

that the problems lie in the beginning; they are historical and structural and - in addition - they depend only partly on Israel.

There are two debates underway in Israel today. The first: should security be obtained by making peace, or should peace be obtained through security. In my opinion, this is an artificial debate, as if peace and security could be divided from one another.

The second debate concerns how to ensure both a Jewish and democratic future and character for the state of Israel. The main response - though hotly contested by a minority - is apparently that this goal can only be reached with two states, Israel and Palestine, next to each other, living in peace and cooperation. This is a very concrete debate. I believe that the present new government in Israel intends to work in this direction.

As for me, I would humbly like to add another idea, one involving culture.

We might consider drawing up a preliminary initial agreement to the peace treaty: a commitment by the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Palestinian equivalent to make the study of their respective languages, Arabic for the Israelis and Hebrew for the Palestinians, compulsory. It doesn't make sense that two peoples, who speak very similar languages, should have to speak to each other in English, a language that neither of them know very well.

That could open a door, and once the door is open, the path is clear to the study of the history, thought and literature of the two cultures.

But that is not enough. There is much more to culture. We know that when in *Al-Andalus*, Arab culture flourished in every field of knowledge, Jews of the Iberian Peninsula learned from their "cousins" to read Aristotle, to write poetry according to certain metrics and rhyme, and to study mathematics and astronomy and even medicine.

Times have changed. Science and philosophy, not to mention medicine, are no longer the same. Nor are the academies the same. Today, Israel can offer the Palestinians the scientific, technological culture that they must otherwise import from abroad with great difficulty. Israel can give back to Arabs what Jews received in Spain, which later expelled them both in the same year. Both Arabs and Jews suffered, but Spain suffered too, a great deal indeed.

Allow me to conclude by quoting some particularly significant lines by the 19th century Jewish poet, Heinrich Heine, where he evoked the heart-rending departure from Granada of the last "King of the Moors":

"Not the triumphant,
crowned with victory,
the favourite of the blind goddess,
but also the bloodied son of misfortune
even the heroic fighter
subjected to an adverse destiny
will live forever
in the memory of men".