue" between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

- **anti-Buddhist:** although less well-known in the West, Budd-hism has been sub-ject to strong anti-Buddhist actions (cf *Great Anti-Buddhist Persecution*) but also has a proactive approach to critical views (cf *Against Buddhism - Anti-Buddhist*; *Arguments*; *Anti-Buddhism Traditions*). Buddhism has engendered one of the oldest attempts to create a framework for mutually incompatible views in the classical text on *The All-Embracing Net of Views* (Bodhi 1978) which identifies 62 philosophical views as constituting a complete set of inap-propriate or unsustainable views – together constituting a larger and more appropriate framework. Whilst these may be usefully framed as classical errors of interpretation, it is not clear however that Buddhism has generated guidelines for more spontaneous criticism.

- **anti-Taoist:** criticism of early Taoism is clarified in an annotated commentary by Livia Kohn (1997). Of particular interest in the case of Taoism is the special role given to polarities, raising the technical question of the modalities by which a polarizing external critical perspective is integrated (*9-fold Higher Order Patterning of Tao Te Ching Insights* 2003; *Disco-vering richer patterns of com-prehension to reframe polarization* 1998). It is not clear that Taoism has reflect-ed its understanding of such dynamics in guidelines for its critics.

- **anti-Hindu:** typically Hinduism is naturally accepting of non-Hindu philoso-phies and practices, although anti-Hindu prejudices within Indian tribal popula-tions and amongst fundamentalists of Muslim and Christian persuasion have notably led to massacres of the Hindu population. As with Taoism, the Hindu concept of Indra's Net points to an encompassing of the total variety of views and counter-views. But again it is not clear that Hinduism has generated guide-lines for critical feedback on its worldview. This conclusion would also appear to apply to contemporary spiritual leaders of Hindu inspiration.

Christianity has been the most successful in occupying the moral highground by ensuring that "unchristian" is widely held to mean "uncharitable" or "uncompassion-ate" – if not "inhumane". Other religions have however successfully elaborated power-ful symbolic understandings of "impurity", "uncleanness" and the like – which would in each case typically apply to the practices of another worldview, including the Christian (Handelman 1996; Hayes 2002; *Ritual Impurity* (*hadath* and *najasa* in Islam); *Guide to Ritual Impurity* (*asaucham* in Hinduism). Dialogue under such condi-tions calls for special precautions that need elaboration.

Other instructive parallels: These are to be found in the case of:
- Academic and other disciplines and skills
- Political ideology

- Nationalism and ethnic culture
- Aesthetics
- Physically-characterized social groups
- Social status and behavioural skills
- Lifestyle preferences
- Alternative and hypothetical (including intentional communities, semi-secret societies, extraterrestrials, and the deluded)

A number of these worldviews combine most unfortunately to sustain a pattern of denial – notably associated with the consequences of regional conflicts engendered by them. This is most evident in the widespread use of landmines and cluster bombs. Millions of unexploded cluster bomblets now endanger civilian populations in rural areas long after any cease fire. This is the case in Laos, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq. It is a notable consequence of the military strategy of Israel in southern Lebanon in 2006 (United Nations 2006). Countries adopting such strategies tend to do so covertly, denying use of inhumane weapons at the time, and offering no guidelines as to how criticism of such policies could be fruitfully formulated as a contribution to policy-making (Rappert 2006).

Sources of the sense of "chosenness"

The previous section gives a sense of the varieties of "chosenness". Clearly the source of this sense may derive from any of the following, in isolation or in combination:

- **divinity:** namely where God is understood to have appointed a people or a person as specially "Chosen"; in the case of individuals this may take the form of being "born again"
- **inborn talent:** where it is a matter of skill, this may well be inherited or inborn, notably with the "specially gifted" – possibly to be understood as the consequence of reincarnation
- **education / training:** qualifications of the highest degree may be acquired through successful pursuit of an educational pathway, which may include physical and mental endurance (notably as in military training)
- **social circumstances:** birth into a well-positioned family (with a large inheritance), or a social group, may nurture a sense of having been chosen for a particular role in life (as with dynastic inheritance such as royalty); being "at the right place, at the right time" may also lead to a sense of having been chosen by circumstances; in certain cultures, birth under auspicious circumstances may be a significant factor, if not the primary one (as with selection of the Dalai Lama)
- **appointment / election:** leaders of every kind may be chosen by those who wish to follow them or by the previous holder of a mantle of authority – possibly perceived to be in fulfillment of prophecy
- **inner sense:** individuals may be persuaded of their self-worth, or unique destiny, through subjective processes, including dreams and delusions; some occupants of mental asylums consider themselves to be specially chosen
- **creativity:** a creative breakthrough in some area (music, technology, etc) may

result in the development of a sense of self-worth

- **promotion:** commercial and political processes may result in the promotion of an individual into celebrity status
- **ritual:** secret societies may offer initiation rituals (including hazing) that progressively enhance the status of the individual through a hierarchical system within an elite
- **invitation:** an individual may be invited into an elite group
- **luck / fate:** especially problematic is where a combination of circumstances selects one or more individuals, notably in unfortunate cases of scapegoating (being chosen for victimhood), criminal framing, mistaken identity, accident and the like; this sense of having been chosen is typically associated with the question "why me"; individuals can be arbitrarily selected in this way "to make an example"
- **commitment:** however triggered, commitment to a cause may be transmuted into a belief in having effectively been "chosen" to complete it (as with, on a larger scale, the myth underlying the faith-based intervention by the Coalition of the Willing)

In addition to the religious sense of being "chosen" through being "born again", other variants of this process may also be considered significant (Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again", 2004). The sense of being chosen is of course of particular relevance in the case of acts of life endangering courage – or of suicide bombers.

Characteristics of dialogue with "the chosen"

Critical dialogue amongst "the chosen": For purposes of comparison, it is useful to distinguish the case of critical dialogue amongst those subscribing to a particular belief whether religious, scientific, political or otherwise. Here a degree of fundamental agreement is to be assumed. Criticism and disagreement are essentially superficial or focused on details of interpretation – whether or not these are framed as a "major debate" between schools of thought of that worldview. The chosen dialogue amongst themselves within a "circle of trust" – a complicity that is called into question by critical dialogue with "others". In the case of the Jewish diaspora, this might be termed "semitic" dialogue from which "anti-semitic" dimensions are necessarily to be excluded.

Judgment of those within the circle is muted – in ways that evoke external criticism – even when some of its values are betrayed. The P2 scandal of freemasonry provides an example.

Critical discourse by "the chosen": Again for comparative purposes, this is the case where a particular worldview is used as the basis for criticizing the inadequacies of another worldview – without being open to any criticism in return, except to the extent that the arguments of the latter can be refuted from within the worldview of the former.

Preferred non-critical dialogue: As a development of the preceding condition, this is the preferred mode of discourse for exponents of any worldview.

- Under these conditions any questions are only acceptable to the extent that the response can be provided or the question can be proven to be inappropriate.

Typically the process of such dialogue may consist of a number of stages:

- aspects of the preferred worldview are articulated
- comments from those not subscribing to it are accepted
- responses are made to those comments, correcting errors of understanding
- if the degree of protest against those comments is deemed excessive after a "reasonable" attempt at "dialogue", then the "dialogue" is terminated
- the protestor is stigmatized as "unreasonable" or "beyond reasoning" – or "beyond saving"
- in certain situations, measures may be taken to intimidate, isolate or even "terminate" the protestor – some modes of discourse can indeed prove fatal (if only to a career position)

A common defensive strategy in response to this form of dialogue, especially in corporate culture, is that of the "yes man". Recent examples of faith-based governance have clarified the extent to which world leaders – "chosen people" such as George Bush and Tony Blair – consider themselves as "above criticism" normally characteristic of democratic governance. Ultimately they, and their supporters, consider that only God can appropriately judge them for the deaths they perpetrate in the name of spreading Christian Democracy.

Critical dialogue with "divinity": An especially problematic form of the previous variant occurs when a potentially critical dialogue, with potentially "fatal" consequences, takes place with the "ultimate" authority of the worldview rather than with an intermediary interpreting that authority's perspective. This may take the form of "God", a "Chief Priest", a "President", a "Professor", a "Worldmaker", or an elective affinity.

Radical dialogue and "anathema": Dialogue with a group may, exceptionally, become of such a radical nature that it challenges the fundamental assumptions basic to the identity of the group – even challenging its very integrity. This may for example occur in theological debate, in scientific debate, or in political debate. The consequence may be a schism in the group, with the more authoritative declaring the other to be the vehicle of heresy. In theological debate, the excluded perspective and the holder of it, may be declared to be anathema – implying a degree of denouncement and banishment, namely a form of extreme religious sanction.

Curiously the original Greek sense of anathema implied a form of suspension, something set apart as sacred – even offered up to God. This accords with the sense of the perspective being out of a conventional frame – "out of the box?".

An excellent example has been provided, on the occasion of the Israel-Hizbollah conflict, by the widely publicized commentary of the renowned Norwegian philosopher Jostein Gaarder (2006), expressing his outrage against Israel's military operations and foreign policy since 1967. Vehemently contested by many (Samuels 2006), his text, has been perceived by some as attacking not only Israel and Israeli policy, but also Jews and Judaism in general, and as such is considered an extreme example of anti-semitism. Gaarder himself repeatedly dismissed such interpretations. Critics considered that he had "crossed a line", whether or not he realized it. Supporters, includ-

ing the former prime minister of Norway, Kåre Willoch, criticized the attacks on Gaarder, stating that *"whenever Israel's politics are criticized, there are attempts to divert the attention from what this is really about."*

Another example, arousing worldwide protest, is the Pope's quotation, without qualification, of the views of a predecessor claiming that Muhammed's innovations were "evil and inhuman" (2006). As noted by Jonathan Freedland (2006):

The Pope seems unaware that, for hundreds of millions of people, religious affiliation is not a matter of intellectual adherence to a set of abstract principles, but a question of identity. Many Muslims, like many Jews or Hindus, may not fully subscribe to the religious doctrine concerned, and yet their Muslimness, or Jewishness or Hinduness, is a central part of their make-up. Theology plays a lesser part than history, culture, folklore, tradition and kinship. In this respect, religious groups begin to look more like ethnic ones. Which means that a slur on a religion is experienced much like a racist insult.

Anything that is "anti" that which has been "chosen" must necessarily be the epitome of "evil" (for religion), "ignorance" (for science), "incompetence" (for competitive business), "anarchy" (for politics and governance), "ugliness" (for aesthetics), "unknown" (national/ethnic culture), etc..

Unacceptable denial of formative existential experience: Of major significance in any dialogue situation of the kind described above is any implied challenge, by the critic, to a fundamental formative experience sustaining the worldview that is questioned. Examples of such experiences from the above may be found in the case of religion, science, ethnic identity and labour relations

In a dialogue situation great weight is naturally attached to such formative experiences. This may be articulated in the form of statements indicating that the there is absolutely no way in which the critic can understand how such considerations completely outweigh the validity of any criticism. Those of a younger generation are typically exposed to such argument from their elders, especially their parents, who attach a high degree of significance to the challenging conditions from which they have developed, from which the young now benefit. Typically the young attach relatively little weight to such arguments and view them with suspicion, whatever their respect for their parents.

Transformation of human rights into a defensive shield against feedback: The general approach to the above challenges has been articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately this document limits itself to promoting a high degree of tolerance and says almost nothing about the real-world situation of when, and how, to provide feedback to those who may be considered by others to be acting inappropriately – in terms of those very same principles. As in the religious case of the 10 Commandments about what (not) to do, there are potentially 10 Missing Commandments about what to do in the event of failure to respect them – beyond provision for "an eye for an eye" and a presumptuous anticipation of God's retributive justice.

Article 30 might be interpreted as pointing in a necessary direction, but only in a negative sense. It reads:

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group

or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Some efforts have been made by some groups to formulate corresponding declarations of human responsibilities. Responses to such initiatives have been well summarized by Ben Saul (2001) – with the conclusion that no further action is expected by the United Nations. But again such initiatives themselves fail to indicate when and how to provide feedback in appropriate form.

Such concerns regarding critical feedback may be implicit in proposals of the Hamelink Declaration (also termed the *Draft Declaration on the Right to Communicate* 2002 or the *People's Communication Charter*) but objections to it have been raised by the group Article 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression (Hamelink 2003).

The weakness of any such legal focus on isolated "rights" or "responsibilities" it that it fails to acknowledge the dynamics of the systemic communication processes through which feedback is provided to ensure a sustainable, self-correcting balance between freedoms and obligations. Critical feedback is a vital feature of this self-correcting dynamic.

It is within the context of the *Universal Declaration*, and various supporting treaties, that the question of how – given the principle of free speech – actions considered inappropriate may be criticized, in particular (as an example) when the person undertaking or promoting those actions is Jewish. In the case of charges of "anti-semitism", as condemned by the *Universal Declaration*, the challenge for all is to clarify when the charge is appropriately made. If the charge is extended as a protective device for any action undertaken by a Jewish person, its weight and value is progressively diminished. The consequence is illustrated by the well-known tale of the little boy who cried "wolf". In a dialogue situation it would be most useful to benefit from the insights of those sensitive to the charge to clarify what is "anti-semitic" and what is not – and the grey areas to which all should be sensitive

The difficulty from a systemic perspective is that the charge of "anti-semitism" is used by some on occasion to block critical feedback, possibly dynamically. Michael Neumann (2002) defines this dynamic as an identity shell-game:

"Antisemitism", properly and narrowly speaking, doesn't mean hatred of semites; that is to confuse etymology with definition. It means hatred of Jews. But here, immediately, we come up against the venerable shell-game of Jewish identity: "Look! We're a religion! No! a race! No! a cultural entity! Sorry – a religion!" When we tire of this game, we get suckered into another: "anti-Zionism is antisemitism!" quickly alternates with: "Don't confuse Zionism with Judaism! How dare you, you antisemite!"

The question in such a dynamic context is then how to formulate critical feedback – or is it the case that none is ever acceptable in the case of "the chosen" (of any variety)? Clarification of the scope for dialogue is especially problematic when the charge is coupled with reference to the Holocaust as a guarantee of unquestionable validity. It then becomes a potential dialogic weapon – the ultimate moral weapon – to which no response is possible without triggering the device. Further dialogue is impossible. Suicide bombings – perversely mirroring the perpetation of genocide – might then be

considered a response by individuals placed in this "dialogue" situation.

Dialogue with gated communities: As noted elsewhere (Judge 2004), increasingly social groups, typical of the diversity of civil society, might be usefully understood as forming into psycho-social analogues of the "gated communities" that are now emerging in affluent suburbs. Whilst in the latter case it is for security reasons to sustain a particular lifestyle, in the psycho-social case it would appear to be a question of sustaining a particular belief system or worldview. The process is being reinforced by the rapid commercialization of the web and the creation of exclusion zones – gated communities in cyberspace – accessible only to those who can afford access to them and therefore explored as viable business models.

A distinction was made there between:

- Conventional gated communities: residential; business incubators; nonprofit incubators; residential intentional communities
- Conceptually gated communities:

The generic challenge is then one of dialogue with such a conceptually gated community – a conceptually walled worldview – when that community is essentially defined dynamically by its "internal" dialogue processes and their distinction from excluded external processes. "Internal" may of course be understood to include modes of "externality" such as the divine, with conventional understandings of externality then reframed as mundanities to be transcended. Two distinct dialogue situations then exist:

- where the boundary is primarily created and sustained **by the walled community**, as in most of the situations above defined by "the chosen".
- where the boundary is primarily created and sustained **by the surrounding** environment, as with reservations, ghettos and certain institutions (penitentiaries, asylums, quarantine zones, etc), or the Israeli West Bank Barrier (to contain Pales-tinians)

Any dialogue across the boundary is severely conditioned by the coherence of the language on either side and the force with which it seeks to penetrate the barrier – or oppose such penetration – with or without the consent of the other. Those on one side may adopt a highly defensive attitude. Much may be dependent on the image that those on either side cultivate of the other – or project onto the other. Typically any such "wall" is an edifice of binary logic – separating an understanding of "appropriateness" from an understanding of "inappropriateness" or some form of "impurity".

Consequences of "inappropriate" dialogue

Justification for extremist action: With respect to any of the forms of "chosenness", it is instructive to note the controversial comment of Roger Garaudy who has argued that:

The idea of a chosen people is politically criminal, for it has always sanctified aggression, expansion and domination. The idea of a chosen people is theologically intolerable, for if some are "chosen" that means that others are "rejected".

Whilst most worldviews do not provide any guidelines for acceptable criticism of their perspective, a number provide rationalizations or guidelines for responses to crit-

ical discourse deemed inappropriate – notably when this is framed to include forms of apostasy, namely the renunciation of a worldview as the result of revolt or defection. Of particular importance is the religious and moral justification for war – known as just war. Other examples from the monotheistic "religions of the book" (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) have included:

- **Islam:** a well-defined legal pronouncement in Islam, provides for the issuance of a fatwa on a specialized issue
  A number of widely publicized incidents of violent response by Muslims to blasphemy (cf Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy 2005) are seen as an appropriate response to insult to the faith. Islam provides for the death penalty in the case of apostasy (ridda) (Ali; Pipes 1999). Scriptures can be narrowly interpreted to justify jihad in the form of religious warfare.
- **Judaism:** widespread response to critics such as Jostein Gaarder (see above) is based on scriptural provisions; These may be interpreted as justifications for death threats. Judaism provides for a death penalty in the case of apostasy (Deuter-onomy 13: 6-10)
- **Christianity:** some denominations may provide for shunning or excommunication in the case of heresy or apostasy. Military action, sanctioned by the Pope, has long been a characteristic of Christianity, most notably at the time of the crusades. Other forms of extreme action that have been justified (as a means of "saving souls") have been persecutions and inquisitions – or condoning such actions by others. A militaristic tradition persists.

Although other examples of the above are widely available (on the web), even quoting the scriptural basis for such justifications from sacred texts tends to be interpreted as a justification for retribution. As "religions of the book" it might be said that these religions are deserving of the rationalizations they have developed for their bloody treatment of each other – purportedly in the name of a common deity.

Intimidation: With the aid of such rationalizations a range of techniques – including various forms of harassment, threats and bullying – may be deployed against those who have evidenced various forms of inappropriate dialogue. Another range of variants is associated with politics, business and the security services.

Invaders of a particular religious persuasion have typically intimidated populations to convert. Christians and Muslims down the centuries have accused each other of religious conversion under intimidation – "by the sword". Considerable protest was engendered by the Pope through quoting a predecessor's view that Muhammed had commanded his followers "to spread by the sword the faith he preached" (September 12th, 2006).

It is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview to prove with any credibility that those questioning that perspective are not subject to constraining intimidation and harassment, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

Retraction and apology: Typically highly publicized critical statements evoke protests, and requests for retraction and apology. In the USA, for example, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has a policy of requesting retractions from those who have made anti-Jewish statements. The Jewish Defense League (JDL) is allegedly more militant in this respect.

Under conditions of accusation, denial and counter-accusation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which retractions and apologies are made in response to intimidation. Three days after publishing his criticism, Jostein Gaarder announced his intention to "withdraw from the debate." An earlier highly publicized retraction and apology was that of Mel Gibson.

Again, it is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview to prove with any credibility that those questioning that perspective are not subject to intimidation and harassment to ensure the retraction of any publicized statement and the dissemination of an associated apology.

Perhaps the most delayed apology of historical significance was that of Pope John Paul II in 1992 to Galileo Galilei condemned in 1633 and forced to abjure – for teaching that the Earth revolved around the Sun. It is claimed that the apology implied that Galileo did not suffer from the church as such, but from "churchmen and church bodies." Galileo has long constituted an exemplar of the conflict of authority and freedom of thought, particularly with science, in Western society.

Complicity with extremist action: Given the dominant psychosocial, political or economic role of the worldview subject to criticism, and given the rationale for extremist action, there is a widespread tendency towards tolerance of any action against a critic, even complicity in that action. This might be understood as a perversion of "tolerance".

Yet again, it is now unfortunately impossible for the adherents of any powerful worldview – by which the the rules of dialogue are defined – to prove with any credibility that those rules are not systematically abused, whether deliberately or inadvertently. Again, it is possible, but unwise, to name groups whom it is widely acknowledged engage actively in intimidation – and even "termination with prejudice" – and with whom many are knowingly or inadvertently complicit.

Adherents of a dominant worldview are unable to demonstrate credibly their non-complicity in extremist actions in their name. It is unfortunate that any approach to more radical forms of dialogue is inhibited by extremists from whom the honorable are both unable, and unwilling, to distinguish themselves.

Degrees of maleness or femaleness in the case of transexuality; degrees of genetic commonality across species; and the generic assumptions made in security profiling.

Conclusion

Challenge of language: A complicating factor with challenging prefixes such as "anti-", "non-" and "un-" is that it is too readily assumed that they are unambiguously translated into other languages and that the distinctions between their connotations is preserved. This is not the case as previously explored in relation to "non-governmental" which can carry connotations of "anti-governmental" in some languages (Judge 1974).

Dialogue about the implications of criticism, reflected in preoccupation with "anti-semitism", typically fails to introduce the cultural and connotative implications characteristic of differences between languages. What may be termed "anti-semitism" in one language may have far more – or far less – pejorative connotations in another

language or culture. As noted above, the prefix may not be unambiguously translatable and may carry quite different meanings. An interesting example is the distinctive use of terms in Australian English – like "bastard" – that could possibly be considered to be offensive in an inoffensive or even affectionate way. Such a term could be a mortal insult in other cultures.

Conflation: In clarifying more fruitful approaches to dialogue, it is appropriate to recognize that many of the seemingly isolated issues noted above tend to be conflated in ways that contribute to confusion. In such a context, the challenge for all is to ensure that a label such as "anti-semitism" is not used as a conceptual shield to block out any critical feedback whatsoever – possibly as a means by some to avoid dealing appropriately with issues of concern (such as the use of cluster bombs in southern Lebanon, for example). The concern with groups who define themselves as "chosen" is to ensure that they do not arbitrarily set the rules that preclude critical dialogue. They can however usefully contribute to the articulation of the guidelines for such feedback to avoid it being labelled unfruitfully as "anti-" .

The conflation arises in part because the isomorphic relation between forms of chosenness is complicated by an experiential dimension – perhaps best described by Kathleen Forsythe (1987) with the term isophor – isomorphisms experienced in the use of language. Isophors are distinct from metaphors in that they are experienced directly. With the isophor there is no separation between thought and action, between feeling and experience. The experience itself is evoked through the relation. She suggests that the "experience" of one thing in terms of another, the isophor, is the means by which one domain is mapped onto another and that consciousness of this meta-action, when we observed, lies at the heart of cognition. Without such consciousness, issues of identity and discrimination are confused.

In terms of critical dialogue, should lengthy papal denial of the Earth's movement around the Sun be compared with current denial of the Holocaust and of the Armenian massacre – since all have been the subject of legal proceedings? What then of false accusations or denials regarding weapons of mass destruction, treatment of detainees or climate change – which have not yet been the subject of such proceedings?

Recognizing more complex patterns: Every group of "chosen" people engenders its "Palestinians" and "Hizbollah" constrained in consequence to disruptive protest by unconventional and unexpected means – necessarily to be framed as unreasonable and unacceptable. The case of the Israelis, and by extension the Jews, is therefore not unique. The dysfunctional pattern is widespread and will continue to undermine the emergence of more fruitful patterns – until reframed by richer modes of understanding (Judge 2004).

Rather than consider the critical dialogue between worldviews as a simple binary interaction in which one party should necessarily "win", there is a case for exploring more complex patterns of interaction – even beyond "win-win" expectations. Whether or not this is realistic in practice, it could be considered more instructive than the use of cluster bombs and rockets by supposedly intelligent people. It could be hypothesized that the pattern of interaction is at least one degree more complex than the participants are as yet capable of naming and communicating – other than in terms of "cycles of violence". It may indeed be mappable as a complex mathematical object

incorporating temporal dimensions, distinctive perspectives, different capacities in response to complexity, different sensitivities, and different agendas.

Embodying the challenge of chosenness: The approach taken above highlights the extent to which Israel effectively embodies the challenges engendered by the patterns of all forms of "chosenness" – of which the particular conditions associated with the continuing focus on "anti-semitism" are but a single case. In this sense Israel is effectively a "scapegoat" for collective human failure to acknowledge the generic dysfunctionality associated with chosennesss.

It might even be said that the founding myths of Israel are in many ways analogous to those of any other sense of chosenness, whether religious, academic, political or otherwise. Each such group has its "promised land" and aspires to build its new "Jerusalem" – as in the case of the aspiration of physicists with respect to a "Theory of Everything".

Transformation of discriminatory argument: In this light, the controversial literature associated with Holocaust denial, notably that disseminated by the revisionist Institute for Historical Review, can be fruitfully explored in terms of its generic implications for any particular worldview – including that of "historical revisionism" itself. As an example, the well-argued but controversial study of Paul Grubach (1988) is explicitly addressed only to those who (mistakenly) harbour the following beliefs:

- Criticism of the Jewish people, Jewish culture and behavior, etc., is synonymous with immoral racism;
- At best this criticism is only to be tolerated due to [US] First Amendment protection of free speech, or, at worst, to be censured and censored.

Although not his intention at all, Grubach's study can far more fruitfully be read as addressed (more generally) to any who consider criticism of their own preferred worldview as inappropriate ("evil", "unreasonable", etc), in ways explored above. The same may be said of his conclusions, given here with appropriate substitutions to ensure that the wording is relevant to any preferred worldview:

1. X is an established social and political power in the [world]. In concurrence with the democratic principles of our society, it is morally and politically correct to offer criticism of X and its politico-cultural power.
2. The potency of the charge of anti-X – its ability to silence critics of X – derives not from the force of reason, but rather, from the force of an irrational, deeply ingrained, cultural convention specifically, the unthinking association of a sense of [evil] with criticism of the X.
3. The charge of anti-X is a... sword and shield of X... [As a sword] it is an ad hominem attack on any critic of X. By focusing on the critic's character, it induces people to reject his assertions on X behavior out of hand, without fair examination.... [As a shield] the charge serves as a psychological defense mechanism whereby X people can insulate themselves from criticism which is too painful to confront consciously. In a political and sociological sense, the charge of anti-X is a powerful weapon of the X cultural and political establishment, used in an undemocratic manner to silence its opponents and to enable that establishment to operate with impunity. Thus, the accusation of anti-X is an essential tool of X power and influence.

4. In our society almost every form of social and political power has its share of critics... If all forms of social and political influence have their tolerated, even respected critics, then let the critic of X influence speak openly. By the canons of our free society, even X should ultimately benefit from an open discussion of the power of X in politics, economics, and culture in [the world].

Dysfunctionality of singular worldviews: This reframing of "anti-X" may be usefully taken further through use of the argument of Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (1991) with respect to whether Judaism does in fact believe that chosenness endows Jews with special rights in the way racist ideologies endow those born into the "right race"? He cites the key verse in the Bible on the subject of chosenness as indicative of the precise opposite: *"You alone have I singled out of all the families of the earth. That is why I call you to account for all your iniquities"* (Amos 3:2).

In the light of the arguments above, regarding the dysfunctionality common to worldviews that see their perspective as uniquely "singled out" and reserved for the chosen, there is a case for recognizing the "iniquities" consequent upon adopting such a mindset – as evident in the perpetuation of "cycles of violence".

Possibilities: Other approaches to comprehending critical dialogue between worldviews could be usefully inspired, in response to other preferences, by:

- games that simulate such exchanges, sensitivities and misunderstandings in order to offer a sense of the "space" in which the "cycles of violence" emerge
- use of virtual personalities (based on artificial intelligence) to experiment with the dimensions of critical dialogue
- use of sets of fables from different cultures to provide a sense of the different patterns and conditions of critical and asymmetric dialogue (Judge 2006)

Such techniques may help to reframe critical dialogue so that more can be expressed through indirection and context rather than in binary confrontational modes.

Correspondence

Anthony Judge
Director, Communications and Research Union of International Associations
Rue Washington 40,
B- 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: (32 2)640 18 08; Fax: 646 05 25
Email: Anthony.judge@gmail.com

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