

## The Punishment of Gaza by Gideon Levy.

Verso 2010.

Gideon Levy is a long-standing observer of the Israel-Palestine conflict, a specialist in the recent history of the Gaza Strip, an outspoken journalist for the Israeli newspaper Ha-aretz and an Israeli patriot driven to distraction and beyond by the actions of successive Israeli governments and the military in the Occupied Territories.

The Punishment of Gaza is a collection of the best of his articles about that benighted plot of land on the Mediterranean Sea, written between 2005 and 2009, and it is a collection that no one who can call themselves, according to Levy's own definition, a 'true friend' of the State of Israel, will be able to read without a combination of pain, shame and outrage.

Levy tackles head on all the arguments that are advanced for the Israeli treatment of Gaza by government spokespeople and others and rebuts or refutes them convincingly; he argues passionately for a more constructive engagement with the Middle East question by the Obama White House than has yet been evinced, and he bleeds over the brutalisation of Israeli youth as he bleeds over the Palestinians with whom they have engaged during their compulsory military service.

The Punishment of Gaza is not a book for the faint-hearted, but every Jew who truly cares for Israel, in a way uncluttered by shibboleths from the past, should read it and engage with a point of view which they may not like, but which rings all too hideously true.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh