

Study Guide for *Embracing Israel/Palestine*

The following are some questions to help guide you and your reading group through each chapter of *Embracing Israel/Palestine*. Please do add your own questions!

Chapter One: People of the Land

- How do you feel about the role played by both Christians and people on the Left in generating hatred of Jews?
- What are some of the ways that Jews responded to European anti-Semitism? How might you have responded if you were in their place?
- One of the sections in this chapter is titled “Palestinian Reality: A Land With a People.” Why do you think Rabbi Lerner chose this title?

Chapter Two: Zionism Comes to the Land

- In what sense was Zionism an affirmation that “Jewish is beautiful”?
- Why does Rabbi Lerner argue that Jews coming to Palestine was not a colonial phenomenon? Do you agree with his argument? Why or why not?
- If you were an early Zionist in Palestine, how might you have felt? What might have been your fears, dreams, ambitions, and views of Palestinian Arabs?
- If you were a Palestinian Arab in Palestine during this same period, how might you have felt? What might have been your fears, dreams, and ambitions, and views of Zionists?
- What was the significance of the Balfour declaration for Jews? For Palestinians?

Chapter Three: The Emergence of a Jewish State

- What are some examples of terrorist acts committed by both sides? Do you think this violence could have been prevented?
- How did the Holocaust change the way Jews thought about Zionism? How did it change how they thought about violence and self-defense?
- Why did Palestinians reject the 1947 partition plan? How do you think they might have been convinced to embrace it?

Chapter Four: After the 1948 War—Palestinian Refugees & The Conflict Continues

- What is “Al-Nakba?” How does this single event continue to color the lives of Palestinians around the world?
- How did Arab leaders enable the spread of anti-Semitism?
- In what ways are Palestinian citizens of Israel—those who remained in Israel and did not become refugees—still discriminated against?

- What happened in 1967 and 1973, and how did this influence the emergence of an ultra-right-wing Likud government in 1977?

Chapter Five: The Oslo Accords and Beyond

- What do you think were some of the strengths of the Oslo Accords? What were some of the weaknesses?
- Why, in Rabbi Lerner's opinion, did the Oslo Accords fail? Why did the "settler right" win the hidden civil war in Israel?
- If you were in the place of Yitzak Rabin or Shimon Peres, what peace-promoting message would you send to Palestinians? To left-wing Israelis? To right-wing Israelis? To the international community? What sorts of rhetoric would you avoid?

Chapter Six: Camp David, the Second Intifada, Hamas, and the PA

- In what ways was Ehud Barak's "generous offer" not generous?
- Why do you think Ariel Sharon entered the Temple Mount? What is Rabbi Lerner's view of this incident?
- What does Rabbi Lerner identify as the "two flaws" in the Road Map for Peace? How, in his view, did these flaws doom negotiations?
- How might Palestinians view the withdrawal from Gaza? How might Israelis view the withdrawal?
- In what ways do you think the Goldstone report was fair or unfair to Israel? In what ways was it fair or unfair to Hamas?
- How do you feel when you view the map of West Bank settlements on page 235?
- Do you know anyone who's afraid to speak out against Israel for fear of being labeled as anti-Semitic? What might you say to such a person?

Chapter Seven: Healing the Traumas of Both Peoples

- What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and how does it affect Israeli consciousness?
- What is "splitting"? Do you or anyone you know use this defense mechanism to protect yourself?
- Rabbi Lerner argues that the Israeli fear of being a freier is connected to widespread PTSD in Israeli society. How so?
- Do you agree with Rabbi Lerner that imposed solutions to the conflict will backfire? Why or why not?

Chapter Eight: Terms of a Sustainable & Just Peace Agreement

- What do you think of Tikkun’s proposal for two states at peace?
- What do you think of the “two states with overlapping electorate” solution?
- What do you think of the “one-state solution”?
- What do you think of the “no-state solution”?

Chapter Nine: Strategies For Achieving Peace

- Which of the peace-promoting strategies advocated by Rabbi Lerner most resonates with you? Why?
- Rabbi Lerner supports boycotts of companies that produce Israeli settlement products or products that directly support the Occupation of Palestine. However, he does not support a general boycott of Israel. What might his critics on the Right say about his position? How about his critics on the Left?
- Some might argue that a Global Marshall Plan is too idealistic and unrealistic. Do you agree? If not, how might you respond to this argument?

Chapter Ten: The Spiritual Path Forward: Embracing The Left Hand Of God

- What is the Left Hand of God? What is the Right Hand of God?
- How did Settler Judaism grow to dominate Zionism?
- How might an Emancipatory Judaism, Christianity, and Islam help promote peace?
- Do you feel inspired to join this movement? Why or why not?