

It is said that time heals all wounds, but do some scars run too deep? Our nation is experiencing an incredibly divisive time, but this is not unique. Our nation was built on trading power as one party steps up and the other gracefully steps down. Our nation has survived a Civil War, when the issue of slavery threatened to divide the country into two, and many World Wars. But, what can be done now to close this gap? This gap that seems to stem from a growing resentment and anger of those who are resisting the change of our ever increasingly fast-paced society. Race, religion, immigrants, are all issues that need to be addressed in order to reach across boundaries to reconnect ourselves. America has always been a melting pot of cultures, but now the fire is brewing hotter than ever. What can be done to reunite the two sides like we have done in the past so we are united as a nation? Perhaps we may need to take a lesson from Israel and Palestine. Their tumultuous histories, even now, overshadow the possibilities of peace today; however, their ability to reach out and connect with others embodies the belief that things can become better. By working together, understanding the other side with reason, and critical thinking about how to address the heart of the problem, social groups are uniting the two sides. Like Pandora's Box, it is from the darkest places that hope can blossom.

Within Palestine, the leadership is crumbling. There is no promising authority figure to lead either Fatah, the P.A., or the P.L.O., and the

crumbling administrative situation has been described as a “slow but sure decay of the Palestinian political scene.” In addition, former UN Chief Kofi Annan has bluntly dismissed chances of reconciliation as long as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas remain in power (AP and TOI staff, 2017). However, this lack of leadership also creates a vacuum for the next generation to step in, one with newer ideas, broader minds, and the experience of generations of conflict.

Change can be seen in hospitals such as the Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital, where outside the walls suspicion and distrust run rampant but within there is understanding and peace. Change can be seen in schools such as the Max Rayne Hand in Hand where young Jewish, Christian, and Muslim students mingle, laughing and learning together. Our Generation Speaks (OGS), a fellowship program and incubator for emerging Israeli and Palestinian leaders aims to close the gaps between the two populations through collaborative work as they learn to question, think, and reason together. Change can be seen in youth groups such as Heartbeat, where young Israeli and Palestinian musicians promote equality, empathy, and harmony through music. With support from major newspapers and government entities, such as the U.S. State Congress itself, Heartbeat is spreading its message of peace. Fostering a sense of community and trust within the people, and then utilizing the government as the powerful force it is seems like a lofty goal, but with the power of the internet, the ability of

the youth to express their voices, communicate across borders, and create a dialogue of discussion is unprecedented.

Humanistic values of science, reason, and critical thinking allow for two sides to understand each other, regardless of race or religion. This type of thinking allows places with a common mission (hospitals, schools, etc.) and social groups to create ways for the two disagreeing sides to work together, and this is crucial to even the possibility of cooperation. So many problems arise when we choose to look at each other based on our own perceptions and emotions, which can lead to further conflict. Only by looking through a scope of reason can collaboration take place and solutions be found. In the case of Israel and Palestine, history cannot simply erase itself. However, while the scars between Israel and Palestine are unlikely to fade, hope should not be lost. While prospects are admittedly bleak, perhaps it is just a time of calm, a time to gather strength; with each generation comes a chance to foster trust anew, build faith, and spread understanding. We must learn from their example and apply it to our own nation. Social groups create social harmony by making the two sides cooperate with one another so that they can see the two opposing views. And to understand means looking at an issue or idea with reason. Social groups are at the heart of humanistic thinking because they understand that people will unite if they understand that they have a common goal that can be solved with collaboration. I believe that this sort of humanistic thinking championed

by schools, hospitals, and social groups, of uniting people through a common message, idea, or goal and having them collaborate in order to find a solution, is essential to uniting our nation. By showing the two that they are so similar in their pains and desires, by showing them that they need each other, by showing them that we are all human, we will come to better understand one another and hopefully diffuse the tensions that run so tenuously in our nation.