There are only two areas of potential conflict. One is the prioritising of our charitable giving. Fortunately a recent survey of the Jewish Policy Research Institute has shown that most British Jews give generously to general as well as Jewish causes (*Patterns of Charitable Giving among British Jews* by Jacqueline Goldberg and Barry A. Kosmin, July 1998).

The other is the area of British foreign policy, especially in relation to the State of Israel. Not that the loyalty we owe to Israel is on a par with the loyalty we owe to Britain. For we are not Israeli citizens and do not have citizenship obligations towards it. Nevertheless, the State of Israel was created by and for the Jewish people, and we all feel a special bond with it which our non-Jewish fellow citizens understand perfectly well, and which we feel particularly strongly on this day marking the 51st anniversary of Israel's Independence.

What then if Britain pursues a foreign policy at variance with Israel's? Then, if we believe that it is morally wrong, we have every right as democratic citizens to argue against it. However, we should judge Israel's policy by the same criterion. For the attitude of 'my country right or wrong is just as inadmissible in the one case as in the other. Both Britain and Israel, like every other country, stand under God's judgment, and therefore as Jews we must do the best we can, difficult though it is because of our emotional involvement, to judge their policies by universal-ethical principles.

A Duty to be Critical

Therefore we have a right and a duty to criticise British policy, whether towards Israel or towards any country, if we have good reason to believe that it is morally wrong, and in the extreme case of military call-up for a an unjust war we have a right as a last resort, to claim conscientious objection.

But by the same token we have a right and a duty to criticise Israeli policy when criticism is called for. For instance, Israel is the only country in the world which does not grant full religious freedom to Progressive and Conservative Jews. This is a flagrant violation of its own splendid Proclamation of Independence, and of every law of natural justice, which fair-minded people should never cease to denounce until it is rectified.

Even more serious, of course, is the matter of Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. The 'Greater Israel' philosophy, which denies their right to exercise self-determination even in those areas of Palestine in which they are still the great majority, is morally indefensible. It was that philosophy which inspired Israel's unprovoked invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the chorus of support which that operation received from the Anglo-Jewish establishment at the time is the best — or, rather, the worst — illustration I can recall of the iniquitousness of the attitude of 'my country right or wrong' as applied by British Jews to Israel, and therefore of the way in which our loyalties can indeed 'lie' in the sense of deceiving us.

To say these things is not anti-Israel: it is pro-Israel because the future well-being, and even the long-term survival, of Israel depends on bringing the stalled peace process to a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible.

Conclusion

And so we come back full circle to where we began. As British Jews, we owe loyalties of various kinds to many people, many traditions, many principles, many institutions, many communities, in a complex network of concentric and overlapping relationships, and to prioritise them rightly is no easy task. But at the apex of the network stands God, who demands truth and justice, compassion and peace. If we recognise that, then, though there will still be difficult decisions to make, the chaos of our conflicting loyalties will become an orderly whole, much as a random heap of iron filings, when a magnet is applied to it, assumes a well-defined pattern. 'I have set the Eternal One always before me' (Ps. 16:8). If we make that verse our guiding principle, all our other loyalties will fall into place. •

CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM
(continued from page 6)

ploring Judaism's wisdom about life, who can make an updated Classical Reform Judaism successful. With our modern technology, such views may be' transmitted through the Internet to generate interest in such an endeavor at a heretofore unimaginable fast pace. It is people with a vision of this kind for the future who should be defended upon, not those who have turned their backs upon the vision of the original Reformers of Judaism and have embraced, instead, a fundamentalist and ethno-centric religion, the very religion the Reformers meant to move beyond. •

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