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Zionism, Nationalism, and Populism:
Reflections from a Previously Unpublished Letter by Solomon Schechter
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Israel at Seventy-Five: A Fifty-Year Retrospective
David Golinkin

MASORTI

The New Journal of Conservative Judaism

בארץ-ישראל קם העם היהודי, בה עוצבה דמות
לאומיים וכלל-אנושיים והוריש לעולם כולו את ספר הספרים הנצחי. לאחר שהוגלו
תקוה לשוב לארצו ולחדש בתוכה את חירותו המדינית. מתוך קשר היסטורי ומסורת
שבו לארצם בהמונים, וחלוצים, מעפילים ומגינים הפריחו נשמות, החיו שפתם ה
שלום ומגן על עצמו, מביא ברכת הקידמה לכל תושבי הארץ ונושא נפשו לעצמאו
המדינה היהודית תיאודור הרצל והכריז על זכות העם היהודי לתקומה לאומית בארצ
הלאומים, אשר נתן במיוחד תוקף בין-לאומי לקשר ההיסטורי שבין העם היהודי לב
לה על עם ישראל בזמן האחרון, בה הוכרעו לטבח מיליונים יהודים באירופה, הוכיח

MASORTI
The New Journal of Conservative Judaism

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**of blessed memory*

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Note from the Editor

Joseph H. Prouser

With this issue of *Masorti: The New Journal of Conservative Judaism*, we mark a momentous milestone in the history of the Jewish people: seventy-five years of Israeli independence and national sovereignty. This is a time lovingly and thoughtfully to renew our personal ties to the Jewish State and to marvel at the miraculous quality of its 1948 founding.

It is a fact beyond dispute that Israel faces numerous, profound, and concerning challenges, as well as threats both external and internal. This year's milestone beckons us with equal force to confront those challenges with moral integrity and clarity of purpose. In so doing, let us not forget the tenuous condition of the United States when it was seventy-five years old. In 1851, Millard Fillmore (among the most ineffectual of presidents) was in office; the vice presidency remained vacant. Construction of the United States Capitol had only just begun. The California gold rush continued. Sojourner Truth delivered her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech. America was less than a decade from the Civil War.

Although America has come a long way, challenges and critical flaws certainly remain. We pray with confidence that Israel, too, has a bright future. That future, as well as present challenges and a proud history, are examined in this volume. We are indebted to the contributing authors for this collection of personal reflections and retrospectives, scholarly inquiries, and shared visions. A special note of thanks to poet Danny Siegel for his original contribution introducing these essays.

A new feature of this journal, "Yashan Noshan," in which we reprint articles of historic significance, is introduced in this issue. Robert Gordis's 1948 essay "The Biblical Basis of Democracy" explores the transformative hopes the Jewish people vested in the newborn State of Israel at its founding: "It may well prove an indispensable prelude to the triumph of the ideals of democracy the world over." Seventy-five years later, we continue to pray that the Jewish State will come to realize its fullest potential.

As the current issue of this journal was being prepared for publication, we observed the fortieth *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Saul Lieberman, of blessed memory, an all but unrivaled scholar. At the time of his passing, Rabbi Lieberman was Professor of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary, rector of the

Rabbinical School, and rabbi of the Seminary Synagogue. In that synagogue, it was my privilege as a young undergraduate to serve as *shamash*, learning immeasurably and gratefully (and with considerable trepidation) at Rabbi Lieberman's knee. Rabbi Lieberman famously divided his time between New York and Jerusalem. He received the Bialik Prize for Jewish Thought, the Israel Prize for Jewish Studies, and the Harvey Prize of the Haifa Technion. He died peacefully on a flight travelling to the Jewish State, a poignant further reminder of his impact on the Jewish communities of both nations, and of the reverent esteem in which he was held on both sides of the Atlantic. Even as we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, may Rabbi Lieberman's scholarship, piety, and Zionism continue to illumine our path. *Yehi zikhro varukh*.

We also note with sorrow the passing during this period of Rabbi Harold Kushner, celebrated author of, inter alia, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, and editor of this journal from 1980 to 1984. He demonstrated through his distinguished rabbinic career the wisdom of his own counsel: "I think of life as a good book. The further you get into it, the more it begins to make sense." Rabbi Kushner spent much of his career helping and encouraging fellow Jews and others to make sense of our tradition, its theological challenges, and the vicissitudes of the human condition. This journal has much the same goal.

As did the founders of the Jewish State, let us place our trust in the Rock of Israel as we set about our sacred task.

Joseph H. Prouser is rabbi of Temple Emanuel of North Jersey in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, and editor of this journal.

Happy Seventy-Fifth, Israel! - יוֹם הוּלֶדֶת שָׂמֵחַ!

Danny Siegel

It must be because of a course
I took with Heschel sometime in the 60's:

Some twenty or so years ago
I was strolling in Jerusalem's Emek Refaim
when two young girls — maybe 10 or 11 —
walked by just (*stam*) chattering.
I don't remember if they were talking about new shoes
or a movie they had just seen,
but they were only (*stam*) chattering in *Hebrew*.

But I was (radically) amazed.
It was only a few decades before that
the (delusional) Eliezer Ben Yehuda
thought that it was as possible
as any historical Jewish miracle.
(And no less when Herzl [another madman?] wrote
"Today I founded the Jewish state"
fifty years before Independence Day #1).
And no less than the prophet Zechariah:

כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ צְבָ-אוֹת עֹד יֵשְׁבוּ זְקֵנִים וּזְקֵנוֹת בִּרְחֹבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָיִם
וְאִישׁ מִשְׁעַנְתּוֹ בְּיָדוֹ מֵרֹב יָמִים: וּרְחֹבוֹת הָעִיר יִמָּלְאוּ יְלָדִים וְיַלְדוֹת מְשַׂחֲקִים בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ:

Thus said the Lord of Hosts:
There shall yet be old men and women in the squares of Jerusalem,
Each with staff in hand because of their great age.
And the squares of the city shall be crowded
with boys and girls playing in the squares.

All this may be the meaning of the Talmudic sages
that two Jerusalems simultaneously exist:
a יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל מַעְלָה/a *Yerushalayim shel Ma'alah* —
a Jerusalem in Heaven
and a יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל מַטָּה/a *Yerushalayim shel Mata* —
a Jerusalem down here

(so soon after the destruction of the Temple
maybe they couldn't conceive of
a יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁל מַעֲלָה/a *Yisrael shel Ma'alah* — a Heavenly Israel
and a יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁל מַטָּה/a *Yisrael shel Mata* — the Israel as we know it,
with all its past and present challenges).
But I believe that is how we should live
a life of double vision
when we think of and speak of Israel,
and when we walk in the streets
past the ice cream stands
with their שׁוֹקוֹלָד וַנִיל תּוּת/*shokolad vanil tut* flavors,
and when we lie down and when we rise up.

How many times have we read or heard
"Titus (the Crusaders, the Blood Libelers, Chmelnitzky, Hitler)
liegen tief in dr'erd — lie deep in their graves,
and we are here!"

So, Happy Birthday, Israel! — יוֹם הוּלֶדֶת שָׂמֵחַ!
מַזָּל טוֹב/Mazal Tov!
כֹּל הַכָּבוֹד/Kol HaKavod!

Danny Siegel, an alumnus of the JTS-Columbia undergraduate Joint Program, is a poet and lecturer on philanthropy, Tzedakah, and Jewish values. He founded the Ziv Tzedakah Fund, and is the author of 29 books.

The Rabbinical Assembly of Israel: Establishing, Persevering and Celebrating

Amy Levin

This essay is a short review of the history, challenges, and achievements of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel since its inception in the early 1980s.

Establishing

The intentional establishment of a Masorti rabbinate in Israel began in earnest in the 1980s. Before that time, individual colleagues were engaged with a few congregations (particularly in Jerusalem and Haifa), and a few more colleagues served on the faculties of Israeli universities. As the State of Israel has recently marked seventy-five years of independence, it is possible to count about 175 colleagues as members of the Rabbinical Assembly living in Israel. Many of these colleagues were ordained abroad and have made aliyah—over eighty from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and smaller numbers from other rabbinical seminaries in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

The Schechter Seminary of Rabbinic Studies was established in 1984, an initiative of then–JTS Chancellor Gerson D. Cohen, along with partners from the Masorti movement who were eager to provide Israel-trained rabbinic leadership to the growing list of Masorti congregations in the country. The first Schechter ordination was held in 1988 at the amphitheater at Hebrew University. Four colleagues were ordained in that first class: Ehud Bandel, Shlomo Fuchs, David Levine, and Shmuel Shaish, *z"l*. The first class would prove prophetic in its makeup: two Israeli-born (Bandel and Fuchs), an *'oleh* from Latin America (Shaish), and one child of the American movement (Levine is the son of Rabbi Professor Lee [Israel] Levine, one of those legacy colleagues born and ordained in the United States who made aliyah and taught at Hebrew University). To date, The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary has ordained 110 colleagues.

The absence of women in this first class (and the next eight) is particularly striking, as the Schechter rabbinical program opened after JTS began to admit women to their rabbinical school (1983) and after the international

Rabbinical Assembly admitted women into its ranks. The contention was that "Israel was not yet ready for female rabbis." The first female Rabbinical Assembly members in Israel were consequently those who were ordained abroad. Of particular note is Israeli-born Rabbi Gilah Dror, who served two Israeli congregations over the course of the Israel chapter of her career (in Gilo, Jerusalem and in Beersheva) and was the first woman to hold the office of President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel. She ultimately created another precedent as the first woman to hold the office of president of the international Rabbinical Assembly.

In response to the dissonance of women studying in the JTS rabbinical school and included as members of the Rabbinical Assembly, I was asked to create a committee called "The Status of Women in the Masorti Movement." We interviewed Schechter faculty and administration, as well as the leadership of No'ar Masorti (NOAM) the Israeli equivalent of the Conservative youth movement in the United States, United Synagogue Youth (USY). We also surveyed the leadership of the Masorti congregations in the country and mapped out the practice and policies of each community: which had mixed seating, which had women reading Haftarah and/or Torah (with or without receiving the aliyah) and/or leading services, and which congregations would accept female rabbinic candidates to serve their communities. The data gleaned from this survey helped to advance the ordination of women at Schechter. Our final committee report was submitted in early 1990, and Schechter subsequently embarked on its own decision-making process, which included seminar days, internal discussions, and *divrei Torah* by students at weekday minyanim. A number of women were already studying at Schechter in anticipation of the decision to accept women into the rabbinical school; several were in the M.A. program, although one individual was officially registered as a JTS rabbinical student with the intention of transferring to the Israeli program when allowed.

The first female colleague to be ordained at Schechter and welcomed into the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel as an Israel-ordained woman was French-born Rabbi Valerie Stessin, who would, along with JTS-ordained Rabbi Miriam Knight Berkowitz, pioneer the field of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling in Israel. I was the second woman to receive Schechter ordination, and Rabbi Tami Kohlberg was the third. We each went on to serve congregations, in Jerusalem and Raʿanana, respectively.

Members of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel have established or served in *kehillot* that had begun as self-generated *ḥavurot*, were central to the

formation and establishment of the network of TALI schools around the country, teach in high schools and universities, and are licensed tour guides, social workers, consultants, spiritual directors, and entrepreneurs.[1]

It is worth noting the very different dynamics of Conservative Judaism in the United States and Masorti Judaism in Israel. In the United States, JTS in New York served as the central, generative institution that spawned the subsequent branches of what would become the Conservative movement. The Rabbinical Assembly began as the alumni association of JTS, while the Ramah Camps, USY, the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, the National Federation of Men's Clubs, and the Cantors Assembly were all also generated at JTS and for many years had their offices there.

In Israel, the dynamic has been quite different: the Masorti movement and the Israel region of the Rabbinical Assembly were the first bodies established in Israel (almost entirely by *'olim* from North America), and it was the Masorti movement that generated the Israeli iterations of JTS, USY and Ramah—namely, the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, NOAM, and the Ramah NOAM summer camp. To date, there are over fifty Masorti congregations around the country as well as a number of minyanim that meet just for the Days of Awe. Of the fifty established communities, fewer than twenty enjoy rabbinic leadership, and about half of those positions are full time. The absence of rabbinic leadership in over half of the Masorti communities in Israel is yet another reflection of the difference in structure between Israel and the communities abroad. Here in Israel, Israelis regard religious services as covered by their taxes; this includes synagogues, rabbinic leadership, burial in public cemeteries, and weddings. As a consequence, the dynamic of community members joining forces to establish a congregation, build a building, hire a rabbi and professional staff is generally not known here. The Masorti movement has established a Congregations Department through which they provide a modest subsidy for rabbinic salaries in order to help provide as many congregations as possible with rabbinic leadership.

Persevering

The experience of serving as a Masorti rabbi in Israel in our current political and social setting is challenging. It is fair to say that every colleague serving in Israel from time to time feels that they are walking around with gifts that

[1] TALI is a Hebrew acronym for "Enhanced Jewish Studies."

many Israelis would consider a blessing if they only knew such things existed—namely, the gift of a pastoral rabbi chosen by one's own community, and the gift of egalitarian halakhic Judaism that works to create healthy, mutually supportive communities created and sustained by their members.

This does not sound like a very innovative idea for many Conservative/Masorti Jews around the world, but the dynamics of Jewish communal life are very different in Israel. Billions of shekels of government funds are invested in building and maintaining Orthodox synagogues, hiring Orthodox (and ultra-Orthodox) rabbis, and maintaining Orthodox government-funded cemeteries and burial societies. Billions of shekels of government funds also support ultra-Orthodox yeshivot and pay monthly stipends to the thousands of full-time fully mature students so that there will be food on the table for their wives and children. These funds come from the taxes paid by Israelis of every background: Muslim, Christian, and Druze, as well as secular, Reform, and Masorti Jews. The Rabbinical Assembly of Israel receives no public funding at all. Our challenge is to amplify our voice with the means at our disposal, which is largely made up of the perseverance, gifts, and determination of our colleagues.

What happens when a regular Israeli experiences a Masorti rabbi in action? When I served a congregation just outside of Jerusalem, I was sitting with a family as they planned their son's bar mitzvah. We were, as one does, making a list of who would receive each aliyah. The father agreed to the seventh aliyah so that he could stand with his son for the *maftir 'aliyah*. I said to the boy's mother: "you know, you can have the aliyah together, we are egalitarian!" At which point she replied: "No, I just can't. You don't understand… I grew up on a Hashomer Hatsa'ir kibbutz [Hashomer Hatsa'ir is not just a secular Zionist movement but an antireligious secular Zionist movement!]. My brothers are coming from the kibbutz…it's amazing that they are coming at all. But I can't imagine what they would say if I were to say a *berakhah* over the Torah scroll!" So she didn't. We had the bar mitzvah, and the boy was great. At the kiddush, the three (over six-foot tall) brothers came up to me and said, "This is the Judaism we need in Israel!"

A year or so later, I was working with a family to plan their daughter's bat mitzvah in a congregation in the Galilee. I offered the mom an aliyah, and she replied: "I couldn't possibly! My Orthodox grandmother is coming and it's amazing that she's coming at all! But I have no idea how she would feel if she saw me taking an aliyah." So she didn't… The bat mitzvah girl was great, and, at the kiddush, the Orthodox *savta* came up to me and said,

with tears in her eyes: "all my life I have sat behind the *meḥitsah*…and this is the first time in my life I have felt a part of the tefillah."

Every one of my colleagues here in Israel has stories like this to share.

With miniscule resources compared to our orthodox and ultra-Orthodox counterparts, the members of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel persevere, create, reach out, and inspire regular Israelis all over the country with their accomplishments. Imagine what we could do were we to receive a quarter of what the government spends on orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis and institutions.

Celebrating

What do we celebrate?

We celebrate the vibrant communities our colleagues serve today from the Negev to the north of Israel.

We celebrate the moments when our rabbis and our communities are acknowledged on a national scale. Rabbi Chaya Rowen Becker, the incoming dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, has spoken at Beit Hanasi, at the official president's eesidence, the first female rabbi to do so. Our colleague Rabbi Gustavo Greenzweig has welcomed President Isaac and Michal Herzog to the sukkah of his congregation, the Masorti Kehillah Ra'anana Amitai!

We celebrate our colleagues' capacity to reach out, to influence, to draw near with the meager resources at their disposal.

And we aspire to celebrate so much more! The colleagues of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel around the country are eager to share the gifts of Masorti halakhah and Torah, as well as pastoral, community-focused rabbis.

Rabbi Amy Levin currently serves as President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel. Rabbi Levin is the second woman ordained by the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, serves on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, the Va'ad Hakavod (RA Ethics Committee) and offers congregational consulting and one-on-one strategic advising to colleagues through her platform, "Tzibur Strategies: For Thriving Sacred Communities and Their Leaders."

אוצר והוא הגשר

רקפת גינסברג

אגדה יהודית מוכרת מספרת על אדם שנסע רחוק בעקבות אוצר, רק כדי לגלות לבסוף שהוא נמצא מתחת לגשר בעירו. לדאבון ליבנו, בישראל של היום בה הגשרים מתפוררים וקורסים בזה אחר זה, האוצר החברתי והחוסן האזרחי נקברים ברעש מחאות ומאבק חברתי עיקש שנדמה שהולך ומתקרב לנקודת רתיחה מפחידה במיוחד.

75 שנים למדינת ישראל וזו היא עת של חרדה אמתית לגורלנו המשותף. אלו ימים בהם חוסר האמון העמוק בין חלקי החברה הישראלית הולך ומתפרץ אל מול עינינו המשתאות וליבנו דואב. המתח הזה מתפרץ במלוא עוזו על רקע ניסיונות להשפיע על אופייה הדמוקרטי והיהודי של מדינת ישראל. הקרע המתהווה בין יהדות לדמוקרטיה ובין אלו המרוממים את זה אל מול זה מחייב את כולנו להישאר ערניים ולשמור באדיקות על האיזון הקדוש ביניהם, לבל יבטל ערך מכונן אחד את משנהו, לבל נתפצל לשתי מדינות נפרדות.

עמדת התנועה המסורתית בישראל היא שהיהדות והדמוקרטיה שוות ערך במרחב שלנו. מדינת ישראל היא יהודית ודמוקרטית בדיבור אחד וזהו יסוד חיוני לקיומה כמדינה אחת ומאוחדת ללא כל סייג. דווקא כעת, כשהמאבק הופך להיות יותר ויותר רגשי וקשה, כשרעיונות של הפרדות ופיצול נוכחים יותר ויותר בשיח הציבורי ופוליטיקאים שמתבצרים בעמדותיהם גוררים אותנו למלחמות זה בזה, דווקא עכשיו, אנחנו חייבים להיות נחושים לשמור על שני הערכים הללו באדיקות, כיוון שבזכותם ועל בסיסם קמה מדינת היהודים והחברה הישראלית.

כתנועה המאמינה בפלורליזם – כפי שאנו חושבים שיש יותר מדרך אחת להיות יהודי, יש יותר מדרך אחת לשמור על הדמוקרטיה. הפלורליזם שלנו לא יכול להסתיים רק במקומות שמשרתים ונוחים לנו או תואמים את עמדתנו. כתנועה המחזיקה בתפיסה מורכבת אנחנו מאמינים שבמורכבות אין תשובה אחת, יש כמה תשובות ובכולן יש אמת. במורכבות יש צורך להקשיב לאמיתות השונות ולהכיל אותן. במגוון יש חשיבות לאינטראקציה זה סוד כוחנו, כאן טמון קסם החוסן והיצירתיות של החברה הישראלית. ויתור עליו הוא ויתור על המהות שלנו.

שנים של מאבקים מול אויבים חיצוניים למדו אותנו מלחמת הישרדות והתגוננות, אבל לא לימדו אותנו הקשבה ונדיבות הדדית. אסור לנו לשכוח שאנו פועלים מול רעיונות, הצעות ומעשים – ולא מול אנשים, מול אחים. לא ניגרר להשתמש ולאיים בצמד המילים האיום והנורא, מלחמת אחים.

יש מי שרואים בניצחון המדינה היהודית את סופה של הדמוקרטיה ושל מדינת ישראל, יש מי שרואים בניצחון הדמוקרטיה בדיוק את אותה תמונת ראי, ואנחנו רואים בעצם המאבק האלים ביננו את סופה של המדינה. אם נמשיך בדרך שבה נאיים ונפחיד מהאחר לא תתאפשר כאן מדינה יהודית, דמוקרטית ופלורליסטית. ללא אמון הדדי ושותפות, לא יתאפשרו כאן חיים משותפים.

לצד המחאה הלגיטימית המתקיימת בישראל ומתוך הבנה שיש חילוקי דעות מהותיים גם בקרב חברינו, מודל הסכמה משותפת הוא חיוני. ההבנה שאין פתרון אחד ואין פתרון אידאלי אלא מהלך ארוך של שיח משותף הוא המתחייב כאן. מודל של פתרון מתוך פשרה. יצירת גשר ורצף שמחזיק את שני הערכים הוא חיוני. ההבנה שכולנו מחויבים לחיים המשותפים המבוססים

על ההכרה שאין לאף אחד מאיתנו בעלות על האמת ואסור לנו לראות את המציאות במושגים של ניצחון אלא אחריות וערבות הדדית. הפתרון יהיה בהכרח פשרה שלא תרצה את כולם, אבל אם הוא יכיל את הערכים הללו באופן מאוזן – הוא ישמור עלינו. אנחנו, כתנועה המסורתית בישראל, ניאבק על מנת שלכל אחת ואחד יהיה מקום שווה במדינה, כי אין לנו ארץ אחרת וגם לא חברה אחרת.

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Zionism, Nationalism, and Populism

Reflections from a Previously Unpublished Letter by Solomon Schechter

David J. Fine

In late 1915, shortly before he died, Solomon Schechter composed a letter to the journal *The American Hebrew* in which he addressed issues of Zionism, nationalism and populism. The version of the letter printed below is the text of Schechter's handwritten draft. While there also exists a tighter and more restrained typed version in the archival collection of the Schechter Papers preserved at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), I opted to share the earlier "first draft" because it represents an uncensored Schechter.[1] Following an introduction on the context of the letter, I present the text with some brief annotations in the notes, followed by an epilogue on reading Schechter's letter over a century later.

Introduction: The Context of Schechter's Letter

Much has been written on Schechter's "Zionism: A Statement" first published in 1906.[2] In that essay, explaining why he was joining the ranks of

[1] Both the handwritten and typed version are located in Box 101-10 of the Schechter Papers at the Rare Book and Manuscript Room, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

[2] Solomon Schechter, "Zionism: A Statement," *American Hebrew* (December 28, 1906), 191–94. It is reprinted in Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers*, repr. (New York: Burning Book Press, 1959 [1915]), 91–104 and Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Atheneum, 1959), 504–13. An abridged excerpt appears in Gil Troy, ed., *The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland—Then, Now, Tomorrow* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2018), 126–28. The various treatments of Schechter and Zionism focus on this important essay; see Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1940), ch. 12; Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, 503–4; Robert E. Fierstein, "Solomon Schechter and the Zionist Movement," *Conservative Judaism* 29 (Spring 1975): 3–13; David Benjamin Starr, "We Cannot Escape History: Solomon Schechter and Zionism," *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly* 55 (1993): 65–82; Starr, "This Is Only Fact, But We Have the Idea: Solomon Schechter's Path to Zionism," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 9 (Spring 1997): 15–32; Naomi W. Cohen, "'Diaspora Plus Palestine, Religion Plus Nationalism': The Seminary and Zionism, 1902–1948," in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, ed. Jack Wertheimer, 2 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), 2:118–87 (the section on "Schechter's Legacy"); Starr, "Catholic Israel: Solomon Schechter, a Study of Unity and Fragmentation in Modern Jewish History" (PhD diss., Columbia University,

the Zionist movement, Schechter aligns himself with the cultural Zionism of Aḥad Haʿam, adding to it his sense of the spirituality of Jewish religious culture. As he writes: "To me personally, after long hesitation and careful watching, Zionism recommended itself to me as the great bulwark against assimilation," later on defining assimilation as "loss of identity."[3] Schechter opposed the "Uganda Plan," the British offer of a tract of British East Africa as an autonomous Jewish territory that Theodor Herzl had presented to the Zionist Congress in 1903. "It is not only desirable but absolutely necessary," wrote Schechter, "that Palestine, the land of our fathers, should be recovered with the purpose of forming a home for at least a portion of the Jews, who would lead there an independent national life."[4] But Zionism offered as much a cultural solution for the Jewish people as a territorial one, as Schechter understands "Galuth" (exile) as applying to "Judaism" as well as to "Jews."[5] Schechter summarizes his position as follows: "I belong to that class of Zionists that lay more stress on the religious-national aspects of Zionism than on any other feature peculiar to it. The rebirth of Israel's national consciousness, and the revival of Israel's religion, or to use a shorter term, the revival of Judaism, are inseparable."[6] In Arthur Hertzberg's analysis, Schechter's 1906 statement,

> a reinterpretation of Ahad Ha-Am in the context of Schechter's own unfanatical but traditionalist religiosity, naturalized cultural Zionism in America. Above all, Schechter imparted a Zionist temper to the Conservative movement in American Judaism, of which he was the master builder, both intellectually and institutionally, so that it remained henceforth the most overwhelmingly Zionist of the three major Jewish religious groupings in America.[7]

Schechter's Zionism as a Jewish cultural nationalism was rooted in his religious conservatism. His clearest statement on this matter appears in an

2003), ch. 5; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 203; and Eric Alterman, *We Are Not One: A History of America's Fight Over Israel* (New York: Basic Books, 2022), 43.

[3] Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 93.

[4] Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 92.

[5] Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 97.

[6] Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 97.

[7] Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, 503.

essay that he never published, most likely because of its harsh treatment of Reform Judaism, but it appeared in the posthumous collection of essays that made up the third series of his *Studies in Judaism*:

> Jewish nationalism is not a creation of the nineteenth century. Its compact with religion was eternal.... It was just those things that distinguished us from our surroundings (not for the things which we had in common with them) and separated us from the nations, such as the devotion to the Pentateuch, the keeping of the Sabbath, the observance of the Covenant of Abraham, and the loyalty to the dietary law, to which we clung for thousands of years with all our life and for which we brought numberless sacrifices. Is this now the time, when the thought of nationalism is universally accepted, to destroy it as far as Israel is concerned? Should we rather cherish it as the best antidote against the poison of utter assimilation which threatens us as never before?[8]

For Schechter, the development of the various nationalist movements in the nineteenth century opened a door to a conviction of Jewish religious conservatism. Where the various nationalist movements sought to uncover the traditions of the peoples they represented, Jewish nationalism should do and has done the same. In this posthumously published essay penned against the universalism and antitraditionalism of Reform Judaism that, in Schechter's view, threatened the continuity of Jewish identity, Schechter argues for a more Romantic and nationalist Judaism that celebrates the basic observances that were being abandoned by the Reform Judaism of his day. His embrace of Zionism as Jewish nationalism must be understood in this context, just as the Conservative Judaism that Schechter taught and established must be understood as a Romantic and Jewish nationalist response to the universalism and rationalism of Reform Judaism.

Schechter's letter to *The American Hebrew*, reprinted here, was written in 1915, nine years after his "Zionism: A Statement." The letter must be

[8] Solomon Schechter, "Abraham Geiger" in *Studies in Judaism*, third series (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1924), 78. The "Covenant of Abraham" refers to circumcision. On the Geiger essay, see David J. Fine, "Solomon Schechter and the Ambivalence of Jewish Wissenschaft," in *Passionate Centrism: One Rabbi's Judaism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 185.

read as a reaffirmation of both Schechter's embrace of Zionism and his growing apprehension about and disapproval of the secularist nature of the Zionist movement. The developments that are reflected in this tense and raw exposure of his thoughts are the outbreak of World War I in Europe, the rise of Louis D. Brandeis (1856–1941) as the leader of American Zionism, and Brandeis's project to establish an American Jewish congress.

One of the many dramatic effects of the war was to reveal the catastrophic potential of nationalist movements. Schechter understood, presciently, that Zionism needed to be shielded from the type of nationalism that brought about the outbreak of war in 1914. From his perspective, the European national rivalries were secular, unlike his understanding of the Zionist movement that was rooted in Jewish religion, history, and culture. He was, therefore, doubly wary of the ascension of Brandeis, a secular American Jew, to the leadership of the American Zionist movement.[9] Brandeis was later to become a hero of American Jewry, nominated the following year by President Woodrow Wilson as the first Jew to serve as a Supreme Court justice. He would also play a key role in securing Wilson's support for the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Both developments predate the contentiousness that comes across in Schechter's letter. While the American Zionist movement's "ranks and treasury swelled as never before," a development that Jonathan Sarna credits to Brandeis's "persona, mystique, charm, prestige, fluency, sincerity and passion," Brandeis also found himself walking into a minefield of intra-Jewish politics.[10] Zionism and its assertion of Jewish nationality was so controversial among American Jewry that Brandeis, after finding himself accosted by hecklers at an American Jewish Committee conference in 1916 and criticized by the *New York Times* for bringing embarrassment to the Supreme Court, felt compelled to resign his chairmanship of the American Zionist movement.[11]

In 1915, Schechter was agitated by Brandeis's efforts to establish an American Jewish congress. Brandeis was engaged in a political battle with the older, established (and less Zionist) leadership of the American Jewish Committee. His vision was to create a democratically representative congress to represent American Zionism and American Jewry in general before the

[9] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 204 defines Brandeis as "an agnostic secularist."
[10] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 204.
[11] Jeffrey Rosen, *Louis D. Brandeis: American Prophet* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 164.

expected deliberation of the victorious powers at the conclusion of the war.[12] Brandeis's appeal to a broader democratic base for Jewish politics should be understood in the context of the broader progressive movement of the time, represented by both Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. The progressivist success in promoting democratic power over the old establishment is best exemplified by the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1913, establishing direct election of United States Senators rather than their selection by state legislatures. Brandeis, a member of the Wilsonian progressivist movement that saw the passage of the Seventeenth Amendment as one of its successes, applied the same approach to Jewish politics, to Schechter's dismay.

Ironically, Brandeis and Schechter were aligned in their support for the Allied nations against the Central powers in the war. Earlier in 1915, Schechter wrote how he yearned for "the glorious prospect of England one day annexing Palestine with God's help. I argue with all my friends that this is the only solution for which we should hope."[13] Schechter could manage the opposition to his support for Zionism on the part of his colleague Cyrus Adler and his trustee Jacob Schiff, for he did so as an individual, not on behalf of his institution, JTS.[14] But speaking out on behalf of England when the United States was still neutral in the war was not something he could do. The United States would not join the war until two years after Schechter's death. In 1915, the German Jewish elite of American Jewry would have supported Germany in the war, as did most Jews who championed Germany's "liberation" of the Jews in Eastern Europe from the yoke of Russian tsarist oppression.[15] Schechter would certainly have celebrated the Balfour

[12] On Brandeis's conflict with the older establishment leadership and the congress debate, see Ben Halpern, "The Americanization of Zionism, 1880–1930" in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 327–30. See also Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776–1985*, 4 vols. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 4:662–68.

[13] Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 329.

[14] Schechter clarified in his 1915 introduction to *Seminary Addresses* that his support for Zionism was not on behalf of the Seminary: "But I should like it to be distinctly understood that this allegiance cannot be predicated of the Institution over which I have the honor to preside, and which has never committed itself to the Movement, leaving this to the individual inclination of the students and Faculty, composed of Zionists, anti-Zionists and indifferentists" (Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, xxiii–xxiv).

[15] "Jews could endorse the war with an easy conscience," writes Steven E. Ascheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), "because the enemy was Russian absolutism; at last the despotic anti-Semitic heritage would be brought to account" (142). On "liberating

Declaration and, later, Britain's victory over the Ottomans and conquest of Palestine. But he could never have supported Germany, having experienced antisemitism in Berlin as a student, followed by great professional success in Britain. Schechter is remembered as saying when the war broke out that "my next book will be by Professor Butcher [as opposed to "Schechter" which, while Yiddish, sounds German and in the latter language means "slaughterer"]. I won't have anyone thinking from the sound of it that I belong to that race of barbarians."[16] These ironies aside, Schechter penned his letter in late 1915 attacking Brandeis for his congress plan for American Zionism.

Schechter's opposition to an American Jewish congress was consistent with his conservative tendencies. Ten years earlier, he opposed the Reform proposal of a Jewish synod, concerned that such a body would legislate popular reforms and, as such, lose sight of the wisdom of Jewish tradition and law.[17] When his opposition to Brandeis and the congress caused Schechter to be, in the words of Norman Bentwich, "denounced as an enemy of democracy and Jewish nationalism," Schechter sought to clarify his views in the letter presented here.[18]

Text of Schechter's Letter

Sir: It is now some ten years since you granted me the privilege of publishing my "Statement" on Zionism which led, as your readers will remember, to a great deal of discussion and criticism.[19] May I now beg again for the privilege to state my present relation to the Movement and its peculiar side-issues which have come to light during the last months? I may as well state at once that I am still adhering in my loyalty to the Movement as I was years ago.

Russian Jews," see also Marsha L. Rozenblitt, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 44 and David J. Fine, *Jewish Integration in the German Army in the First World War* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 12, 72–73. On the changing winds of Jewish politics through the war more generally, see Carole Fink, "Jewish Diplomacy and the Politics of War and Peace," in *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America*, ed. Marsha L. Rozenblitt and Jonathan Karp (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 56–81.

[16] Azriel Eisenberg, *Fill a Blank Page: A Biography of Solomon Schechter* (New York: United Synagogue, 1965), 103. This book, written for young adults, was based on archival research collected in the Schechter Papers Box 101-14 at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

[17] Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Views on the Synod* (Baltimore: Lord Baltimore Press, 1905), 131–41. See David J. Fine, "The Meaning of Catholic Israel" in *Passionate Centrism: One Rabbi's Judaism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 199, 208–9.

[18] Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter*, 328.

[19] Schechter, "Zionism."

Otherwise, I would not have incorporated the "Statement" just mentioned in the volume which was the subject of review in these columns some time ago,[20] though I did not hesitate for a moment to express my fears and anxieties about certain aspects of the Movement chiefly owing to the interpretation of the principles of the Movement by certain leaders with whom religion is a negligible quantity in the scheme of Zionism.[21] It was for the same reasons that in my last graduation speech I expressed my disapproval of converting the pulpit into a nationalistic platform in which the religious aspect of the Movement is almost entirely suppressed, thus secularizing our Synagogues and suppressing all those aspirations and hopes of the Jews attaching themselves to the ideal of God's people and a holy nation.[22] I acted in accordance with my conviction expressed years and years ago that we can as little have Jews without Judaism as Judaism without Jews.[23] That this expression was sure to bring on me a shower of abuse and all sorts of insults in print and in letters, mostly anonymous, was foreseen. And I did foresee it. But I never hesitated to declare freely my principles on account of possible consequences—and least of all would I keep back my convictions because of the fear of unpopularity. Popularity does not form a part of my happiness. I never courted the people, nor will I begin to do so now.

[20] The volume in question here is Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, first published in 1915 in Cincinnati by Ark Publishing.

[21] In Schechter's 1915 introduction to *Seminary Addresses*, he affirms that "speaking for myself, Zionism was, and still is, the most cherished dream I was worthy of having," he goes on to say how "this dream is not without its nightmares. For in their struggle to revive the National Sentiment, some of the Zionist spokesmen calling themselves by preference Nationalists, manifested such a strong tendency to detach the movement from all religion as can only end in spiritual disaster" (Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, xxiv).

[22] The speech in question is Solomon Schechter, "Loving Kindness and Truth" in *Seminary Addresses*, 245–53, address delivered at Schechter's last JTS commencement, June 6, 1915. Schechter is referring to the following sentences from that address: "The pulpit will cease to be an institution of self-glorification, boasting of our successes in various departments of secular endeavor.… I would not even advise you to enlarge too frequently on the feature of nationalism.… [N]ationalism of the purely secular kind as taught by certain philosophers and historians within the last two generations leading to the excesses which we are witnessing now all over the world had better be relegated to the lecture platform" (Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*, 248–49). This commencement, Schechter's last, was the first one held after the outbreak of World War I.

[23] The original phrase was: "There is no Judaism without Jews and there are no Jews without Judaism. We can thus only be Jews of the Jewish persuasion." It appeared in the *London Jewish Chronicle* in 1901 in Schechter's "Four Epistles to the Jews of England," reprinted in Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, second series (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1908), 183. Schechter's phrase "Jews of the Jewish persuasion" is meant to be contrasted to "Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion" or "Germanen of the Mosaic persuasion" (Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 182).

So as to my present attitude towards the Movement. As I have said, I still adhere to the cause of Zionism, as far as it does not collide either with one's religious principles or scientific convictions. But there were also lately brought up what I call side issues which have practically nothing to do with the Movement, and were only forced on us by Mr. Brandeis. For good or for evil, I belong to those whom Mr. Brandeis stigmatized lately as the Bonzes.[24] To what class Mr. Brandeis belongs I do not know. But he impresses me as something of a *homo novus*, or rather as a *Judaeus novus*, having had till lately no affiliation at all with Jewish affairs, either religious or even philanthropic and educational. His accession to Zionism is decidedly a great gain for the Movement, considering his social position and his organizing abilities. But his methods are extremely objectionable. He has brought into Zionism a factor which has certainly no bearing on the Movement; and whilst preaching always unity, I can only see that he has brought about a split in American Israel as never known before. We are living now in dreadful times,[25] and if there ever were a time when silence was golden, it is this time, when we are being closely watched by the Jewish and Christian world at large, especially by the latter, and whenever any incautious word, any denunciation is sure to be reported by the agents of the Great Powers to their superiors, and have an immediate effect on the fortunes in the power of these superiors. A world of mischief has already been done by our papers, whose partisanship as unrestrained comment on behalf of the Central Powers has certainly not made the task of our brethren in England and France easier.[26] We are not considered there as neutrals, but as outspoken Pro-Germans, at war with the whole world except with the Teutonic Powers.[27] And now Mr. Brandeis comes and is determined to force upon us a Congress, in which the Jewish problem should be discussed, followed by action. This means to commit the whole of American Israel to the views which will be aired there by the men versed in the art of shouting and agitating. The reason Mr. Brandeis gives is that such agencies as they existed till now, as for instance, the American [Jewish] Committee, are not

[24] The term "bonze" refers to a Buddhist monk; Schechter's use of it here indicates that he understands Brandeis to disapprove of his overt religiosity.

[25] Dreadful times: less than a year into World War I.

[26] Schechter subtly allies himself with the Jews in Britain and France rather than with their governments, and more subtly he excludes Russia from the Entente, or Allied, powers.

[27] Schechter, who could not publicly express his support of Britain and France against Germany, argues here for an American Jewish policy of neutrality that, at the time, was also the position of the Wilson administration.

an expression of popular opinion, the men at the head of affairs there not having been elected on democratic principles, not knowing the will of the people, which alone are justified to act. I may premise that I am in no way connected with the American Jewish Committee, or with the Kehillah, or with any other organization dealing with such problems.[28] On the other hand, I do object to the cry of "undemocratic." Suppose it is not democratic? Suppose I distinctly object to democracy? Suppose I think that it is only the very few chosen distinguished for their tact, discretion, experience, influence and connection with the influences that be, is there any reason to declare me as disloyal to Jewish principles in general, or Zionist principles in particular? As far as my experience goes, it was not the multitudes who wrought the great miracles in American Israel. It was the chosen few who built up our institutions, who called into life our Orphan Asylums, our Hospitals, our Reformatories, our Homes of the Aged and Incurables, who maintained our institutions of learning, who erected our libraries, who created our Synagogues, and made an American Israel possible. Without them we would have been a mere wilderness, without any intellectual, educational and philanthropic factors in the country. It was those few who threw themselves into the breach, whenever misfortunes threatened Israel either here or abroad. It was they who watched for every opportunity to ameliorate our conditions, spiritual as well as material, whether at home or abroad. And it is my conviction that [it] is only these few who have both the will and the power to make our claims felt in the councils of the nations when the time comes. Their past, which testifies so greatly to their sense of responsibility, is the best guarantee which we have for the future. All these are matters which apparently Mr. Brandeis is unaware of or has failed to realize. What Mr. Brandeis has further failed to realize is the demagogic element in all this Movement. If he would know something more of the history of this community, he could not fail to see that some of his associates who speak so glibly of the will of the people, the conscience of Israel, etc., are only seeking to pay off old scores. It is the very people, who by their desecrating everything considered sacred and eternal, have outraged the conscience of Israel. And it was the silent opposition which they found in the rank and file of our great public spirited men, that rendered them so bitter and so pugnacious.

I am deeply sorry that I have to point out all these things. Mr. Brandeis

[28] The Kehillah was the organization of New York City Jewry that existed between 1909 and 1922; see Sarna, *American Judaism*, 200–201.

always maintains that he is open to conviction. But what I have read of his various manifestos and pronounciamentos, it seems to me that he should be open to instruction. No man can preface for us the future of Israel who is so devoid of all the knowledge of our past, even of the past of our New York community, with its various currents and jealousies and partisanships.

Epilogue: Reading Schechter's Letter Over a Century Later

Reading Schechter's 1915 letter against Brandeis over a century later, one is struck, after digesting the rawness of what was an uncensored unpublished draft, by how much has changed. Nationalism, discredited by so many after World War I, was further blamed for the unimaginable tragedies of World War II. And yet, the Jewish nationalist movement found its greatest success in the wake of that war and of the Shoah, with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The nature of Jewish nationalism is more controversial today than ever before, as an ultranationalist governing coalition came to power in Israel after democratic elections in November 2022. As of this writing, Israel is seeing massive weekly demonstrations against the governing coalition's proposals to limit the role of the courts as a balancing power against the majority of the democratically elected Knesset. The democratic nature of the state is being argued by both sides in what has become the most polarizing debate in Israeli history. The antigovernment protestors claim that only with the courts' power of judicial review can minority rights and democracy in general be protected from the tyranny of the majority, while the prime minister responds that the majority will of the parliament is not antidemocratic but is the essence of democracy. Looking at Schechter's letter in 1915 offers a fascinating perspective on today's conflicts.

In 1915, Schechter opposed democratic progressivism, provocatively writing (although not publishing) the question: "Suppose I distinctly object to democracy?" We would not phrase such a challenge today with those words, as "democracy" is the signpost being brandished by both sides in the current debate in Israel. But we can understand that what Schechter is really opposing is what we call "populism," understood as an ultranationalist majority that has found success across democratic nations since 2016 in electoral patterns that have not been seen since before World War II. The concept of judicial review, the question that has exploded on the streets of Israel in 2023, exists as a check against majority will, the unchecked populism that Schechter so feared in both religious contexts (the synod proposed

by the Reform Movement) and political contexts (the congress politics of Brandeis's Zionism). Constitutional law, Schechter would argue, exists as a protection against tyranny, whether from a monarch or a democratically elected body. This is no less the case in Israel, which lacks a constitution, than in the United States, whose constitution itself gives not a hint of the court's power of judicial review. "Constitutional law," wrote John Hart Ely, dean of Stanford Law School, in 1980, "appropriately exists for those situations where representative government cannot be trusted."[29] And so, in 2023, 108 years after the death of Solomon Schechter, the Rabbinical Assembly, his supposed heirs in the rabbinate, declared its opposition to the proposals to subject judicial review to repeal by a majority of the Knesset. "The RA proudly stands," its statement of January 4, 2023, concludes, "for the rights of all and champions the integrity and independence of the High Court, which has historically safeguarded minority rights against the threat of tyranny by the majority."[30] Schechter's concerns about majority-rule remain complex and contested.

Another area of supposed difference from Schechter's perspective is on the role of secular and religious Zionism. Schechter's cultural Zionism leaned toward religious Zionism, whereas most of his supposed heirs in today's Conservative/Masorti movement see themselves, in general, as more aligned with the secular Zionist parties than with the religious parties. Israeli political history has seen the religious parties gain a beachhead of power that has made it difficult for non-Orthodox Judaism to exist in Israel. Because of the discrimination faced by non-Orthodox Judaism, Masorti Judaism generally allies itself with the secular Zionist parties, even as it stands for a Jewish religious traditionalism (*masoret*) that is championed by the religious parties. But the tensions faced by Masorti Judaism today are not so different in nature from what Schechter expresses. What worried him about Brandeis and the secularists was the demagoguery of unchecked populist nationalism that he saw exploding around the world with the outbreak of World War I. In his day, that was a secular nationalism. Today, the ultranationalists of the Zionist spectrum are found within the religious camp (understanding the Yisrael Beiteinu party as an exception which proves the rule). While

[29] John Hart Ely, *Democracy and Distrust: A Theory of Judicial Review* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 183.

[30] "Rabbinical Assembly Condemns Bill to Undermine Israel's High Court," Rabbinical Assembly, https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/story/rabbinical-assembly-condemns-bill-undermine-israels-high-court.

the issues of the debate change, a closer look reveals that what really scared Schechter was a populist extremism unchecked by traditional Jewish sensibilities and wisdom. In that sense, we share Schechter's concerns.

Historians throughout history have served in the consoling role of reminding the disoriented that the issues we face are rarely new and unprecedented. Our century is worlds away from what was before the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel. And yet, we can still call ourselves students of Solomon Schechter.

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Israel at Seventy-Five: A Fifty-Year Retrospective

David Golinkin

The State of Israel was founded on May 15, 1948; I moved to Israel in September 1972. Thus, during the past few months, as Jews throughout the world began to speak more and more about "Israel at Seventy-Five," I realized that I have been living in Israel for two-thirds of its existence. Therefore, I thought it fitting to write a retrospective essay about my fifty years in Israel. This is not a memoir. Rather, I would like to discuss three topics: the miraculous nature of the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, where we have succeeded, and where we have yet to succeed.[1]

The Miracle of 1948

After one pandemic, five elections, and seven months of political turmoil and terror attacks, it is not surprising that many Israelis, myself included, are feeling depressed. At times like this, one must remember the saying of Rabbi Elazar in the Talmud (Niddah 31a): *ein ba'al haneis makir et niso*, "a person involved in a miracle does not recognize his miracle."

I believe that the rebirth of the State of Israel is a miracle. It defies logic. A people that had just lost one third of its members—six million men, women, and children—declared a state after an exile lasting 1,878 years. Both the United States and Russia approved that State. The United Nations approved that State. President Harry S. Truman approved that State, thanks to his close Jewish friend and business partner, Eddie Jacobson. And, after the State was declared, 650,000 Jews, with insufficient weapons and few allies, withstood the onslaught of seven Arab countries. The Jews who witnessed the founding of the State understood that it was a miracle. I would like to illustrate this by four vignettes presented in chronological order.

The first vignette is about Dr. Gabi Barkay's Torah scroll. Barkay is a well-known Israeli archaeologist who discovered two small silver scroll

[1] In the notes below, I will refer primarily to my own writings and to the sources of specific quotations. Most dates and statistics are taken from Wikipedia and other internet articles without specific citations.

amulets containing *Birkat Kohanim* from the seventh century BCE, which may contain the earliest quotation from the Torah. He is also the co-founder of the Temple Mount Sifting Project in Jerusalem, which has spent nineteen years sifting through 350 truckloads of dirt that was illegally removed from the Temple Mount by the Waqf and dumped in the Kidron Valley. The sifters, mostly volunteers, have discovered almost 600,000 artifacts from all periods of Jerusalem's history. Barkay is also a longtime member of my synagogue, Moreshet Avraham in Jerusalem.

He was born in the Ghetto of Budapest in 1944, at a time when the Arrow Cross Party was murdering 80,000 Jews, many of whom they drowned in the Danube River. Most of the members of his family were murdered. He shared his crib in the Ghetto with a small Torah scroll that had belonged to his great-grandfather, who had his own little synagogue in his courtyard. About twenty years ago, Gabi decided to repair and donate that *sefer Torah* to Moreshet Avraham, and I was privileged to read from the Torah at that event. It had a simple mantle with no inscription.

Racheli Bin-Nun, another member of our synagogue, volunteered to make a new mantle and she wrote on it a verse from Ezekiel 37 (verse 14), which we read every year on *Shabbat Ḥol Hamoʿed Pesaḥ*. She chose that verse not only because it conveys the miracle of the State of Israel, but also because it conveys the personal story of her mother, Sabina Schweid, widow of Professor Eliezer Schweid, *z"l*, who spent fifteen months hiding underneath a stable with her mother and others in order to survive.

In the spring of 1946, when Sabina was fifteen, she and her mother were part of a "kibbutz" of survivors at Mainkofen, Germany. It was before Passover and they were preparing for the seder with their beloved teacher, Moshe Friedrich, an *ʿilui* (talmudic genius) who had been ordained at the age of sixteen, and who later died in the battle for Gush Etzion. Moshe for some reason did not teach them the traditional text of the Haggadah but the Vision of the Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37), which is read every year on *Shabbat Ḥol Hamoʿed*. As they were rehearsing for the seder and got to the words "and it was filled with bones," someone began to wail, and they all cried together with him. Sabina Schweid recalls:

> Even I, who had spent the war in "deluxe" conditions, had been in that valley. Even I remembered the bones poking out of the mass grave, the grave where my father was bur-

> ied, where all my classmates were buried, all our friends, the entire city… But Moshe would not let us cry. He continued: "Thus said the Lord to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live again! I will lay sinews upon you, and cover you with flesh, and form skin over you. And I will put breath into you, and you shall live again. And you shall know that I am the Lord!" (Ezekiel 37:5–6). The Prophet Ezekiel was talking about us and to us in the voice of Moshe Friedrich, because Moshe—like all of us—was in the same valley filled with "very dry bones"…[2]

The second vignette happened a short time after the dry bones episode, on April 23, 1948. It was recently recounted by Rabbi David Geffen in the *Jerusalem Post.* During the siege of Jerusalem, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, chief chaplain of the Jewish forces, had requisitioned matzah and other provisions for soldiers who were preparing for seders throughout Jerusalem.

> When the largest Seder got underway in Jerusalem, Goren announced that a special Elijah would be arriving so a cup was filled for the special guest. To everyone's surprise, David Ben-Gurion arrived, having been flown from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a Piper Cub. The soldiers were overwhelmed—the leader of their country, soon to be the nation of the Jewish people, had not forgotten them. Rabbi Goren recalled a portion of Ben-Gurion's speech: "Tonight, this is the first time in the 2,000 years of Exile that the Jewish people are celebrating the festival of freedom and redemption as a free people back in its own land. The Seder concludes with the hopeful words 'Next year in Jerusalem.' You men are in Jerusalem fighting to liberate it and fulfill that destiny. Do not yield, but hold on to Jerusalem tenaciously."

He spoke with tears in his eyes until it was time to return to his headquarters in Tel Aviv. But the soldiers were so packed in to the hall that it

[2] Sabina Schweid, *Milhamah, Milhamah, Gevirah Nehedarah* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 254–55.

was impossible for Ben-Gurion to reach the exit, so they picked him up and passed him over their heads so that he could exit the building and fly back to Tel Aviv.[3]

The third vignette happened just three weeks later, on the night of May 14, 1948, just before Ben-Gurion declared the State of Israel. This is what Professor Mordecai Kaplan wrote in his diary: "In fifteen minutes from now, a new Jewish state will officially come into being. The mental and physical agonies of birth are beyond those suffered by any people known to history. May God grant that it will not be stillborn." He then copied Ezekiel 16:4–6 in Hebrew: *umoldotayikh beyom huledet otakh*, "on the day you were born, you were left lying, rejected, in the open field. When I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood. I said to you: 'Live in spite of your blood!'" He then continued:

> No words of my own could possibly express any better the feelings that storm in my heart at this moment […] Even the verse which precedes them has significance for me: *avikh ha'emori ve'imekh ḥitit* ["your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite"]. The new state has been parented by the U.N. with the U.S. as its father, and the Soviet Republic as its mother; is sent forth by them into the world as a castaway, but God will say to this state as he said to the one of old *bedamayikh ḥayi* ["Live in spite of your blood!"].
>
> [It] is 5:30 p.m. Judith and Ira [Eisenstein, his daughter and son-in-law] just phoned telling me Truman issued a statement at 6:01 p.m. recognizing the Jewish State. It is simply impossible for me to describe how I feel at this moment. Again and Again: *barukh sheheḥiyanu veqiymanu lazeman hazeh* ["Blessed…who has kept us alive and sustained us to this time"].[4]

The final vignette is a letter written by my father, Rabbi Noah Golinkin, *z"l*, in Yiddish on 3 Iyar 5711 (May 9, 1951), the day before the third Inde-

[3] David Geffen, "Passover Seders of 1948," *Jerusalem Post Magazine* (March 31, 2023), 26–27 quoting Rabbi Shlomo Goren, *With Might and Strength* and one other source.

[4] Mordecai Kaplan, *Communings of the Spirit: The Journals of Mordecai M. Kaplan, Volume III: 1942–1951*, ed. Mel Scult (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2020), 330–31.

pendence Day of the State of Israel, which was observed that year on the fourth of Iyar because of Shabbat. My father was then serving as rabbi in Arlington, Virginia, next to Washington D.C. Since he was very active in Zionist organizations and in close contact with the Embassy of Israel in Washington, he learned that the State of Israel was about to issue the first Israel Bonds. He bought a bond in honor of the first birthday of his nephew Meyer Goldstein and sent him a letter in Yiddish explaining the importance of the matter. As one can discern from the letter, my father knew that he had bought one of the first bonds, but he did not know that it was *the* first Israel Bond; this became clear only when the bond arrived in the mail. An excerpt from the letter appears below in English translation:

B″H 3 Iyar 5711 [May 9, 1951]

Sweet Yisrael Meirke!

Tomorrow is your birthday…

Tomorrow, you will receive in the mail a "Bond" from our long-dreamt-of State of Israel. Today is the first day when Bonds of the Jewish State will go on sale throughout the world, and you will be one of the first to receive a holy Bond from the Holy Land, which will connect your young life with the great, fulfilled dream of tens of Jewish generations.

You were born in a great time and, as you grow up, let the "Bond" serve you as one of the symbols of your connection [to Israel] and of your growth.

Your Uncle Noah…[5]

[5] For a photograph of the first Israel Bond, and for my father's letter in Yiddish, see David Golinkin, *Responsa in a Moment*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute, 2021), 5:364–80, also available at www.schechter.edu. For biographies of Rabbi Noah Golinkin, see my eulogy in *Insight Israel: The View from Schechter* (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute, 2003), 157–67, also available at www.schechter.edu; Rafael Medoff, "Golinkin, Noah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., 22 vols. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 7:740–41; and Rafael Medoff and David Golinkin, *The Student Struggle Against the Holocaust* (Jerusalem:

Dr. Gabi Barkay and Sabina Schweid, who had survived the Shoah; David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel; Professor Mordecai Kaplan, a major American Jewish leader; and my father, Rabbi Noah Golinkin, who escaped from Vilna in 1938 and spent the war years trying to save the Jews of Europe—they all understood that the State of Israel was a miracle. Do we?

Where Have We Succeeded?

I believe that there are eleven areas where the State of Israel has succeeded and has lived up to the expectations of the five distinguished Jews described above.

The Ingathering of the Exiles—Mizug Galuyot

From 1948 to 1951, Israel's Jewish population more than doubled, from 650,000 to 1,338,000. Between 1948 and 2022, Israel has absorbed approximately 3,400,000 new immigrants. I would like to share two typical stories, one about the IDF, and another about a course I teach. In the 1980s, I did my basic training in the IDF. My unit consisted of sixty-six soldiers from twenty-three countries, including Iran, Ethiopia, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Canada, and the United States. When I teach my course on the Haggadah at the Schechter Institute every other year, and I want to know the customs of different '*edot*, or ethnic groups, I do not just look in books. I simply ask my students what they and their parents do at the seder. They proceed to share the customs of Morocco, Tunisia, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Germany, France, Russia, and so on. I believe that Israel's feat of *mizug galuyot* is unparalleled in human history.

The Revival of Hebrew as a Spoken Language

Jews always read and wrote Hebrew from the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 CE until the nineteenth century, but, for the most part, they did not speak it.[6] When Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his wife Devorah

Schechter Institute, 2009).

[6] Eliezer Ben Yehuda, introduction to *Milon halashon ha'Ivrit*, 8 vols. (New York, 1960), 1:80–254; Cecil Roth, *Personalities and Events in Jewish History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), ch. 9; William Chomsky, *Hebrew: The Eternal Language* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1957), ch. 11; and Shimon Federbush, *Halashon ha'Ivrit beYisra'el uva'amim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1967), ch. 27.

began to speak Hebrew to their son Itamar in 1882, Itamar was probably the only native Hebrew speaker in the world. Today there are some 9,656,000 Hebrew speakers in Israel (including Israeli Arabs), even though thirty-six other languages are spoken in Israel. Every year approximately 8,300 new Hebrew books are published in Israel. This revival of a so-called dead language is also without precedent in world history.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF)

The last time the Jewish people had an army in *Erets Yisra'el* was during the Bar Kokhba Revolt, which ended in defeat in 135 CE. When the State of Israel was founded, there were actually three different armies: Haganah, Etzel, and Leḥi. They quickly became one army and won numerous wars. Today, the IDF is considered one of the best armies in the world and continues to defend the State of Israel against terrorists, Hamas in Gaza, and Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran. It also serves as a major instrument for ingathering the exiles, as explained above.

Jewish Time and Space

In the State of Israel, Shabbat and all the Jewish holidays are national holidays. People can go to synagogue, go on field trips, or visit their families. Every public building has a *ḥanukiyyah*, or Hanukkah menorah, on top, there are hundreds of thousands of Sukkot, and if you drive around Israeli cities on *ʿerev Pesaḥ* or *Lag Baʿomer*, you will smell the *ḥamets* burning or watch the bonfires glowing. The IDF keeps kosher, and, when I served in the army, one could not eat on Friday night before someone made kiddush (it was usually me!). Cheese sales increase by 230 percent before Shavuot; Israelis consume 250 grams of honey per person during the month of Tishrei, 40 percent of their yearly consumption; and radio ads before Passover are set to the tune of the Ten Plagues or *Eḥad mi yodeʿah*.

Agriculture

Before and after 1948, a large percentage of the Israeli economy depended on agriculture. Today, while farmworkers make up only 3.7 percent of the work force, Israel produces 95 percent of its own food requirements, supplementing this with imports of grain, oilseeds, meat, coffee, cocoa, and

sugar. Furthermore, since the 1950s, Israel has developed many important agricultural techniques and has taught them throughout the world, especially in poor countries in Africa and elsewhere.

Reforestation

Since the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was founded in 1901, it has planted over 250,000,000 trees in Israel. It is the only county in the world that ended the twentieth century with more trees than it had in 1900. In 1948, roughly 2 percent of Israel was covered in trees, and this has now grown to around 8.5 percent. This, too, is without precedent.

Water

Some 60 percent of Israel is desert. In addition, the population of Israel is twelve times greater than it was in 1948, not to mention millions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who also need water. In 2009, there were television ads featuring Israeli celebrities warning people that they must conserve water or the Kineret would dry up. The government was seriously discussing bringing boatloads of water from Turkey. Israel dealt with this crisis in three ways: the JNF has built over 240 reservoirs and dams; close to 95 percent of wastewater is now recycled for agriculture; and Israel has built five major desalination plants, with two more to be completed soon. The result is that Israel now produces 20 percent more water than it needs, and that the level of the Kineret continues to rise. These methods are now being copied by many other countries in the world.[7]

Start-Up Nation

As documented by Dan Senor and Saul Singer in 2009, sixty-three Israeli companies were listed on NASDAQ, more than those of any other foreign country, even though Israel is ranked 100th in the world in terms of population and 153rd in terms of size (within the green line). Their book addresses the question:

[7] This paragraph is based on Max Kaplan-Zantopp, "How Israel Used Innovation to Beat its Water Crisis," *Israel21* (April 28, 2022), https://www.israel21c.org/how-israel-used-innovation-to-beat-its-water-crisis/.

> How is it that Israel—a country of 7.1 million people, only sixty years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources—produces more start-up companies on a per capita basis than large, peaceful, and stable nations and regions like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada, and all of Europe?

They reply that this success stems from mandatory military service and immigration. But it is not just the number of start-ups; the inventions themselves have improved the lives of billions of people around the world. Among the inventions are Waze, Mobileye, USB drives, Check Point, which created the first firewall; Watergen, which produces clean drinking water from the air; Sniffphone and NaNose, which can smell diseases; ReWalk, which enables paraplegics to walk again; and PillCam, a medical camera that can be swallowed.

Medicine

Israel has one of the best medical systems in the world. There is universal health coverage, and every citizen belongs to one of the four *kupot ḥolim*, or medical plans. Health care is also much cheaper than most of the countries in the Western world, and the price for any approved drug is very low. Despite the fact that Israelis complain about it all the time, the medical system is quite efficient. A number of years ago, I had a problem with my shoulder. I went to an orthopedist, who sent me for an X-ray and an ultrasound; all of this happened on the same day and cost me next to nothing over and above my regular fee. Finally, Israel ranks sixth in the World Index of Healthcare Innovation, and Sheba Medical Center, Israel's largest hospital, was recognized as among the best medical centers in the world, ranking 13th on Newsweek's "World's Smartest Hospitals for 2023."

Academia

The number of academic institutions in Israel went from two in 1948, to seven in the 1970s, to fifty-nine today. The number of students grew from 1,600 in 1948, to 56,000 in 1980, to 200,000 in 2000, and to 342,000 in 2023. In other words, while the population of Israel grew by a factor of twelve in seventy-five years, the number of students in academic institutions grew

by a factor of 213! Finally, Israel has produced thirteen Nobel Laureates, which ranks us as 15th in the world, even though we rank 100th in terms of population.

Happiness

In 2023, Israel was ranked 4th on the World Happiness Index. The top ten countries are Finland, Denmark, Iceland, *Israel*, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and New Zealand. This is not a fluke. Every year since this Index was founded in 2012, Israel has been found among the top fifteen in terms of happiness. The only difference is that some of the other countries have not been at war since World War II, and some have never been at war, while Israel has been at war for all seventy-five years of its existence. How can this be explained? Some of it stems from the list above. Another explanation is the emphasis in Israel on family and children, and the feeling that *kol yisra'el 'arevin zeh bazeh*—that all Jews are responsible for one another.

Where Have We Not Yet Succeeded?

There are seven important areas where the State of Israel has not yet succeeded.

The Palestinians

The first and most well-known dilemma is the Palestinian problem. I am hesitant to discuss this because I know that whatever I write will anger someone. Yet this, too, is part of Israel at seventy-five. Much of the Western world and especially the United Nations blame Israel for the fact that Palestinians are still living in refugee camps instead of in their own state. These claims are not borne out by the facts.

Abba Eban famously said after the Geneva Peace Talks in December 1973: "The Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." This is true. In 1947, Israel accepted the UN partition plan, while the Arab League and all Arab factions rejected it. After the Six Day War, many Israelis were interested in returning all or part of the territories captured in return for a peace treaty. The Arab League responded with the Khartoum Resolution of September 1967, which contained the "Three Noes": "No peace with Israel,

no negotiation with Israel, no recognition of Israel."

In 1993, Israel and the Palestinians signed the Oslo accords. Like many Israelis, I was in favor of the accords, and I published a responsum explaining why it was permissible to give up some of the territories for the sake of a peace treaty.[8] Unfortunately, within a short amount of time, the accords literally blew up in our faces. From 1993 until 2000, almost three hundred Israelis were killed in terrorist attacks, including many horrific suicide bombings in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Bet Lid.

In July 2000, at the Camp David Summit, Ehud Barak offered Yasser Arafat 92 percent of the territories; Arafat rejected this, and in September the Palestinians began the Second Intifada, which lasted for five years and led to the death of some four thousand Israelis and Palestinians. In August 2005, Israel withdrew from Gaza; the Palestinians immediately burned down all of the synagogues and greenhouses of the Jews who had lived in Gush Katif. In June 2007, war broke out in the Gaza strip between Hamas and Fatah; Hamas emerged victorious after killing many Fatah supporters. Since 2001, Hamas and the other terror organizations have shot more than twenty thousand missiles at Israel, which has forced Israel to wage eleven military campaigns against Gaza.

Some claim that the Palestinian leaders are the problem; the Palestinian people really want peace. This, too, is not supported by the facts. An in-depth analysis of 330 surveys conducted by four major Palestinian research institutes between 1993 and 2015 revealed that from 1993 to 2000, 42 percent of Palestinians favored armed attacks against Israeli civilians. From 2000 to 2015, a solid majority supported such attacks and, on occasion, specific suicide attacks on civilians were approved by 74 percent or 84 percent of Palestinians.[9]

A friend of mine lived for many years in a Jerusalem on a street that borders the Arab neighborhood of Jabel Mukaber. During the First and Second Intifadas their house was attacked by stones and Molotov cocktails over one hundred times. In 1989, she helped initiate a dialogue program with some of the Palestinian women. At the second session, which took place in Jabel Mukaber, she said: "Why not talk about making peace?" One of the Pales-

[8] David Golinkin, "Returning Territories for the Sake of Peace", *Moment* (December 1993), 34, 89; reprinted in David Golinkin, *Responsa in a Moment* (Jerusalem: Shechter Institute, 2000), 31–36.

[9] Daniel Polisar, "What do Palestinians Want?," *Mosaic* (November 2, 2015), https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/israel-zionism/2015/11/what-do-palestinians-want/. This is one of the most eye-opening articles I have ever read about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

tinian women replied: "As soon as there is a Palestinian State, there will be peace, but it might be a problem for you: Where will you live?"

I understand that many Americans and Europeans think that every problem has a solution. Yet we now know from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—which cost trillions of dollars and the lives of 6,833 American soldiers, as well as over 52,000 who were wounded—that you cannot impose democracy on Arab societies that have never had a democracy and have no desire to have one. I do not know the solution, but the overwhelming majority of Israelis believe that if Israel withdraws from more territories it will endanger the very existence of the State of Israel without leading to any solution.

The Haredi Dilemma

When the State of Israel was founded, Ben-Gurion gave some four hundred Haredi yeshiva students an exemption from serving in the army. In 1977, when Menachem Begin and the Likud took over, they allowed over eight thousand such students, and they proceeded to exempt more and more students as part of coalition deals with the Haredi parties. Today there are over sixty thousand such students, but, in order to get an exemption, you must stay in a yeshiva. The result was that the State of Israel itself created a situation in which up to 13.3 percent of the population, who elect some eighteen members of Knesset, do not study the required core subjects in school, do not serve in the IDF, and do not start working, if at all, before the age of thirty. Not serving in the army and studying Torah at the public's expense are diametrically opposed to Jewish law and are not sustainable in the long term.[10]

The Religious Zionists

From 1948 until the early 2000s the Mizrahi or Mafdal party consisted of Modern Orthodox Jews such as Yosef Burg, Zevulun Hammer, and Zevulun

[10] Jewish law very clearly requires both men and women to serve in a *milḥemet mitzvah*, a commanded war, which the Rambam defines as a war "to defend Israel against an enemy which attacks them"; see Numbers 32; Deuteronomy 20:1–9; m. Sotah 8:7, Maimonides, *Laws of Kings* 5:1 and 7:4; and Robert Harris and Reuven Hammer, *Teshuvot va'ad hahalakhah shel kenesset karabbanim beYisra'el* 2 (5747): 61–71. Since all of Israel's wars have been wars of self-defense, all Jews, both men and women, are required to serve in the IDF. Jewish law also requires Jews to work and not study Torah at the expense of the community; see, e.g., m. Avot 1:10; 2:2; 4:5; b. Berakhot 35b; Maimonides, *Commentary to Avot* 4:5 and *Laws of Torah Study* 3:10–11; *Shulḥan Arukh Orah Ḥayyim* 156:1; and *Yoreh Deah* 246:21 in the Rema.

Orlev, who believed that observant Jews should combine work, IDF service, and Torah study and did their utmost to coexist with secular and traditional Jews. Yet, as Rabbi Yitz Greenberg stressed in a recent article, the Religious Zionist Parties today, as exemplified by Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and Avi Maoz, are almost the diametric opposite of classical religious Zionism.[11] These politicians hate Arabs, Conservative and Reform Jews, and gay people; they want Israel to be governed by halakhah; and they want Israel to annex the entire West Bank. This trend began after the Six Day War as a result of the messianism of Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kuk and his disciples. Since then, it has morphed in various extreme directions. There is no easy solution to this problem, but this sector of the voting public will continue to have a big effect on Israeli politics.

Jewish Education

Despite what I wrote above about the beauty of Jewish time and space in Israel, a lack of serious Jewish education is one of Israel's greatest failures.[12] Israeli Jews speak Hebrew and study the Tanakh as history, but most of them who attend the secular public schools in Israel have not received a serious Jewish education. They have not studied basic rabbinic texts such as *Pirqei Avot,* Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Rashi, the Siddur, or medieval Jewish history and philosophy. Even though, as I explained above, most Israeli Jews observe the Jewish holidays in a culinary fashion, their knowledge of the Jewish holidays is for the most part extremely superficial.

Here is one typical example out of hundreds. On *ḥol hamoʿed Pesaḥ* I was listening to a talk show on Reshet Bet, Israel's most popular radio station. One of the hosts has been a radio and television presenter for forty years and in 2017 she received a lifetime achievement award for outstanding journalistic work. She was discussing with her co-host and a guest the fact that it is difficult for many Israelis to understand the Haggadah. She said: "The Haggadah is written in Aramaic; it really needs to be translated into Hebrew so that Israelis will understand it!" Not only is this statement totally incorrect—only the *Ha laḥma* paragraph and the song *Ḥad gadya* are in Aramaic—but the two men involved in the discussion agreed with her!

[11] Yitz Greenberg, "Smotrich's Religious Zionist Party is Becoming Anti-Zionist," *Jerusalem Post* (January 6, 2023), https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-726776.

[12] See, e.g., David Golinkin, "Wanted: A Jewish Education Revolution in the State of Israel," in *Insight Israel: The View from Schechter*, second series (Jerusalem: Shechter Institute, 2006), ch. 24, also available at www.schechter.edu.

Unlike some of Israel's other problems, this problem has a simple solution: make sure that every Israeli child and adult receives a Jewish education. Indeed, that is the goal of the Schechter Institutes, and that is why we now run programs for over 125,000 Israeli children and adults every year.

Religious Pluralism

As I have explained elsewhere, this, too, is one of Israel's greatest problems.[13] The Chief Rabbinate and the religious establishment in Israel are a coercive bureaucracy without a constituency, controlled primarily by Haredi rabbis. They make life difficult for those who wish to make aliyah, convert, get married, or receive kashrut supervision. This monopoly has not led to greater observance. On the contrary, it has led to a situation in which many Israelis dislike Judaism or simply find ways to work around this religious coercion. For example, approximately 25 percent of young couples, including some Modern Orthodox couples, now get married in Israel by Conservative, Reform, and secular rabbis and obtain a civil license in Cyprus or elsewhere. This problem, too, has a solution: religious pluralism. Either the State should fund no rabbis or it should fund any synagogue and its rabbi, regardless of the denomination. It is not the State's job to define which rabbis and synagogues are "kosher."

Judicial Reform

I have written elsewhere about Israel's current judicial crisis and stressed the need to maintain checks and balances between the Knesset and the Supreme Court on the basis of precedents from the Bible until today.[14] Our current crisis stems to a large extent from the fact that Israel has no constitution. When the State was founded, Ben-Gurion was so preoccupied with other major challenges such as wars, food shortages, and immigrant absorption that he decided not to deal with this challenge. This lack of a constitution has now come back to haunt us in a big way. I do not think that it is possible

[13] David Golinkin, "Why the State of Israel Should Abolish the Chief Rabbinate," *Jerusalem Report* (December 16, 2013), 6–7; reprinted in Golinkin, *Responsa* (2021), 3:27–31 and also available at www.schechter.edu.

[14] David Golinkin, "The Proposed 'Judicial Revolution' in Israel: What Can We Learn from Our Sources?," available at www.schechter.edu and, in an abbreviated form, in David Golinkin, "What Jewish History, Tradition Teaches about Israel's Judicial Reform—Opinion," *Jerusalem Post* (March 7, 2023), https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-733533.

to write a constitution in the middle of our current crisis. But I hope and pray that President Herzog's mediation efforts will bear fruit and lead to a true compromise between the two main voting blocs in Israel.

Jewish Unity

In a recent video in honor of Passover, I asked the question: What can we learn from the story of the Exodus that can help us weather the current storm in the State of Israel?[15] I proceeded to compare the behavior of the children of Israel in the desert for forty years after the Exodus and the behavior of *'am Yisra'el*, the Jewish people, in the State of Israel since 1948. I concluded that video as follows:

> Since 1948, we have been privileged to witness the ingathering of the exiles—*Kibbutz Galuyot*—in the State of Israel, but that does not mean that we are one united people. Many of the politicians leading the so-called "Judicial Revolution" these past few months have stated very clearly that their motives are ethnic—to show the Ashkenazi elite that the *'edot hamizraḥ* [the Jews from Islamic countries] are now in charge, or revenge for the disengagement from Gaza in 2005. I can only say to all of this: *Lo' zo haderekh!* This is not the correct path. The correct path is that of President Isaac Herzog: to sit and to talk and to compromise—however long it takes.
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> Rabbi Yehoshua said in the tractate of Rosh Hashanah (folio 11a): "In the month of Nisan we were redeemed [from Egypt]; and in the month of Nisan we are destined to be redeemed." And what will lead to *ge'ulah*, what will lead to redemption? We have a very clear answer in Midrash Tanḥuma (ed. Buber, Deuteronomy, pp. 48–49): "God will in the future shine upon you the light of the world… When? When you will all be one bundle… According to the custom of the world, if you take a bundle of reeds can

[15] David Golinkin, "What Can We Learn from the Exodus about Israel's Current Civil Crisis?," https://schechter.edu/israel-needs-to-unify-lessons-for-todays-state-of-israel-from-the-bible-and-rabbis/.

> you break them all at once? But if you take one reed at a time, even a child can break that reed. And so you find that the Jewish People will only be redeemed if they become one bundle…."
>
> The secret of redemption is that the Jewish People become *agudah aḥat*, one bundle. The secret of redemption is for us to stop fighting with each other and start working with each other.

Of all the unfinished problems of the State of Israel, this last one is the most crucial. We will be able to solve our major problems only if we work together as one united people.

The founders of modern Zionism and of the State of Israel wanted Israel to be an *or goyim*, "a light unto the nations," in keeping with the prophecies in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6. I hope and pray that we will have the wisdom to fulfill that dream.

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התבוננות מחודשת במבעי האהבה של יהדות ארה"ב לישראל[1]

יקיר אנגלנדר

אני נזכר בסצנה מתוך הסרט כנר על הגג, בה טוביה פונה לאשתו גולדה ושואל אותה: "האם את אוהבת אותי?" השאלה מעוררת בגולדה תמיהה. מנין היא צצה לפתע פתאום? טוביה מתבונן בהשתאות כיצד בנותיו מבטאות אהבה כלפי בחירי ליבן, בדרכים שהן זרות לו, לטוביה; גילויי אהבה שכלל לא הכיר בקיומה. טוביה מתערער, חש בלבול, דחוי, כועס, מתוסכל. תשובתה של גולדה לאו דווקא מניחה את דעתו, ואולי אף תורמת לבלבול: "הרי עשרות שנים שאני מבשלת, מנקה, מגהצת ועושה הכל למען הבית שלנו – ואתה שואל אותי האם אני אוהבת אותך?" משיבה לו גולדה. אך טוביה מסרב להתרצות וחוזר על השאלה פעם נוספת, כמערער בזאת על תקפות הראיות שהוצגו לעיני בית הדין לענייני אהבה: "האם את אוהבת אותי?"

הסצנה לבטח מעלה חיוך על פני הצופים בשנת 2023, שכן בשונה מחיי הצופים כיום, לרעיה בשטעטל היהודי לא הייתה דרך אחרת להביע פומבית אהבה מלבד אותן פעולות המגדירות את תפקידה המסורתי כאם הבית. ואולם בהיבט אחר, מצליחה הסצנה הזאת ללכוד משהו אל-זמני; דבר הנכון במידה רבה לגבי ימינו כמו לגבי ימי השטעטל המדומין אנטבקה. ככל שזה נוגע לשפת האהבה, וליכולת להביע אהבה, עלולים להתגלע פערים עמוקים בין אוהבים. הבדלים מסוימים אמנם נעוצים בתבניות חברתיות, דתיות, והיסטוריות. כך, למשל, אפשר להבין את השתאותו של טוביה לאור גילויי האהבה של בנותיו. ואולם דומני כי המצוקה שאליה נקלע טוביה, כאשר הוא מבקש לברר את טיב אהבתה של גולדה, רעייתו, אינה מתמצה על ידי ההסבר הזה. הפער בינו לבין גולדה נעוץ בעובדה כי ישנה יותר משפה אחת לאהבה. חמש שפות לאמיתו של דבר, על פי התיאוריה של גארי צ'פמן.

בספרו *חמש שפות לאהבה: כיצד לבטא מחויבות רגשית כלפי בן או בת הזוג שלך* (1992), צ'פמן מזהה חמש שפות מובחנות לאהבה ועומד על מאפייניהן: השפה המילולית (Words of affirmation), זמן איכות (Quality time), שפת המתנות (Giving/Receiving gifts), שירותים, סיוע וטיפול (Acts of service) ושפת המגע (Physical touch). צ'פמן מאבחן כי רבים מהקשיים שרובנו חווים במערכות יחסים אישיות - אינטימיות, ידידותיות, משפחתיות, ואחרות – נובעים מהעובדה פשוטה זאת: כשזה נוגע לרגש האהבה, כלומר ליכולת לחוות ולהביע מנעד של רגשות כמו מחויבות, חיבה, דאגה, וכו', ייתכן שאנו מדברים בשפות שונות. ומה הפלא שלעיתים איננו מבינים זה את שפת האהבה של זה, שהרי "לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ," נכתב בספר בראשית (יא:ז).

אולם להבדיל מהסיפור המקראי על בלילת השפות כעונש על מעשה מגדל בבל, כאן לא מדובר על שפה במובן צר של לשון (עברית, אנגלית...) אלא על שפה כמערכת של סימנים (לאו דווקא מילוליים) אשר באמצעותם ניתן לתקשר משמעות, כמו גם לפרש ולחוות מציאות מסוימת. כמו

[1] תודה לנדב אברוך שערך את המאמר והפיח בו חיים. תודה נוספת לקורא האנונימי של המאמר על הערותיו הנדיבות והמועילות.

כן, המילה אהבה אף היא משמשת כאן בהוראה רחבה, ונכללים בה מגוון של יחסים בינאישיים לרבות קרבה משפחתית, יחסים רומנטיים, ידידותיים, וכיוצ״ב.

בחיבור זה אבקש להרחיב מעט את תחום החלות של שפות האהבה ולחשוב מבעד לפריזמה זו על מערכת יחסים אחת ומורכבת, שידעה עליות ומורדות רבות במהלך העשורים האחרונים. רבים מסתכלים כיום, מי בדאגה ומי בתסכול, על מערכת היחסים הטעונה בין מדינת ישראל והעם היהודי שחי בה, ליהדות ארצות הברית. קיימת "מגמה של התרחקות מישראל בקרב היהדות הרפורמית,״ כותב למשל פרופ׳ זכי שלום, חוקר בכיר במכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי. ״הביקורת עליה גוברת, ומתקבל הרושם שהם כלל לא מעוניינים לגשר על הפערים. היית מצפה מתנועה זו לעסוק במצבם המורכב של היהודים במקומות אחרים בעולם. אך לאחרונה הם עוסקים רק בביקורת על מדינת ישראל." תחושות אכזבה ותסכול כגון אלו קיימות בשני הצדדים, ולדעתי, מעל הכל, הן מבטאות את משאלת הלב להרגיש נאהבים ולדעת בביטחון שהאהבה ממשיכה לשרור בין הקהילות, בישראל ובארצות הברית, יהיו המחלוקות ביניהן אשר יהיו. מבלי להידרש לשאלה מי צודק ומי אשם במצב הזה, אבקש להצביע על אחד הפערים שביסוד המשבר אשר לו אנו עדים ביחסי ישראל ויהדות ארצות הברית. בדומה למשבר שפקד את טוביה וגולדה, גם בין שתי הקהילות היהודיות הגדולות בעולם דומה שהתגלע פער גדול בין שפות האהבה אשר באמצעותן הן הורגלו לבטא את אהבתן זו לזו. פער זה מקשה על הצדדים לחוש נאהבים ולבטא את עוצמת הברית והקשר ביניהם. כיום, 75 שנה מאז קום המדינה, שפות האהבה הללו אינן משקפות נאמנה את זהות הקהילות. נכון אפוא לחשוב מחדש על האופן שבו נראו יחסים אלו במשך עשורים רבים, להכיר בשינויים שחלו ולאפשר לשפות אחרות של אהבה להתגלות ולמלא את מקומן של אלה שמעמדן ירד.

אהבת ישראל

שפת האהבה העיקרית של גולדה, במונחיו של צ׳פמן, היא שפת השירות והסיוע, או Acts of service. תאמר גולדה לטוביה: הבאתי בנות לעולם וגידלתי אותן, אני רוחצת, ומבשלת, ועושה אינספור פעולות למענך ולמען ביתנו, ואתה שואל אותי אם אני אוהבת אותך? לא עשיתי די למענך שכך תפקפק באהבתי? הבעיה, כפי שטענתי קודם, נעוצה בכך שטוביה אינו מפרש מעשים אלו כסימני אהבה; לפחות לא כשמנגד מתגלה לו שפת האהבה המילולית והמפורשת של בנותיו הצעירות. ואולם, לא אמרנו עדיין דבר על שפת האהבה העיקרית של טוביה, אשר קרוב לוודאי אף היא רובה ככולה מושתתת על אקטים של שירות. נקל לדמיין את ימיו של הרפתן והחלבן קשה היום; יוצא השכם בבוקר וחוזר בערב במטרה לפרנס ולדאוג לבני משפחתו; לעיתים נעדר פרקי זמן ממושכים מחיק המשפחה וכשכבר נמצא בבית, אז הוא עייף, טרוד ועצבני. רבים ורבות מאיתנו לבטח מתישהו חשו מוזנחים או בלתי נאהבים בשל העובדה שבני או בנות זוגם ״תמיד בעבודה״, ״אף פעם לא בבית״, ״לא זמינים רגשית או פיזית״. הצורך או אפילו התביעה ל״זמן איכות״ - הלא היא שפת אהבה אחת מן החמש - עלולה להתנגש חזיתית בשפת האהבה המושתתת על אקטים של שירות. זאת משום שאקטים אלה, הגם שמונעים לחלוטין על ידי אהבה ואף כרוכים במידה רבה של הקרבה עצמית למען מושא האהבה – לעיתים קרובות מתנהלים הרחק מעינם וליבם של מושאי האהבה עצמם. אני מציג תרחישים ״טיפוסיים״ אלה לשם המחשה בלבד, ולרגע איני

טוען שיש בהם כדי למצות את המורכבות הרבה והמרובדת שמאפיינת מערכות יחסים רבות. ענייני כאן הוא, כזכור, מעט אחר.

לעיתים קרובות נזכרת שפת מחוות השירות גם ביחס שבין אדם למולדתו - השירות נתפס כאפיק מרכזי להבעת מחויבות אזרחית, למשל, דרך השירות הצבאי והשירות הלאומי, וכו'. המדינה, מצדה, אמורה "להשיב אהבה" לאזרחיה באמצעות מגוון שירותים, בראש ובראשונה דרך הבטחת שלומם ובטחונם הפיזיים. כך, למשל, מדינת ישראל רואה עצמה אחראית לשלום אזרחיה הן בתחומיה והן מחוצה לה, והיא משקיעה מאמצים ומשאבים ניכרים על מנת לחלצם ולהשיבם ארצה במקרים שונים כמו הסתבכויות עם רשויות החוק בארצות זרות, תאונות וכדומה.

מאז הקמתה, מדינת ישראל ראתה, ועודנה רואה בעצמה מקלט ובית לאומי לכל היהודים באשר הם. כמדיניות רשמית, שעריה פתוחים בפני יהודים המבקשים להשתקע בה, יהיה הרקע להגירה אשר יהיה. כזכור, עצם רעיון הקמת בית לאומי לעם היהודי בארץ ישראל נהגה על רקע שנאת היהודים ורדיפתם בכל רחבי אירופה, וכינונה של מדינת ישראל הלכה למעשה התרחש על רקע האסון הנורא ביותר שפקד את היהודים באירופה. לפחות במובן הזה, אפשר לומר כי תודעת האסון (הן בעבר והן כאפשרות עתידית) מהווה חלק בלתי נפרד מהגנום של מדינת ישראל כישות פוליטית. המיתוס היהודי שאנו מעלים על שפתינו מדי שנה בליל הסדר, "אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו", אך מחזק נרטיב זה. אי לכך, אומרת מדינת ישראל ליהודים בתפוצות, היכן שלא תהיו, ברגע שתחושת הביטחון שלכם כיהודים בארץ אחרת נגרעת, אני כאן למענכם; רק תבואו. בקול מעט אחר, אומרת מדינת ישראל, היכן שלא תהיו, תחושת הביטחון שאתם חשים כוזבת; באף מקום אחר אינכם בטוחים כמו בארץ ישראל, ומפצירה בהם לעלות, או, לכל הפחות להביע נאמנות אליה תמורת הגנה עתידית.

במסגרת חוזה נושן זה, ישראל מצפה מיהודים החיים בתפוצות, ובייחוד מיהדות ארצות הברית, לסולידריות לאומית ללא תנאים. סולידריות זו יכולה לבוא לידי ביטוי במגוון צורות, או שירותים אם תרצו, לרבות תמיכה כלכלית ישירה או עקיפה, הזדהות פומבית עם הנרטיב הישראלי ופעילות לוביסטית נמרצת במסדרונות הגבוהים של המנהיגות האמריקאית. במילים אחרות, שפת האהבה שישראל הורגלה לה במיוחד מיהדות ארצות הברית היא acts of service. יהדות ארצות הברית אכן שיחקה תפקיד חיוני בתור גוף מתווך בין ישראל לארצות הברית, וממשיכה במידה רבה לתפקד כגוף שוחר טובת ישראל. בעשורים הראשונים למדינת ישראל, "שפת מתנות" הייתה אחת מהדרכים המרכזיות של יהדות ארה"ב להביע את אהבתה למדינה. ארגונים כמו הקרן הקיימת לישראל, הבונד, ופדרציות יהודיות שונות מזרימות מליארדי דולרים ואיפשרו לבנות, במובנים מסוימים, את מדינת ישראל ואת צה"ל בצורתו הקיימת. שפת אהבה זו עודנה קיימת, אם כי במידה פחותה. בהמשך, **שפת השירות** נהייתה למשמעותית יותר עם הופעתם של שדולות יהודיות באמריקה וארגונים פרו-ישראלים מובהקים כמו AIPAC אשר פועלים ללא לאות במטרה ללחוץ על הממשל האמריקאי להגדיל את התמיכה הכספית בישראל ולקדם פרוייקטים ביטחוניים כמו כיפת ברזל. דוגמאות נוספות לשפת האהבה של שירותים, עזרה וטיפול הן ארגונים התנדבותיים כמו "בלב אחד" המממנים טיפול רפואי משלים לחיילים ישראלים שנפגעו במהלך שירותם ואף מאפשרים את הבאתם לארה"ב, ועוטפים אותם בחיבוק אוהב.

לדעתי, לא ניתן להתעלם מכך, שפת האהבה המרכזית שדרכה מדינת ישראל מעוניינת לחוש נאהבת היא מעשי שירות וסיוע - acts of service (ולאחריה מתנות), ויותר מכך, היא מעוניינת

לקבלם ללא תנאים. אולם דומה כי משהו בכל זאת השתנה ויהודים אמריקאים בעיקר מהדור הצעיר, מסרבים כי שפה זו תהיה המרכזית במערכת יחסי האהבה. לפי התרשמותי, יהדות ארה"ב הליברלית מבססת את ערכיה מתוך תפיסת היהדות ככלי של "תיקון עולם". בשם רעיון זה, יהדות ארצות הברית מייצגת קול פלורליסטי במסגרת מאבקים שהיא מחשיבה כצודקים, ברחבי אמריקה ומחוצה לה: בעד זכויות אדם ונגד קיפוח מכל סוג שהוא, אם מדובר על אפליית נשים או Black Lives Matter, זכויות LGBTQIA+ או סוגיות של צדק סביבתי. במילים אחרות, אם משנות ה50 יהודים אמריקאים השתמשו בשפת האהבה של מעשי שירות כדי להביע את אהבתם למדינת ישראל כמו גם בהמשך ליהדות ברית המועצות, בעשורים האחרונים, מעשי שירות מופנים משיח פנים יהודי של אהבה – לשיח סביב ערכים יהודים כלפי שאלת הסבל בעולם, באמצעות הערך היהודי-אמריקאי של תיקון עולם. זאת מכיוון שבעשורים האחרונים, ובעיקר לאור הנרטיב סביב ישראל מדמותו של דוד החלש לגולית החזק (ביחס לפלסטינאים), מדינת ישראל אינה נחווית בעיניהם ככזו הנזקקת לעזרה מתמידה על מנת לשרוד, והעזרה מופנית לאינספור מרחבים בעולם הזקוקים לעזרה מיידית.

ישראל אינה בהכרח טועה כשהיא מזהה מגמת ירידה בתמיכה הציבורית (הבלתי מעורערת) של יהדות ארצות הברית ביחס למדיניותה, אלא לגבי המשמעות שהיא מייחסת לכך. אכן חל שינוי ניכר ביחס כלפי ישראל בקרב יהדות ארצות הברית, אשר בא לידי בעמדה פוליטית ביקורתית יותר מבעבר, ונכונות פחותה מבעבר לאמץ בפומבי את מדיניות ישראל הרשמית בשם עיקרון הסולידריות הלאומית. סקר שערך מכון PEW מצא כי בעוד שרוב יהודי ארה"ב ממשיכים להביע תמיכה עזה בישראל, התמיכה נמוכה הרבה יותר בקרב הדור הצעיר. כך למשל בעוד ל52% מקרב יהדות ארה"ב המבוגרת ישראל היא מרכיב חיוני ליהדותם, השיעור צונח ל35% בקרב צעירים מתחת לגיל 29. מגמה נוספת שמזהה סקר זה היא דירוג נמוך למדי של סוגיית ישראל בכלל בהשוואה לסוגיות אחרות שמעסיקות את יהדות ארצות הברית כיום, כמו עתיד הדמוקרטיה האמריקאית, מדיניות ההפלות בארצות הברית, אינפלציה וכלכלה, ושינוי האקלים, בין היתר.

במילים אחרות, אפשר שהחוזה הנושן בין מדינת ישראל ליהדות ארה״ב, שיחס האהבה היה מושתת על ערבות ביטחונית הדדית ובעיקר על אקטים של שירות: הסברה, פעילות לוביסטית ענפה במטרה להשפיע על מדיניות החוץ של ארצות הברית הנוגעת לסוגיית ישראל, וכיוצא באלה – הופה. הוא הופר בדיוק משום שהדור הצעיר אינו חש עוד כי קיומו הגלותי תלוי על בלימה (אדרבה, הם יאמרו כי הם נהנים מתחושת ביטחון מוגברת בהשוואה לאחיהם הישראלים) או כי קיומה ושגשוגה של מדינת ישראל תלוי בו מבחינה כלכלית או פוליטית, כפי שהיה בעבר. זאת ועוד, אף על פי שרוב היהודים בארצות הברית מוטרדים מעליית האנטישמיות בשנים האחרונות בארה"ב, הדור הצעיר רואה בזה היבט של תופעה נרחבת יותר, כלומר חלק משיח השנאה, חוסר סובלנות, ובכלל מגמת ההקצנה והקיטוב שפשו בחברה האמריקאית. מכאן שגם הפתרון לעליית האנטישמיות בארה"ב צריכה להיות כחלק מחינוך לסובלנות כלפי מיעוטים שונים, ולא באופן ייחודי כלפי יהודים. העובדה ששפת אהבה מסוימת אינה מועילה עוד אינה מעידה בהכרח על כך שיחס האהבה לישראל גם הוא בהכרח פחות. לדעתי, תיאורית 5 שפות האהבה מזמינה את המנהיגות היהודית, בישראל ובארה"ב, לא להתנות את האהבה לישראל דווקא בשפת אהבה אחת, אלא להרחיב את מנעד שפות האהבה, ובכך לאפשר ליהודים אמריקאים, בעיקר צעירים, להתאהב בישראל ולבטא את אהבתם בדרכים אחרות שמתאימות יותר לערכיהם.

במקצועי אני עוסק בשאלות של חינוך יהודי ובחינוך למערכת יחסים אוהבת בין ישראל לבין ארה"ב. מנקודת מבטי כמי שמתבונן, מזה זמן מה, בהתפתחויות שחלו במערכת היחסים בין הקהילות הללו, הירידה בנכונותה של הקהילה היהודית להתייצב לצד ישראל בכל מצב, וכן אף הביקורת שנמתחת מפעם לפעם כנגד מדיניותה של ממשלת ישראל, אינן מעידות על סופה של מערכת היחסים, אלא על הזמנה לחזק אפיקי אהבה חדשים בין שתי הקהילות היהודיות הגדולות. כולי אמונה כי הפוטנציאל לאהבה קיים, אך אם יתממש או לא תלוי בהבשלתם של שני תנאים יסודיים. הראשון, הכרה מצד ישראל בכך ששפת האהבה שהורגלה לה במשך עשורים כבר לא אקטואלית באותה המידה עבור חלקים גדולים ביהדות ארה״ב, לפחות לא במתכונת הבלעדית והטוטאלית שהייתה. מכאן נובע התנאי השני, והוא הכרה בהתכנותן של שפות אהבה אחרות - אלה שכבר ישנן, ואלה שעוד יופיעו כפי שאציע בפיסקה הבאה.

מגעים איכותיים

בעוד שהשיח המרכזי מתמקד בירידה בפעולות שירות סיוע (Acts of Service) של יהודים אמריקאים כלפי מדינת ישראל וברגש האהבה הנגזר משיח זה, אני מבקש להציע, בהבלחת מכחול, את קווי המתאר לשפות אהבה נוספות שיהודים אמריקאים שונים כבר מושקעים בהן וניתן לחזקן. לדעתי, על יהדות ישראל לפתוח את ליבה להקשיב לאותם אינספור פלגים ומבועים של אהבת ישראל בקרב יהדות ארה"ב, לרבות הדור הצעיר. שפת האהבה של זמן איכות באה לידי ביטוי במאות מנהיגים יהודים אמריקאים המגיעים לישראל לתוכניות בהם הם לומדים על החברה הישראלית בצורה עמוקה ונפגשים עם פסיפס הקולות שבה ובין שמדובר בלקיחת קורסים אקדמים בחוגים ל-Israel Studies שנוסדו באוניברסיטאות, קשה שלא לראות בכל אלה צורות של "זמן איכות" וניסיון כן להתקרב לחברה ולהוויה הישראליות, לשפה העברית ולתרבות היהודית. בנוסף, ארגון הישראלים הגרים בארה"ב (IAC) מציע עשרות קורסים מדי שנה העוסקים בהיבטיה של התרבות הישראלית, ונרשמים אליהם אלפי תלמידים בגילאי 6 עד 80 בני דור שני להגירה ישראלית לארה"ב ויהודים אמריקאים. למען האמת, לא פעם יצא לי להיווכח עד כמה עמוקה ההיכרות של מנהיגים יהודים אמריקאים רבים עם סוגיות רגישות בחברה הישראלית וכמה ערים הם לבעיות ולמצוקות של אוכלוסיות שונות בתוכה, אשר לדאבוני ישראלים רבים בוחרים להסיט מהן את המבט. העניין והדאגה של המנהיגות היהודית האמריקאית כלפי כל חלקי החברה הישראלית ללא יוצא מן הכלל מעוררת בי השתאות והערכה עמוקה, ומהי אם לא אהבת ישראל באמצעות שפת "זמן איכות" או אז אני שואל את עצמי, מה אנו כישראלים יודעים בעצם על יהדות ארצות הברית, מנהגיה, דאגותיה, שאיפותיה, ומצוקותיה? מה בעצם ידוע לנו על גווניה הרבים של הקהילה היהודית בארצות הברית? אני פוגש לא פעם אמריקאים לא יהודים שמגלים יותר עניין וסקרנות לגבי אורחות חיי הקהילה היהודית שחיה לצדם ובקרבם מאשר הקהילה האחות בארץ ישראל.

במקום לבקש להתוודע אל עושר זרמיה ולחבוק אותם על כל ההבדלים היפים, ההנהגה הדתית בישראל לעיתים קרובות מגנה את מקבילתה האמריקאית כ״לא יהודית״, אך האחריות מוטלת לא פחות על החברה החילונית שגם היא אינה מכירה את עושר התרבות היהודי בארה"ב ואינה יוצאת להגנתה. החברה היהודית באמריקה כוללת כידוע זרמים ליבראלים אשר מנהגיהם - ובייחוד מנהיגותיהם - אינם מקובלים על הממסד הרבני בישראל. הסמכת נשים כרבות פוגש בביקורת

חריפה מצד הרבנות בישראל, או נערות בנות מצווה המבקשות לקרוא מהתורה ליד הכותל או לגעת במקומות הקדושים להן, כדרך להתקרב ליהודתם ולישראל, נתקלים לעיתים קרובות בסירוב ואפילו בעלבון. ישראל מבטיחה לגונן על גופם בשעת חירום, אך במקביל היא דוחה את יהדותם.

מחוות של הזדהות והבעת הערכה בשפת אהבה הפיזית ניתן לראות במהלך חגיגות העצמאות למדינת ישראל במקומות רבים בארה"ב, למשל ביוזמה של הקהילה הישראלית-אמריקאית להאיר בניינים מרכזיים בכחול-לבן. וכמובן, קשה להתעלם מכל אותן משלחות צעירים (כמו תגלית) המבקשים ללמוד להכיר מקרוב ולחוות פיזית, בגופם את ההוויה הישראלית.

תיאורית חמש השפות לאהבה נועדה להזכיר לנו שבני אדם חווים ומבטאים אהבה בדרכים שונות. לפעמים שפה שהייתה נכונה ברגע או בשלב מסוים בחיים אינה בהכרח נכונה לרגע או לשלב אחר, והתעקשות עליה עלולה להוביל למצב מתסכל שבו הצד שמנגד אינו מסוגל להביע את האהבה כפי יכולתו ורצונו. כשצפיתי בסרט כנר על הגג, עלה בי צורך עז להושיט יד ולהזכיר לטוביה ולגולדה את העובדה הפשוטה הזאת - את עצם קיומו של ריבוי שפות האהבה. הייתי מבקש להזכיר לטוביה שישנן שפות שונות לאהבה, והאחת לאו דווקא עולה על רעותה באיכות, ובלבד שאנו יודעים להאזין להן, לקרוא בסימניהן. לגולדה הייתי מבקש להזכיר שאף לה מותר להתנסות במבעים אחרים, לא על מנת לרצות את טוביה חלילה כמו על מנת לגלות אולי שפה אחרת המבטאת טוב יותר את אשר על ליבה. בו זמנית, אם היא מגלה כי שפת אהבה מסוימת היא זו שמתאימה לאישיותה – מותר לה לחדד נקודה זו עם טוביה ולבקש ממנו להשתמש באותה שפה. העיקר, בעיניי, הוא להזכיר לשניהם כי באהבה כמו באהבה, הדברים לפעמים מורכבים, משתנים, דינמיים. אך בסוף של יום, כמעט תמיד ישנה דרך נוספת להביע אהבה - צריך רק לאזור אומץ ולצאת לחפשה. בלב פתוח.

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Two Homes: Canadian Connections to Zionism

Jennifer Gorman

When I moved to Canada almost eighteen years ago, I easily believed the common assumption in Jewish sociological circles that the Canadian Jewish community is between one and three generations behind the United States. By the time we lived here a year, it was clear to me that this was a grand misinterpretation.

Growing up, I lived in New York, on Long Island, in the same house in the small town of Merrick. Since I left for university, I have lived in three countries and five US states, and I visited many others before I moved to Ontario. Each region of the United States has a distinct and immediately noticeable atmosphere and culture. Canada is no different. At first, it felt familiar. I already loved hockey when I moved to Toronto (Go Islanders!), so I knew all the words to "O Canada" (because of hockey) and the locations of major cities (where hockey is played). It seemed to me that moving among states illuminated more differences than moving to Canada. Toronto's neighborhoods reminded me of Brooklyn from my childhood. It felt comfortable and familiar. But, over the last eighteen years, I have been privileged to spend time in six of Canada's ten provinces and work with the Jewish communities in others.

Officially, I have been Canadian for less than a year, having taken my citizenship oath the day after Rosh Hashanah, huddled around a laptop camera with my family. Much like potential converts who come to the *beit din* only after they are fully Jewish in their hearts, I can confidently state that, after eighteen years, I have been Canadian much longer than the paperwork attests. My children were raised here. I have watched every episode of Murdoch Mysteries twice. I own Team Canada Olympic mittens and a Canadian skater's hat from the world's largest ice skating rink in Ottawa. I think I became Canadian when, almost ten years ago, I found myself queueing outdoors at a craft beer festival in Ottawa in February—and happy about it.

Although regional differences quickly make themselves apparent, it can take time to fully understand the unique personality of Canada and its Jewish community. Canada's history influences its own development and

the development of the cultures and communities that make it what it is. It will evolve along its own path and not according to American trends. That is not to say that we are not influenced by the same trends affecting the large Jewish population to our south. The Canadian Jewish community is certainly experiencing rising intermarriage and antisemitism, polarization, and frustration with Israeli policy, regardless of who is in power. But so do Jewish communities in other countries, and no one claims that they are just steps behind the United States. Nonetheless, with such a large Jewish population brimming with information so close by, it is rare that we get a deep dive into Canadian data.

Following the 2013 Pew report and changes to Canada's long-form census, a Canada-specific study was clearly needed. Anecdotal evidence showed that Canadian Jews were more connected to their Jewish communities, to Judaism, and to Israel. A 2018 survey of Jews in Canada was designed to discover what it means to be Jewish in Canada today, including our unique connection to Israel and Zionism. The data showed that, when it comes to Jewish issues, Canadians punch above their weight.

What weight is that? "The Pew Research Center (2015) estimated that the Jewish population of Canada was thirteen percent larger than that of France as early as 2010," while others believe that Canada will have the third largest population by 2029.[1] Whether Canada's Jewish population is third or fourth in the world, Canada's Zionism is first outside Israel.

From the start, "Zionism was… much more successful in Canada than the United States"[2] The United States's melting pot ideal encouraged all immigrants to become fundamentally American, a theme that would continue for many decades to come. Judaism also became Americanized. Jewish immigrants arrived in a country where Jews had lived since 1654, when twenty-three Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution arrived in New Amsterdam. Jews were present from the early years of the United States; they actively participated in the founding of the nation; settlement houses, established in large immigrant populations, took on the responsibility of teaching new immigrants to be American; and parents encouraged their children to speak only English. Canada's Jewish foundations are different.

[1] Robert Brym, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton, "2018 Survey of Jews in Canada: Final Report," Jewish Data Bank, Environics Institute (March 11, 2019), 11, https://www.jewishdatabank.org/api/download/?studyId=1043&mediaId=bjdb%5c2018_Survey_of_Jews_in_Canada_Final_Report.pdf.

[2] Michael Brown, "Divergent Paths: Early Zionism in Canada and the United States," *Jewish Social Studies* 44, no. 2 (1982): 149.

Initially, non-Catholics were prohibited from entering the colony of New France. The first Jewish settlers in British Canada arrived in connection with the British army, followed by those in the fur trade. Mass immigration came later than it did to the United States. The Canadian Jewish community developed later, more slowly, and through different means than in the United States.

In Canada, Jewish communities remained separate even as they strove to become Canadian. Large numbers arrived from countries where Zionism was already taking hold to a Canada where nationalism was spreading due to the Boer War. These new Canadians were not immune to the nationalistic fervor.

> [M]embership in Zionist societies skyrocketed during the war years, as Canadian Jews came to understand Palestine as 'our fatherland, England, the British Empire as our motherland'.... [Whereas] Zionism seemed to run counter to the whole ethos of America…Americans had been accustomed to thinking of theirs as the new 'promised land,'… the idea of seeking a place in the Palestine sun reeked of ingratitude.[3]

Within ten years of the first Zionist Congress, Canada's Zionist Federation had swelled to forty-two chapters across the country, encompassing all Jewish denominations and levels of society.[4]

The Federation of Zionist Societies of Canada (FZSC) was the first Canadian Jewish national organization. Other Jewish organizations had made their way into Canada, but they were imports based in the United States. Canadian Jews were ready for a homegrown organization free of American influence, and they embraced the Canadian nature of the FZSC by ensuring that the board was filled with Jews from across the country. Annual FZSC conventions offered the community opportunities to address issues and advance interests important to Canadian Jews.[5] The Zionist movement was about more than Zionism. It brought the geographically dispersed communities of Canada closer together, helping to unify Canadian Jews and the Canadian Jewish identity, in which Zionism would be central. This was

[3] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 151.
[4] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 151.
[5] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 158.

true at the start of the twentieth century, and it is still true at the start of the twenty-first.

FZSC was Canadian and embraced as such not only by Jews, but also by greater Canadian society. Toronto's mayor addressed the first convention along with a prominent professor from the University of Toronto and a member of parliament. Subsequent conventions included greetings from Ontario's lieutenant governor and federal government ministers who assured the gathered delegates "that Zionism had the support of the [Dominion] Government.... The Canadian response, both gentile and Jewish, to Herzl's summons was enthusiastic and universal."[6]

It was not all so rosy. Canada's Christian nature combined with its conservative attitudes led to more traditional reactions, both positive and negative, among Jews and the greater Canadian community. Canada is a Christian nation. In the early years of Zionism, religious zeal meant that Jews were often excluded from Canadian life. "Canada's Jews not infrequently viewed themselves and were viewed by others as 'resident aliens.' ... [Finding] themselves 'most significantly devoid of all power,' ... they turned to Zionism."[7] Due to Christian exceptionalism, public schools often were Catholic or Protestant. "For many years Jews were deemed by Quebec legislation to be 'Protestants for school purposes.' ...[Some] came to support Zionism because they could conceive of no proper place for Judaism in Canada."[8] Jews needed to create their own systems not only as a matter of Judaism, but also as a matter of survival. Even today, most Canadian Jews participate in one or more form of Jewish education. Close to half of Canadian Jews were educated in Jewish day school. This high rate of Jewish education leads to greater knowledge, which leads to greater connection.

According to the Canadian Jewish population study,

> attendance levels at day schools or yeshivas are most notably a function of denomination.... [Being] most widespread among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (67%), followed by those who affiliate with one of the smaller denominations or movements (52%), Conservative Jews (43%), those who are unaffiliated (38%), and Reform Jews (24%). Day school experience is also a function of age cohort, with

[6] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 157.
[7] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 163.
[8] Brown, "Divergent Paths," 161.

> attendance levels more than twice as high among Jews eighteen to twenty-nine (68%) than among those fifty-five and older (31%). Across cities, day school attendance is highest in Montreal (54%) and lowest in Vancouver (33%), reflecting in part the denominational makeup of the Jewish community in each city.[9]

Although there is a significant difference in attendance rates from Orthodox to Reform, to say that even one quarter of Jewish children attend day school would be considered an astronomical figure south of the border.

> The positive effect of Jewish schooling on community cohesion is evident. Comparing those who did not attend a Jewish day school or yeshiva with those who attended such schools for nine or more years shows that the latter are much more likely to believe that being part of a Jewish community, celebrating holidays with family, and caring about Israel are essential parts of being Jewish. Those who attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva for nine or more years are also significantly less likely to have intermarried.[10]

Of those who studied in day school one to eight years, 42 percent of Toronto Jews say they are very attached to Israel, with the percentage rising among those who attended for nine or more years. Beyond day school, Israel still figures high in the hearts and minds of Canadian Jews. For those who did not attend day school, Israel still figures high in the hearts and minds of Canadian Jews.

For those who did not attend day school, Israel still figures high in the hearts and minds of Canadian Jews. This translates into Canadians visiting Israel in numbers that almost double American trips and an increased knowledge of and ability to speak Hebrew. Interestingly, "the ability to carry on a conversation is most common among younger Jews and first generation Canadian Jews."[11] Almost twenty five percent of Canadian Jews speak Hebrew at home, including more than 45,000 Israeli Canadians (although

[9] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 41.
[10] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 8.
[11] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 37.

the actual number may be closer to 60,000).[12] Four in ten (40 percent) Canadian Jews say they can carry on a conversation in Hebrew. By comparison, only twelve percent of American Jews say they can do so.[13] Estimates put Israeli expatriates at 14 percent of Canada's Jewish community and growing.[14] Hebrew signs can be seen while driving along Bathurst Street, and I have done as much business in Hebrew while living in Toronto as I did during my seminary year in Israel, not only in Jewish businesses, but with trades and general businesses as well. Just last year, a motion proposed by two Toronto city councillors was approved to include a stretch of Bathurst Street among Toronto's cultural districts. "This area has been the heart and soul of Toronto's Jewish community."[15]

Some of Canada's continuing connection may come from the concentration of Jewish communities. Canada covers 9,984,670 square kilometers.[16] Within that massive area, Jews make up approximately one percent of Canada's population, about 392,000 people. More than 87 percent live in six major metropolitan areas: 82 percent live in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Canada's 2021 census showed that one quarter of the Canadian Jewish population lives in Montreal. Almost one half live in the greater Toronto area.[17] There is an anecdotal belief among Canadian Jews that a majority live not only in the greater Toronto area but within walking distance of Bathurst Street. If you search for "Canadian Jews Bathurst St," you will get over two million results, many listing the myriad synagogues and other Jewish organizations that line the street.

This physical closeness breeds spiritual and familial cohesiveness. My spouse, Rabbi Sean Gorman, was the third rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation when we moved to Toronto. One of his responsibilities was to build and shepherd *ḥavurot* within the congregation. Within five years, only one *ḥavurah* was still functioning. Created as a young families group, the *ḥavurah*'s couples were primarily families who were geographical orphans or

[12] Robert Brym, "What the 2021 Census Reveals about Canada's Jewish Community," *Canadian Jewish News* (December 6, 2022), https://thecjn.ca/news/canada-jewish-census/.
[13] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 37.
[14] Roni Rachmani, "Study: 14% of Canadian Jews Are Israeli Emigrants," *Ynet News* (December 3, 2009), https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3813797,00.html.
[15] Lila Sarick, "New Poll Shows Canadian Jews Dissatisfied with Current Israeli Government's Proposals," *Canadian Jewish News* (March 10, 2022), https://thecjn.ca/news/jspace-nif-poll/.
[16] "Geography," Statistics Canada (January 17, 2018), https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-402-x/2011000/chap/geo/geo-eng.htm.
[17] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 12.

families in which one member of the couple was a convert to Judaism. Why? All the other *ḥavurot* had family obligations on weekends and holidays. Canadian Jews tend to stay where they are. Multigenerational families still gather weekly at parents' homes for Shabbat and holidays. They are much less likely to go away to school, and, when they do, they tend to travel to specific schools where there is a significant Jewish population. When our younger son decided live in a dorm his first year of university, even though he was attending the University of Toronto, his friends and ours were surprised to learn he was thinking about dorm life and even more surprised to hear we were encouraging it. When our eldest went off to university in Nova Scotia, more than one person said to me, "That's because you're American," even though we had been living in Toronto for a decade. The family closeness, the high Jewish education levels, and the lack of mobility encourages each generation to follow not just in the physical footsteps of the previous generation, but more importantly in their ideological path.

The United States claims its revolutionary past with pride. A close friend who grew up in the United States, but who has spent almost his entire life as a Canadian, finally became a Canadian citizen in his fifties. When questioned as to why, he only half-jokingly replied that, as an American, he did not want to swear fealty to the British Queen. I understand his point of view. Queen Elizabeth died just three weeks before I took my citizenship oath. I had prepared myself to affirm "that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada."[18] As Canadian as I consider myself, it unbalanced me to realize that I would instead be affirming allegiance to a king, especially as George VII had been circulated as a possibility for King Charles's royal name.[19] Canada's independence came in 1867, almost a century after the United States, through legislative means and remains part of the British Commonwealth. It is at once progressive and conservative. Only as Queen Elizabeth aged did the number of Canadians who supported a referendum on removing the monarchy from Canada reach a majority. She was, and remains, a beloved monarch.[20] While King Charles's approval rating is only at 32 percent, that

[18] "Study Guide—Discover Canada—The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship," Government of Canada (May 12, 2017), https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada.html.

[19] King George III was the British sovereign at the time of the American Revolutionary War.

[20] Sean Boynton, "Majority of Canadians Want Referendum on Monarchy Ties after Queen's Death: Poll–National," Global News (September 21, 2022), https://globalnews.ca/news/9133546/queen-death-monarchy-canada-ipsos-poll/.

is an increase from a year ago, the increase likely connected to watching him in the role.[21]

Like the rest of Canada, the Canadian Jewish community continues to be more conservative, slower to change. This is true both denominationally and of the Canadian Jewish community as a whole. Our connection to Israel is no different. In examining Canadian Jewish attitudes toward Israel, as mentioned above, the population study found that "a large majority express an emotional attachment to Israel and have spent time in the country. Eight in ten have visited Israel at least once and have done so an average of five times to date"[22] Notwithstanding what is happening in Israel, Canadians continue boots-on-the-ground Zionism. "Among those who have visited the country at least once, one in five (20%) says he or she has lived in Israel for a period of six months or more (this translates into 16% of all adult Canadian Jews)."[23]

While travel to Israel is highest among Orthodox/Modern Orthodox Jews (92%), "it is common across the population, especially among Jews under forty-five years of age (84%) and those with a post-graduate degree (83%)," regardless of denomination.[24] Even where the percentages are lower, a majority still make the trip, including "Jews in Vancouver (64%), those with no affiliation (70%), and those who do not belong to any Jewish organization (63%)."[25] When we compare Canadian and US Zionism, American Jews are only half as likely to feel a strong attachment to Israel and half as likely to have ever visited the country.[26]

The continuing strength of Canadian Zionism may also be a reflection of continuing immigration by Israelis and by Jews fleeing persecution in other countries. Montreal provides a safe haven for French-speaking Jews, second only to Israel. According to the most recent Canadian census, the Canadian Jewish community is growing, primarily through immigration. Although down from the 1990s, "immigration from Ukraine and Russia continues....

[21] Hayatullah Amanat, "Fewer than One-in-Five Canadians Want Monarchy to Continue: Poll," CTV News (March 16, 2023), http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/fewer-than-one-in-five-canadians-want-monarchy-to-continue-poll-1.6315382#:~:text=Only%2032%20per%20cent%20of,feelings%20about%20Queen%20Consort%20Camilla.
[22] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 9.
[23] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton. "2018 Survey," 58.
[24] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 9.
[25] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 5.
[26] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 10.

[T]he Russo-Ukrainian war may reverse that trend. Immigration from Israel and the United States has been trending upward."[27]

With all our Canadian Jewish connection to Israel documented,

> Canadian Jews over the age of seventy-four are twenty percentage points more likely than Canadian Jewish adults under the age of thirty to think that caring for Israel is an essential part of being Jewish.... This is the first Canadian evidence of a trend that has been documented in the United States over decades.[28]

Nevertheless,

> it would be a mistake to base a historical forecast on these data, anticipating that as young Jewish Canadians age, the Canadian Jewish community's support for Israel will weaken; unforeseen events that change people's minds happen all the time. On the other hand, based on these results, it is possible to say that, barring unanticipated events that elicit an increase in young Jewish Canadians' concern for Israel, the Canadian Jewish community may be somewhat less inclined to offer unqualified support for the Jewish state with the passage of time.[29]

Canadian Jews, like their US counterparts, are not monolithic neither in their views of Israel's politics or government policies, nor in how they believe the Canadian government should support Israel. "The one notable difference is that American Jews are more apt to hold an opinion (whether positive or negative), while Canadian Jews have a greater tendency to say they are unsure or decline to offer an opinion."[30] Younger Jews here, as elsewhere, are increasingly critical of Israeli policies, which may come to affect the Canadian Jewish community's and the Canadian government's support of Israel.

[27] Brym, "What the 2021 Census Reveals."
[28] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 21.
[29] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 21.
[30] Brym, Neuman, and Lenton, "2018 Survey," 10.

While most Canadian Jews appear comfortable with the government's current levels of support, there are significant numbers on both sides of the support spectrum. Recent changes in Israel's government are certainly taking their toll. Recently, the New Israel Fund of Canada and Jspace Canada commissioned a poll, which found that "a majority of Canadian Jews feel that Israel is moving in the wrong direction." This is unsurprising to many, coming two months after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formed his right-wing coaltion. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis continue to protest policies of judicial reform and infringement on civil rights.[31] Since then,

> [p]rominent Canadian Jews have also voiced objections to the Israeli government's proposed judicial reforms. Irwin Cotler, former justice minister and the current envoy on antisemitism, wrote in an essay in the *Globe and Mail* that the proposed changes to the Israeli Supreme Court "if adopted, will have the combined effect of seriously undermining the independence of the judiciary, its ability to review government legislation, the separation of powers and related checks and balances, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights."[32]

It is less the attachment to Israel that is changing than the way Canadian Jews express that attachment.

> Three quarters of respondents said that they are either "very attached" (thirty-four percent) or "somewhat attached" (forty-one percent) to Israel. Professor Robert Brym, of the Department of Sociology and Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, who oversaw the survey said more surveys are needed to corroborate the findings. "However, this poll provides a fair baseline representation of Jewish community perspectives in issues of viral importance to the approximately 404,000 Canadians who identify as Jewish by religion or ethnicity."[33]

[31] Sarick, "New Poll."
[32] Sarick, "New Poll."
[33] Sarick, "New Poll."

Canadians, including Canadian Jews, are concerned that the Israel they love will be forever changed. With so many Canadian Jews feeling connected to Israel, spending so much time in Israel, and having family in Israel, major changes to policies that affect values seen by the Canadian Jewish community to be shared between Canada and Israel and part of their own set of Jewish values receive strong opposition. I recently attended a session on foreign policy at a conference sponsored by Canada's conservative movement. Support for Israel was strongly affirmed and received applause. One speaker did state that we must treat Israel like any other country. When we see commitment to certain institutions being weakened, we must speak up like we would to any other country, to any of our friends and allies. I expect this is a line we will be hearing more in the future. In the current atmosphere of rising antisemitism, there is certainly a concern that silence from Jewish leadership may give strength to antisemites. Of course, there is a difference between quiet and silence, and disagreement on the path the Jewish community should follow.

Canadian Zionism, even in its criticism of Israel, remains strong. More and more, I see Canadian Jews comfortable speaking out when they disagree, considering this to be an act of Zionist love for their homeland, a country to which they continue to have a very strong attachment. Much like the relationships within a family ebb and flow without lessening the familial bonds, so, too, is the likely path of Canadian Zionism, from praise to criticism and back, even in one breath. We will continue to have two homes holding our hearts and minds.

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La influencia de los Festivales de la Música Jasídica en la liturgia del Movimiento Conservador

Luis Cattan

Sería una tarea casi interminable enumerar todas las composiciones musicales que a lo largo de estos 75 años consiguieron un lugar en las liturgia del movimiento conservador. Desde *Shabat Hamalkah* (o comúnmente conocida como *Hajama Merosh*,) basada en el poema de Bialik y compuesta por el Jazan Pinjas Minkovsky alrededor de 1905 hasta la más reciente *Seder Avoda* de *Yshai Ribo* pasando por el Ose Shalom de Nava Tehilah, la música israelí ha generado numerosas composiciones que fueron adoptadas por las comunidades. Al final de este articulo menciono algunas melodías que forman parte de nuestros servicios y que actualmente consideramos "*tradicionales*". Las mismas tienen sus orígenes en los festivales de la música jasídica que tuvieron lugar en Israel entre los años 1969 y 1992. Mas precisamente composiciones musicales que han sido y actualmente son en muchos casos, cantadas en sinagogas a lo largo de continente americano, Europa e Israel. En este articulo intentaremos analizar las influencias musicales de dichos festivales y sus interacciones con la sociedad israelí y las comunidades de la diáspora.

Carlebach como precursor de los Festivales de la Canción Jasídica

Los festivales de la canción jasídica que tuvieron lugar en Israel a partir del año 1969 y hasta 1992 tuvieron su origen en un contexto histórico y musical determinado. A mediados de los años 1960 el rabino y compositor folklórico Shlomo Carlebach creó un nuevo modelo de música religiosa que incorporó elementos de la música contemporánea. Podemos encontrar en sus composiciones elementos marcados del jazz, rock, como así también los elementos tradicionales de la música klezmer. Para la autora Shifra Furst[1], Carlebach fue el precursor musical de los estilos que luego se

[1] Furst, Shifra פסטיבלי המוסיקה הפופולרית כראי של תמורות בחברה הישראלית חיבור לשם קבלת תואר מוסמך למדעי הרוח (M.A.) 1999 העבודה בוצעה בהדרכתו של פרופ' אדוין סרוסי תשנ"ט

vieron expuestos en los festivales de la música jasídica. Esto no quiere decir que la música jasídica *"autentica"*- es decir la que se mantuvo en su forma más pura, sin incorporar otros elementos musicales contemporáneos- no sigue existiendo como tal. Lo que los musicólogos coinciden en afirmar es que hoy en día música jasídica como género abarca no solamente la música tradicional, sino que también incluye composiciones que se basan en los textos sagrados -sea bíblicos o de la liturgia- e incorpora elementos musicales contemporáneos. Carlebach creó un nuevo modelo basado en las antiguas melodías de Europa del este. Sus melodías atraparon al público religioso ortodoxo, conservador y secular por igual. El estilo de Carlebach consta de tres elementos principales (Breuer 1966)[2]:

1. Combinación de estilos variados.
2. Uso de líneas musicales primitivas y, por lo tanto, altamente pegadizas.
3. Performance popular. No profesional.

La combinación ecléctica de estilos de Europa occidental y oriental, la canción folclórica de la Primera Aliá y el uso de medios musicales simples como las melodías y los ritmos pueden ser constatadas en la mayoría de sus piezas. Muchas de sus composiciones son similares entre sí; suenan parecido y mantienen melodías similares o progresiones armónicas idénticas. Pero, sobre todo, Carlebach es un cantante popular, no un profesional, y eso lo convierte en accesible para un público que puede identificarse con él y cantar juntos.

La música de Carlebach fue fervientemente recibida por la sociedad observante de la década de los '60 probablemente porque incorporó elementos musicales *"foráneos"*, pertenecientes a la música de la época y creó el campo fértil para la aceptación y legitimación de nuevos géneros, como el Rock y el Jazz. Al incorporar esos elementos, la música de Carlebach le abrió las puertas de la sociedad ortodoxa a los nuevos géneros musicales.

El Festival de la Canción Jasídica, lanzado por el productor Miki Peled después de la Guerra de los Seis Días, incluyó varios artistas importantes, como Shlomo Carlebach, quien escribió al menos una canción para cada festival, el Dúo Re'im, Shlomo Artzi, Avi Toledano, Yaffa Yarkoni, Geula Gil,

[2] Citado por Shifra Furst

Shimi Tavori, Tzvika Pik, Nurit Hirsh, entre varios otros. Desde el primer festival en 1969, las grabaciones se publicaron cada año en disco de vinilo y en casetes.

Un elemento que influyó en el éxito de esos festivales[3] es que la situación social en Israel a fines de la década de 1960 permitió el crecimiento del festival jasídico, tanto en términos de la aceptación por parte del público secular hacia la tradición, como en términos del estado del público nacional-religioso en la sociedad israelí. Hasta la década de 1960, el público secular se identificaba con la ideología del hebreo, que se basa en la conciencia de la "negación del exilio". Lo *galútico* era desdeñado. Por lo tanto, las manifestaciones musicales como la canción jasídica no eran apreciadas. Sin embargo, durante la década de 1960, como resultado de los procesos de globalización y la penetración de las influencias occidentales, esta ideología fue socavada y fue reemplazada gradualmente por una ¨*israelidad* más equilibrada, una "*nueva israelidad*". En la década de 1970, los israelíes estaban más abiertos al pluralismo social e ideológico. No necesitaban negar el exilio para definirse a sí mismos. Tal vez todo lo contrario, aceptando las diferencias su identidad se solidificaba.

> *"Junto con el cambio en la actitud del secularismo hacia la tradición judía, ha habido un cambio para mejor en el estado del público nacional-religioso en la sociedad israelí. Este público, que pertenece al sionismo religioso, fue un factor bastante marginal en el campo nacional-cultural en las décadas de 1950 y 1960. Sin embargo, después de la Guerra de los Seis Días, en la que el estado conquistó la mayor parte del territorio de la Tierra de Israel, su estado cambió más allá del reconocimiento. El sionismo religioso, que aboga por la vida de acuerdo con la ley judía con modernidad en la vida cotidiana, ha interpretado en la práctica los mandamientos de establecerse en la tierra, especialmente en Judea y Samaria. Se percibía a sí misma como una cultura indígena local y como el cumplidor de los mandatos bíblicos, especialmente con respecto al asentamiento y la conexión con la tierra. En la década de 1970, por lo tanto, la posición del sionismo religioso se agudizó y fortaleció, a la luz del*

[3] Furst, Shifra.

debilitamiento de la identidad hebrea durante estos años. (Regev 1999)".[4]

El primer Festival de la Canción Jasídica

El primer Festival de la Canción Jasídica tuvo lugar en Simjat Torá 1969. El término canción jasídica denota lo israelí y lo religioso al mismo tiempo. Lo primero que observamos es que el propio nombre del festival es similar al Festival de la Canción Israelí[5] que ya venía teniendo algunas ediciones en los años previos con mucho éxito. Otro elemento para destacar es que podemos observar una síntesis muy sugestiva entre la temática religiosa y los artistas seculares. Los compositores y los cantantes en su mayoría no eran observantes, sino que inspirados por el texto sagrado decidieron participar del festival. Un elemento innovador que fue altamente criticado fue la inclusión de voces femeninas en la vasta mayoría de las interpretaciones. El rol de la mujer en los festivales como compositoras o como artistas y su inclusión absoluta refleja los valores de la sociedad secular Israeli y trascendió parcialmente al ámbito ortodoxo. Los ortodoxos que no aceptaron la participación de las mujeres vieron sus necesidades reflejadas en otra iniciativa similar que no incluyo mujeres y que tuvo mucho menos éxito de audiencia.

Otro de los elementos que más fueron criticados por parte de los ortodoxos en Israel fue en uso de vestuario no tradicional y más a la moda y arreglos musicales y coreografías contemporáneos. Esto generó una reducción en la participación de las audiencias ortodoxas, lo que en definitiva determinó una pérdida económica para los organizadores. Pese a ello dos canciones ganadoras del festival, *Ose Shalom* compuesta por Nurit Hirsch y *V´aher Einenu* compuesta por Shlomo Carlebach subieron a los rankings más altos de las radios en ese momento. Esas canciones y su éxito revelaron el vacío que existía en el mercado del género jasídico. El vacío puede entenderse desde el punto de vista social por ese rechazo a la diáspora que sentían los israelíes de la época de la fundación del Estado. El renacimiento de la música Jasídica puede entenderse como el resultado de esa relación ambivalente del israelí con la diáspora, que con nostalgia pretende reavivar y adaptar esa música a su vida contemporánea.

[4] Furst, Shifra

[5] Estos festivales de música popular tuvieron lugar durante el periodo 1960-1980

Los Elementos innovadores de los festivales

Se puede decir que los festivales de la música jasídica tuvieron como premisa reavivar el gusto por el género. Podemos encontrar en ellos algunos elementos innovadores algunos de los cuales mencionamos previamente como las orquestaciones que responden al gusto estético de la época.

Los arreglos mayoritariamente constaban de instrumentos de cuerdas, de viento, batería, bajo, guitarra eléctrica y en algunos casos algunos instrumentos del Medio Oriente. La inclusión de estos instrumentos como así también de los arreglos responde la necesidad de ejecutar las composiciones de acuerdo con los ritmos y géneros preferidos por las audiencias de las diferentes décadas en las que los festivales tuvieron lugar. Es así como las composiciones que muchas veces incluían ritmos de Europa del este, de donde la canción jasídica es originaria también incluían otros ritmos por ejemplo rock and roll y jazz por mencionar algunos.

Los compositores de las canciones seleccionadas y sus obras.

La siguiente lista de compositores y canciones es el resultado de un relevamiento de las grabaciones de todos los festivales de la canción jasídica. He decidido incluir aquí solamente aquellas que han trascendido el tiempo y las distancias para convertirse en clásicos de nuestras tefilot. Al escuchar cada uno de los discos se puede apreciar la calidad musical de los arreglos, de las orquestaciones, el entusiasmo del público y la sentida interpretación de los cantantes. Desde luego que esta lista no pretende excluir otras composiciones que quizás hayan entrado en la liturgia contemporánea pero que han tenido menos repercusión. Esta nómina pretende proveer una imagen de los orígenes populares de las melodías y de la síntesis entre la secularidad israelí y la religiosidad de sus compositores cuyo legado es probablemente infravalorado si lo dimensionamos con el impacto global de sus composiciones.

1. Ose Shalom (1969) Shir Hamaalot (1973) :Nurit Hirsh_

Compositora, directora de orquesta, arreglista y pianista israelí, ganadora del Premio Israel en la categoría de la canción hebrea. Con una carrera prolífica en la que se pueden contar más de mil seiscientas canciones. Nació en 1942 y creció en Tel Aviv. Hirsch se graduó en la Academia de Música

Rubin con especialización en piano, composición, dirección y orquestación. Estudió composición en Nueva York y se graduó en la Universidad de California en Los Ángeles, en el campos de la música para cine y música electrónica. Compuso la música de canciones fundamentales del cancionero israelí como Peraj Halilaj, Bashana Habaa, Lalejet Shebi Ajaraij, Ei Sham con la cual Israel participó por primera vez en Eurovisión. En esa ocasión la letra la compuso Ehud Manor, con quien colaboró en infinidad de canciones, entre ellas Abanibi, que llegó al primer premio en Eurovisión 1978.

2. Adon Olam (1976) Uzi Hitman

Fue uno de los creadores más destacados de la canción Israeli. Compuso en variedad de estilos. Entre otros, escribió letras y melodías para canciones infantiles, música oriental, música pop, música jasídica y canciones de la Eretz Israel. El padre de Hitman era jazan judío observante y su madre era secular. Hitman creció en un hogar religioso-tradicional que veía el pluralismo como un valor importante. Tal vez por eso su interés en participar en el festival de la música jasídica.

El estilo musical de Hitman también estuvo influenciado por el pluralismo de la casa de sus padres. De niño escuchaba regularmente las melodías de las oraciones en la sinagoga, los discos de jazanut y, al mismo tiempo, los discos de pop y rock que compraba, como los de los Beatles y los Rolling Stones y cantantes de rock como Elvis Presley y registros de diferentes estilos musicales en diferentes idiomas europeos.

3. Od Ishama, (1972) Adir Hu, (1973) Uvau Haovdim (1974): Rabino Shlomo Carlebach

Muchos académicos lo catalogan como el precursor del género de la música original judía. Rabino, guía espiritual, cantante, compositor y narrador judío estadounidense nacido en Berlín en 1925 y fallecido en 1994. Fue conocido por su apodo "El rabino cantante", precursor y fundador de un género musical que lleva su nombre, y es considerado uno de los más grandes cantantes jasídicos del siglo XX. Compuso y grabó más de 1000 melodías y canciones.

4. Ievarejeja (1970): David Tzvi Wainkrantz

Músico y compositor israelí nacido en 1947. En el año 1964, viviendo en Zijron Yaacov ganó el primer puesto del Jidón Hatanaj de Hanoar Haoved vehaLomed. Dentro de sus actividades, solía acompañar al Rav Shlomo Carlebach con el acordeón en sus actuaciones en Israel. Continúa dirigiendo coros y organizando eventos de shira betzibur.

5. Or Jadash (1973), Ivdu et Hashem (1973), Malchutcha Leju Neranena (1974), M: Reuben Sirotkin

Compositor de música jasídica israelí nacido en Jerusalem en 1933. Hijo de Zvi y Dinah-Leah Sirotkin, ultraortodoxos profundamente arraigados en la Ciudad Vieja. Cuando era adolescente, Sirotkin se unió al Leji. En su vida diaria se desempeñó como empleado de banco y ahora se encuentra jubilado. Sirotkin es un ejemplo de creación popular. Un empleado bancario sin preparación musical, pero con un talento fuera de serie para componer melodías. Sus composiciones lograron participar de los festivales año tras año y muchas como las que mencionamos arriba permanecen en el cancionero popular judío mundial. Al respecto, en una entrevista en el año 1978 Sirotkin dijo: ¨hay quienes dicen que mis canciones suenan como canciones folclóricas y yo no me sorprendo por ese punto al contrario, yo soy un compositor del pueblo para el pueblo."

6. Al Shlosha Devarim (1970): Jaim Tzur

Violinista, compositor, productor y editor de programas en Kol Israel. Nacido en Jerusalem en 1938, fallecido en 2017. Estudió en la Academia de música y baile de Jerusalem. A los 20 años Además de componer las músicas jasídicas, también se ocupó del cancionero sefaradí, a través de programas en la radio Kol Israel.

7. Sim Shalom (1970): Yeshayahu "Shaike" Paikov

Músico, compositor, arreglador, director y escritor israelí nacido en 1937. Realizó estudios musicales en la escuela de música de Oranim y aprendió a tocar la mandolina, piano y acordeón. Participó como combatiente reservista en las guerras de los 6 días y la guerra de Iom Kipur. Muchas de sus

composiciones musicales surgieron a partir de dichas experiencias.

8. Ki Mi Tzion (1970) Natan Shajar

Musicólogo, compositor, arreglador y director de coros israelí nacido en 1937 y fallecido en 2021. Nació en Tel Aviv y se mudó con su familia al kibutz Ein Jarod. Estudió en el Conservatorio Academia de Música Rubin y luego musicología en Bar Ilan, donde se especializó en investigar sobre el canto hebreo. Publicó diversos libros y artículos. Creó la materia música para la bagrut (la preparatoria para la universidad) y creó y dirigió varios coros con quienes grabó varios discos.

9. Sim Shalom (1972), Shalom Rav (1974): Rami Bar Niv

Músico, pianista y profesor israelí nacido en Tel Aviv en 1945.Es egresado del Conservatorio Israelí de música de Tel Aviv, donde estudió piano y composición. Recibió una beca para estudiar en Estados Unidos con grandes pianistas. Se cuenta entre los primeros músicos israelíes que se presentaron en Egipto luego de la firma del tratado de paz.

10. Shma Israel (1972), Sheejeianu(1973): Tzvika Pik

Estas dos composiciones son posiblemente de las más cantadas en las sinagogas junto con Ose Shalom (Hirsch) y Adon Olam (Hitman) Tzvika Pik fue cantante, compositor, músico y actor israelí nacido en 1949, fallecido en 2022. Se hizo famoso cuando fue elegido para protagonizar el papel principal (Claude) en el musical *"Hair"*, que se presentó en Israel en 1970. Pik también compuso la canción "Diva" interpretada por Dana International, que ganó el Festival de la Canción de Eurovisión de 1998.

11. Sim Shalom (1974) compuesta por Ruth Adler,

Yedid Nefesh(1970) escrita por la pareja Ehud y Sarah Zwaig y Hine ma Tov (1970) compuesta por David Erlij

son composiciones que integran esta lista pero de cuyos compositores no hay información disponible.

Como llegaron estas canciones a las comunidades judías fuera de Israel

La participación de compositores y cantantes de origen no israelí en los festivales fue común a lo largo de las décadas. Como mencionamos anteriormente Carlebach fue un contribuyente permanente de los festivales. Además de él encontramos otros compositores como por ejemplo Debbie Friedman y Sol Zim. Además de los compositores también encontramos intérpretes que no eran originarios de Israel como por ejemplo el grupo *Yeshivat Hatfutzot*, compuesto de 3 cantantes aficionados inmigrantes de Estados Unidos y que recientemente se habían convertido en *jozrei bitshuva*.

Esto hizo que los organizadores del festival pusieran la mira en el mercado estadounidense. A partir de allí y por varios años en la década de los setenta y ochenta una "versión de exportación" se presentaba en diferentes escenarios principalmente en Estados Unidos. Con respecto a la relación entre Israel y la diáspora no fue suficiente la importación de melodías del exterior, sino que también el festival salió hacia afuera. Junto con cada festival se producía un espectáculo que constaba de una selección de canciones de los festivales jasídicos y tenía como publico destinatario a las comunidades en el exterior en donde había demanda importante para este tipo de entretenimiento. Estos festivales en su versión paralela fueron muy exitosos. Hay quienes afirman que inclusive fueron considerados embajadores de Israel en la diáspora.

A modo de conclusión

Los primeros setenta y cinco años del Estado de Israel nos ha regalado un sinnúmero de creaciones culturales a los judíos de la diáspora. Si nos centramos en particular en las contribuciones de la música israelí a las tefilot de nuestro movimiento podemos encontrar muchas y muy buenas contribuciones. Las mismas reflejan el sentido innovador por el que Israel se hizo famosa en áreas como tecnología y ciencia. El rol de los festivales de la canción jasídica es de destacar por diversas razones.

1. Creó un marco genuino de creatividad a través del cual se expresaron compositores israelíes de diversos orígenes, extracción cultural, social y religioso que hicieron que los antiguos textos tomaran vida en los hogares de las nuevas generaciones seculares en Israel y por

consecuencia en la diáspora. Las mismas razones por las que el festival se convirtió en un éxito popular fueron las que por el contrario hizo que los más críticos que se encontraban en la sociedad ultraortodoxa se opusieran a estos cambios.

2. Ofició de puente entre la diáspora e Israel en diversos planos como por ejemplo el intercambio de composiciones entre artistas israelíes y estadounidenses, la conexión entre la sociedad secular israelí y los movimientos no ortodoxos en Estados Unidos, y por último la exposición del mundo religioso no ortodoxo en la diáspora a cantantes israelíes que además de participar en los festivales jasídicos también componían y cantaban canciones seculares israelíes; como es el caso de Zvika Pic, Uzi Hitman y obviamente Nurit Hirsch.

3. Dio impulso a un nuevo género musical como el de la música judía original (basada en textos religiosos) que actualmente está siendo considerado para ser incluido como categoría en los premios Grammy. Esto demuestra el crecimiento y la profesionalización que probablemente haya comenzado hace más de cinco décadas con los festivales.

4. En épocas en donde las comunidades de Israel y la diáspora están atravesando dificultades de relacionamiento es oportuno recordar que existe un puente que nunca se ha cerrado: el de la música.

Luis Cattan es jazan y rabino y reside en Estados Unidos. Es el actual presidente de la Cantors Assembly. Originario de Uruguay en donde colaboró en la fundación de Masorti Uruguay actualmente sirve como jazan en Sutton Place Synagogue en Nueva York.

The African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem

Joseph Yudin

This article examines the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem (AHIJ) and their place in the movement that came to be known as "Black Judaism." Although its origin may be traced to a number of different historical circumstances, Black Judaism emerged most prominently in the nineteenth-century Americas in the context of evangelical Protestantism.[1] Mainstream Jewish movements do not recognize Black Judaism or any of its offshoots as Jewish movements. In the following pages, I present a brief history of Black Judaism, with particular emphasis on the AHIJ.

The Early Years: William Saunders Crowdy and His Revelation

William Saunders Crowdy, a Black Civil War veteran, laid the foundation stone for the creation of the Hebrew Israelites. On September 13, 1892, Crowdy heard what he believed was the voice of God, commanding him to establish a church rooted in both the Old and New Testaments.[2] Following this instruction, Crowdy styled himself the "World's Evangelist" and adopted a number of "Hebraic practices" for his new "true church." He preached that Jesus was Black and promoted the idea that African Americans were the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel.[3]

Crowdy was not the first Black figure to make such claims. In 1888, the Black pastor Reverend William Christian, a former enslaved person from Wrightsville, Arkansas, asserted Israelite descent for African Americans (he also stated that all non-Africans were descended from Satan).[4] In 1913, David Ben Itzock and Henry Itzock, who claimed to be Ethiopian Jews, declared that "the Negro is the right Jew" and advocated the mass immigra-

[1] James E. Landing, *Black Judaism: Story of an American Movement* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2002), 15.
[2] Jacob S. Dorman, Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 38–39.
[3] For the idea that Jesus was Black, see Dorman, *Chosen People*, 39–45. For African Americans as descendants of the lost tribes, see Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (New York: Abingdon, 1965), 152.
[4] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 88–89.

tion of Black Americans to Ethiopia.[5] In 1915, a certain Prophet F. S. Cherry of Philadelphia preached that the Blacks were the seed of Jacob, who was Black, and that white Jews were "interlopers and fraud(s)."[6] While these figures shared theologies and practices with Crowdy, he went further in his appropriation of Jewish holidays, rituals, and customs.

Beginning in 1892, Crowdy preached from Texas to Illinois, making a name for himself as the "Black Elijah." It was probably during his preaching in Chicago that his followers became known as "Black Jews."[7] By 1897, Crowdy had declared himself chief bishop, selected twelve "elders" and an assistant bishop, and established branches of his church, the Church of God and Saints of Christ, in twenty-seven towns throughout the United States.[8] Crowdy's church and Christian's Church of the Living God are the seedbed institutions to which all Black Jewish movements can be traced.[9]

Theologically speaking, Crowdy's churches were a mixed bag. They observed the Sabbath on Saturday and practiced infant circumcision (*berit milah*), for example, but they also endorsed the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. By 1899, the Church of God and Saints of Christ had celebrated their first national Passover and counted twenty-three tabernacles, along with eight bishops, in the state of Kansas alone. Around the turn of the century, Bishop Crowdy began teaching that African Americans were the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Shortly thereafter, his church adopted the Hebrew calendar and increasingly emphasized Jewish and Old Testament holidays and festivals. The Passover festival would later become the central holiday for the AHIJ, among whom it was known as the "New World Passover."[10] In May 1899, Crowdy baptized over one thousand people in New York City alone, and new congregations began to spring up throughout New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. His church continued spreading throughout North America and the Caribbean, as it made its headquarters in Philadelphia.[11]

[5] Israel J. Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers: American Blacks in Search of Jewish Identity* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David, 1977), 69–70. The continent of Africa, which includes the Land of Israel in Black Israelite ideology, was often referred to as "Ethiopia" in the movement's formative years.

[6] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 70.

[7] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 52.

[8] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 43.

[9] Landing, *Black Judaism*, xiii.

[10] John L. Jackson, Jr., *Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 2.

[11] Beersheba Crowdy Walker, *Life and Works of William Saunders Crowdy* (Philadelphia, PA:

The Next Steps: Wentworth A. Matthew, Arnold Josiah Ford, and Marcus Garvey

Arguably, the figure who most profoundly shaped the Black Jewish movements in North America and the Caribbean was Rabbi Wentworth A. Matthew, founder of the Beth HaTephila Ethiopian Congregation in Harlem, New York. Matthew, who came to be considered the "best-known Black Jewish leader" of his time, arrived in the United States in 1919 from Saint Kitts and immediately founded a "Jewish" congregation, the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation.[12]

Matthew may have had some Jewish ancestry. In 1723, some one hundred persons, or 25 percent, of the population of the tiny Caribbean island nation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, were Jews. Most of these individuals were Sephardic, Jewish people of color whose ancestors had fled the Inquisition to Brazil, from which they were then expelled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many Jews of the Caribbean produced offspring, both legitimate and illegitimate, with enslaved Africans and other freed or free residents. The community of Nevis is the only possible known direct genetic link between Black Hebrew Israelites and the Jewish people of today or the Israelites/Hebrews of antiquity. There is no other historical evidence to support the claim that descendants of Black enslaved people in the Americas are descendants of the ancient Jews or Israelites.

Whereas Crowdy was born and raised as an enslaved person in nineteenth-century America and was exposed to Jews and Judaism only through Scripture, Matthew grew up in Saint Kitts among Jews and non-Jews who were the offspring of Jews. He claimed to have been ordained by the Hebrew Union College in 1923, allegedly becoming the first Black ordained rabbi in America. He did apply to become a member of the New York Board of Rabbis, but they rejected his application because he was originally "ordained" by a "Hebrew Israelite rabbi," Arnold Josiah Ford, who was unrecognized by

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E. J. P. Walker, 1955), 59–60.

[12] Sam Kestenbaum, "Hebrew Israelites Celebrate Rabbi Who Founded Their Century-Old Movement," *The Forward* (June 24, 2016), https://forward.com/news/343526/hebrew-israelites-celebrate-rabbi-who-founded-their-century-old-movement. See also Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 70. His arrival from Saint Kitts is disputed. Some believe he was born in Ethiopia; others claim Ghana, Lagos, or Nigeria; while still others say that he had a Jewish father whose own father was from Ethiopia and a Christian mother from the British West Indies; see Sholomo Ben Levy, "Biography of Rabbi Wentworth Arthur Matthew," Black Jews, Israelites…and Our Friends, https://www.blackjews.org/biography-of-rabbi-wentworth-arthur-matthew/.

the established Jewish body. Friction has dogged the relationship between Jews and Hebrew Israelites ever since.

Matthew and Ford were heavily influenced by the Black nationalist and publicly declared antisemite Marcus Garvey, who claimed that Jesus had not been a Jew at all.[13] Garvey, born and raised in Jamaica, was considered a prophet in the Rastafarian religion. He was also a successful businessman who owned a newspaper company. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and had the ears of millions of followers both in New York City and throughout the Americas. At the turn of the twentieth century, Garvey teamed up with the renowned sociologist W. E. B. DuBois to spearhead the "Back to Africa" movement. In so doing, the two men sought to instill a sense of pride and purpose among the African American populace of their time. In Garvey's theology, Blacks were the chosen people of God.[14] Drawing on the biblical imagery that had powered Harriet Tubman's efforts to free the African American enslaved people of the South and the Back to Africa ethos, Garvey would brand his own followers as "Zionists."[15]

As one of Garvey's most ardent followers, Ford served as an officer in the UNIA. Following Garvey's arrest for mail fraud in 1923 (Garvey blamed his incarceration on a Jewish conspiracy), Ford announced that he would now "lead the Black race."[16] Accordingly, he established a congregation, which he called Beth B'nai Israel, and took on the title of "rabbi." Garvey's arrest led to the collapse of his movement, but his ideas moved from the nationalist sphere to the religious one. Although he was deported back to Jamaica and died in the United Kingdom in 1936, his influence significantly shaped the various Black Jewish, Hebrew Israelite, Nation of Islam, and Rastafarian religions.[17]

In a conscious effort to distinguish his congregants from the Jewish people, Ford referred to the former as "Hebrews" or "Israelites." While living in his native Barbados, Ford had rejected Christianity as the "white man's

[13] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 14.
[14] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 12–13.
[15] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 12.
[16] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 119–20, 133.
[17] Barry Chevannes, "Millennialism in the Caribbean," in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 422–24; E. Ellis Cashmore, "'Get Up, Stand Up': The Rastafarian Movement," in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy*, ed. James Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper, and Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1987), 423–24; and Landing, *Black Judaism*, 375.

religion" and embraced a form of Judaism, while preaching that Blacks were descended from the ancient Hebrews.[18] Ford likened the Black exile from Africa to the exile of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Black immigrants from the Caribbean flooded the United States between 1899 and 1929, just as a similar influx of Eastern European Jews were arriving. New York City became a nexus for interaction between these groups. By 1930, 25 percent of the inhabitants of Harlem in Manhattan were Caribbean-born, and many of them became followers of Rabbi Ford.[19] By 1931, eight distinct Black Jewish sects had arisen in Harlem.[20] The members of these sects, who originated from the West Indies and were initially drawn to the Christian Holiness Movement, later adopted some of the beliefs of their Eastern European Jewish neighbors after coming under the influence of Rabbi Ford and others.[21]

In the 1920s, Ford and Matthew appropriated the identity of Ethiopian Jewry, declaring that the Black people of the Americas were the descendants of the original Hebrews, as the Ethiopian Jews claim to be, and that Christianity had been forced upon them by slavery. They maintained this claim despite the fact that the bulk of their congregation was of West Indies descent. Ford now began using the term "Hebrews" for African Americans, stating that "white" Jews were late converts to Judaism in the Khazar Khaganate and not descended from the original Israelites.[22] He and Matthew blended their new theology together with eschatology and a uniquely Black nationalist bent. Arguing that the Arabic and Hebrew languages were native to Africa, Matthew assigned Hebrew names to his congregants. Additionally, he incorporated into his movement a number of Islamic religious practices, including the observance of Ramadan.[23]

With Rabbi Ford's ill-fated attempt to settle in Ethiopia, where he resided from late 1930 until his death in 1935, Ford's protégé, Rabbi Matthew, became the leader of the Original Hebrew Israelite community, a position he held until his death in 1972. It was while Ford was in Ethiopia that he "ordained" Matthew, in May 1931. Ford mailed Matthew his "rabbinic certification" papers from Addis Ababa. It was always assumed that (what was

[18] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 14.
[19] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 115.
[20] Howard M. Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem: Negro Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Negro Leadership* (New York: Schocken, 1970), 10.
[21] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 115, 118.
[22] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 71.
[23] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 130.

thought to be) the Amharic section of the certificate was formal recognition from the long-established Ethiopian Jewish community, but it turns out to have been written by Ford himself.[24]

In 1970, the number of Black Jews in Harlem was estimated to be one thousand souls. Rabbi Matthew led this community in prayer every Saturday, in Hebrew, at the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation. He became the Hebrew Israelites' foremost influencer, often claiming to possess miraculous powers.[25] At this time, Matthew presided over the largest Black Jewish sect in New York.[26]

For a time, Matthew was associated with Elijah Robert Poole (or, Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam as well as the mentor of Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan). Poole suggested that Matthew start a religious movement that was entirely disconnected from Judaism as, in his view, Matthew and his followers would never be accepted as Jews. Some scholars argue that the Black Islamic movements, including the Nation of Islam, are direct offshoots of Black Judaism.[27] What is clear is that the movement and its leaders had an immense impact on the various Black Islamic and Black national movements.

Rabbi Matthew practiced a form of Black Israelite religion that featured Jewish traditions and liturgy, and he ordained at least a dozen "rabbis" during the fifty years of his active pulpit. At the same time, Matthew's private writings reveal his adherence to the Holiness Movement and spiritual healing, an aversion to modern medicine, and an endorsement of the Methodist practice of dual baptism. Notably, at least until the year 1944, these writings also show Matthew's belief in Jesus as the messiah.

In 1934, Matthew assembled a Rosh Hashanah gathering of Black Israelite leaders and rabbis in Harlem, further broadcasting himself as a self-styled "Chief Rabbi of the Black Jews of the Western Hemisphere." Two years later, Matthew would claim that the emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia had declared him "Chief Rabbi" and "official representative of the Falasian order of African Jews."[28] Matthew himself went even further, suggesting that he was Jesus incarnate. During a communal Passover seder at which a group of "elders" were seated, he announced, "I know one of you will betray me."[29]

[24] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 206.
[25] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 152.
[26] Brotz, *Black Jews*, 13–14.
[27] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 375.
[28] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 71.
[29] Brotz, *Black Jews*, 39–40, 50.

Later, Ben Ammi ben Israel would use this same tactic, hinting that he himself was the messiah.[30]

By the time of his death in 1973, Rabbi Matthew had created a new religion and shaped a new identity for his community. Matthew constructed his version of Black Judaism from a diverse range of religions and ideas including, among others, traditional Judaism, Christianity, Voodoo, and other assorted Afro-Caribbean customs, as well as Masonic ideals, occultism, and mysticism. Matthew identified the Africans as descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and rejected the claim of "white" Jews to be the descendants of the ancient Israelites.[31] According to Matthew, the Jews were the descendants of Esau and the Edomites, the ancient enemies of the people of Israel.[32]

The leaders of the various Black Jewish movements sought to differentiate between the sects, some purposefully violating traditional Jewish customs by acts such as eating pork products. But there was consensus on the idea that Jesus was a Jew, albeit a "Black Jew" who was "lynched" by the non-Jews.[33] Ben Ammi ben Israel, founder of the (AHIJ) would later brand the Jewish people as "gentiles" or even satanic in nature.[34]

The cultural Black nationalism that would take the reins of the civil rights movement in the United States emerged in the wake of Black Jewish movements that claimed links to the ancient Israelites and Ethiopian Jewry as a form of "divine identity."[35] These movements, although grounded in an eventual redemption of their people in "Palestine" through an End of Days scenario, gave African American communities the means to express themselves with pride in the face of American racism and, as such, stimulated the Black nationalist movement.[36] Yet not all Black Jewish groups believed that

[30] Ben Ammi, *The Messiah and the End of this World* (Dimona: Communications Press, 1991), 42–45, 55; Shaleak Ben Yehuda, *Black Hebrew Israelites from America to the Promised Land: The Great International Religious Conspiracy against the Children of the Prophets* (New York: Vantage, 1975), 141–212; and Yvonne Chireau and Nathaniel Deutsch, *Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68–69.
[31] He had originally claimed that they were from the tribe of Judah, which, according to the Bible, was not lost and remained in the Land of Israel 136 years after the Ten Tribes were "lost." This was possibly a slip of the pen but more likely an evolution in his theology.
[32] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 174–75.
[33] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 328.
[34] For the Jews as "gentiles," see Ben Ammi, *Messiah*, 7. For the Jews as satanic, see "Louis Farrakhan Denies Antisemitism—Then Refers to 'Satanic Jews,'" *Guardian* (May 11, 2019), https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/11/louis-farrakhan-denies-antisemitism-satanic-jews.
[35] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 12.
[36] In the 1960s, there was no nation or entity called "Palestine," so their use of this term implied a rejection of Jewish claims to the Land of Israel so they could claim it for themselves.

they should wait for Armageddon before moving on to the Promised Land.

According to Jacob S. Dorman, the Black Israelite religion was largely shaped by three historical circumstances: the Protestant Holiness Movement, which emerged in the 1890s; an era of "Spiritual and Judaic" communities that sprang up around World War I; and a "Black nationalist Israelite" camp that grew out of the civil rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s.[37] This assessment overlooks an important issue: the experience of the children of Jews and enslaved Black people in the Caribbean, combined with their descendants' migration to major northern American cities, where they met with rejection by mainstream Jewish groups. When this experience was coupled with Crowdy's millenarian and Methodist-influenced visions of the lost tribes and parallels between freed enslaved people and the biblical Israelites in the book of Exodus, it led them to see themselves as the real Israelites. Adding to the account the exposure of Black individuals to mainstream Judaism in urban areas of the United States, it is easy to trace the African Hebrew Israelites' claim to be the authentic Jews.

Notably, current scholarship on the history of the African Israelite movements, collectively called the African Hebrew Israelite Community (AHIC), has failed to put these movements into their proper context.[38] All these movements, with the exception of the AHIJ, which began to take a different direction at the end of Ben Ammi ben Israel's life and after his death, are staunchly eschatological. Uniquely, the AHIJ has succeeded in its elitist agenda, creating a separatist American religious movement that has migrated to what they refer to as their "Holy Land."[39]

Ben Carter/Ben Ammi ben Israel and the AHIJ

Ben Carter (1939–2014) is considered the founder and messiah of the AHIJ.[40] In 1960, Carter attended a meeting of the Original Hebrew Israelite Nation,

[37] Dorman, *Chosen People*, 5.

[38] Michael T. Miller recently published an in-depth study of the current theological and philosophical worldview of Ben Ammi ben Israel and the AHIJ; see Michael T. Miller, "The African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem and Ben Ammi's Theology of Marginalisation and Reorientation," *Religions* (online) 11, no. 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11020087. Yet Miller, like others before him, neglected to address the crucial foundational ideologies of Crowdy, Arnold, Ford, Matthew, Ben Ammi ben Israel, and other leaders. As such, Miller's work, like much of the previous research on the topic, lends legitimacy to a theology founded on rabid racism, demonization, antisemitism and the usurpation of the Jewish people's ancient identity.

[39] Landing, *Black Judaism*, xiv.

[40] David Glass, *The Black Hebrews: An English Summary of the Special Committee Report*, (Je-

after which he heard a heavenly voice instructing him to bring his people out of slavery. Eventually, Carter claimed that the Jewish patriarchs were Black, and that Black Africans and their descendants in the Americas are the offspring of the ancient Israelites. He considered those Blacks who did not subscribe to this theory inferior in status to those who did, and he viewed any other people who claimed ancestry from the patriarchs as imposters. Carter began his studies with Rabbi Levi Ba Shalom (Fred Lang) of Congregation B'nai Zaken in Chicago. The congregation he joined held the belief, not widespread among assemblies of Hebrew Israelites, that it was time for the congregants to leave America.[41] Carter's next teacher was Rabbi Abihu Reuben. Reuben, a student of Matthew, had been ordained in the latter's rabbinical college in New York and served as rabbi and educator at the Chicago Hebrew School founded by Matthew in 1952.[42] In 1961, Rabbi Reuben ordained Carter and renamed him "Ben Ammi" ("son of my people").[43]

Israelite communities had blossomed in Chicago over the previous decades. In 1963, Ben Ammi Carter, later called Ben Ammi ben Israel, became the spiritual leader at Congregation B'nai Zaken and bore the title *Moreh Tsedeq* ("righteous teacher"). His followers referred to him as *Abba* or "father." Notably, Protestants reserve the term "father" for God when Jesus is speaking to or about God in the gospels. This appellation takes on distinct messianic overtones when we recall that the Black Israelite community sprang from the Protestant tradition and claim to be the real Jews.

At this time, many other Black groups subscribed to the notion that African Americans were the descendants of the ancient Israelites. This shared belief eventually led to a merger of communities into the A-Beta group. Louis "L. A." Bryant, later known as Shaleak Ben Yehudah, was a member of one of the communities that merged with A-Beta into the Beta group and became associated with Ben Ammi ben Israel's Congregation B'nai Zaken.[44]

Carter and his followers in the Beta/B'nai Zaken temples morphed into the AHIJ. The AHIJ read the turbulence of the 1960s as divinely given, the purpose of which was to create a "smokescreen" for the group's escape from

rusalem: American Jewish Committee, 1980), 3.

[41] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 8–9.

[42] Sam Kestenbaum, "Ben Ammi Ben Israel's Spiritual Journey From Segregated Chicago to Negev Desert," *Forward* (December 31, 2014), https://forward.com/news/israel/211907/ben-ammi-ben-israels-spiritual-journey-from-segreg.

[43] American Jewish Committee, "Black Hebrew," 3, 8.

[44] Ben Yehuda, *Black Hebrew Israelites*, ii.

the United States.[45] The organization played on the "Back to Africa" theme with a millenarian bent, as they believed America was on the verge of destruction.[46] Thus, in 1963, Carter informed his congregation that he and two other individuals were being sent to Africa to explore the possibility of the congregation migrating there en masse. Along with Carter, Nasik Gavriel and Ben Yaacov travelled to Africa and laid the groundwork for the move to happen. Later, the idea that the Land of Israel was part of Africa would be incorporated into Carter's ideology.

In 1966, equipped with funds collected from various Israelite communities, Carter, Gavriel, and Yaacov left for Liberia. Upon the trio's return, the community organized some three hundred members to leave for Liberia in different groups between 1967 and 1968. Several leaders had been vying for the chief leadership role in the movement at this time, but Ben Ammi ben Israel seized control of the community, aiming to lead the people out of the "American wilderness."[47]

Life in Liberia was hard for the AHIJ members. By the end of 1967, only twenty members had found decent jobs, while more than ninety were still living in squalor at their camp.[48] The Hebrew Israelites' Saturday day of rest did not accord well with Liberia's six-day work week, and the Liberian government refused to grant permission for the colony to carry on their polygamous relationships. The 125 AHIJ members left in Liberia in 1969 were then expelled by the Liberian government.[49]

After Liberia: Israel-Bound

After the two years of hardship in Liberia, Ben Ammi ben Israel began formulating a plan to move the AHIJ community to Israel. In 1969, as their Passover festival was approaching, the group purchased, at significant cost, a goat for a ritual Passover sacrifice. Somehow the goat died, either by its own rope or by strangulation. This event triggered despair in the community, but Ben Ammi interpreted it as a sign that the group should "offer themselves through their obedience" to God. Some members, however, saw it as a sign

[45] Jackson, *Thin Description*, 2. "Original Israelites" is an early term for what would become the African Hebrew Israelites.
[46] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 388.
[47] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 388.
[48] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 41–43, 46.
[49] Bill Kurtis, "Strangers in the Holy Land," *New York Times Magazine* (March 22, 1981), section 6, 64, https://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/22/magazine/strangers-in-the-holy-land.html.

to go back to the United States. Additionally, some women started to rebel against the polygamy or "Divine Marriage" that had become rampant. Those members who remained came to believe that Ben Ammi had a special relationship with God, and he became their undisputed leader.[50]

In 1986, Ben Ammi and another AHIJ member, Charles Hezekiah Blackwell, visited Israel on tourist visas. Blackwell remained in the country for a year, working on Kibbutz Ein Tsurim and later Kibbutz Maʿabarot; they sent positive reports back to Ben Ammi. In August 1969, Ben Ammi sent five families to Israel. All were admitted to the country as legal immigrants under Israel's Law of Return, which allows any person with at least one Jewish grandparent to immigrate immediately. As immigrants they were granted special status, entitling them to stipends, Hebrew classes, temporary housing, simple furniture and appliances, tax breaks, and help finding employment. The leader of the first group, who had stayed in Israel after the first "advance party," was Blackwell. In requesting immigrant status for the group members, Blackwell stated that they were Jews practicing the traditional Jewish laws, or mitzvot, and that they wanted to serve in the Israeli military.[51] The group's arrival at the airport in Lod caught the Israeli Minister of Absorption and his staff by surprise. Blackwell played on the Israelis' sympathies and managed to obtain rights for the group as Jewish immigrants, including apartments and food subsidies, despite lacking proof that they were in fact Jews, or related to Jews, as required by the Law of Return.[52]

With the granting of immigrant rights to these first Hebrew Israelites who landed in the State of Israel in September 1969, the establishment of the AHIJ was officially underway. This event sent positive reverberations throughout Israelite African American communities. The group's immigration to Israel was for many Original Israelites confirmation that the biblical prophecies, as interpreted by their leaders, were now being realized, and that they would all soon be restored to their rightful place in history.

When the second group of thirty-nine members arrived in December

[50] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 394–95.

[51] Sheffi Gabbai, "Observant 'Hebrew Negroes' from the United States—Pioneer Group in Arad," *Davar* (November 20, 1969), 3 (Hebrew) and H. Bradford Fish, "Trouble among the Children of the Prophets," *Washington Post Magazine* (February 7, 1982), https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2019/01/31/trouble-among-children-prophets. Blackwell would later be caught depositing $100,000 worth of gold bars in a Swiss bank account in the 1970s.

[52] Shraga Har-Gil, "The Negroes are Coming, the Hebrews are Coming," *Maʿariv* (June 26, 1974), 29 (Hebrew) and Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 58–60.

1969, and then the third group in March 1970, including Ben Ammi, the Israeli authorities became suspicious. These groups were granted only tourist status, and a government order was issued not to allow any more members of the community into Israel until it could be determined whether they had a real claim to being Jews. Blackwell invoked his community's generations-old tradition that they were descended from the Falasha Ethiopian tribe through the Israelite patriarchs, who fled to Ethiopia after the destruction of the Judean kingdom. To this day, the Hebrew Israelites continue to claim that they are "Judeans."[53] This assertion contradicts their earlier claim to being descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, which did not include the Jews from the tribe of Judah.[54] Blackwell also insisted that there was proof in the Hebrew Bible that the ancient Israelites were Black, and that formerly enslaved Black Americans were descended from them. He did admit, however, that many men in his community had married gentile women and even that some were baptized and married within the church.

By the early 1970s, a series of tourist visa violations had allowed the AHIJ numbers to climb to two thousand, most of whom lived in one of three cities in the Negev: Arad, Mitzpe Ramon, and Dimona.[55] The AHIJ's stated goal was to "redeem all the Blacks throughout the world from their distress and bring them to Israel, *inter alia* in order to escape 'Judgment Day' when America is due to be destroyed."[56] Ben Ammi ben Israel proclaimed that the Land of Israel was rightfully theirs, and that all white Jews would be deported to their countries of origin. This idea echoed the rhetoric of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), backed at the time by the Arab League, which urged the deportation of all Jews from Palestine to make way for the return of the Palestinian refugees.[57] Further inflaming the situation was Clarence Ellis (aka El Kannan), one of Ben Ammi's chief advisors, who declared that the group had returned to the Land of Israel in order "to liberate Israel from the false Jews—the white Jews."[58]

The 1970s witnessed a continuation of the struggle between the AHIJ and the Israeli authorities. Over time, the community leaders' verbal statements

[53] Armin Rosen, "African. Hebrew. Israelite," *Tablet* (March 28, 2019), https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/282261/african-hebrew-israelite.
[54] Ben Yehuda, *Black Hebrew Israelites*, i–vii.
[55] Kurtis, "Strangers."
[56] American Jewish Committee, "Black Hebrew," 4.
[57] "'Hebrew Negroes' will Conquer Israel with the Help of the PLO," *Maariv* (December 18, 1980), 1 (Hebrew).
[58] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 138. On Clarence Ellis, see Fish, "Trouble."

and writings became increasingly anti-Zionist and antisemitic. In 1971, housing dried up completely for the AHIJ. Their initial, government-granted apartments were being overrun with illegal immigrants, landlords were unwilling to rent to them, and public housing was denied. African Hebrew Israelites were being turned away from Israel at the airport. Ben Ammi called a press conference near Jerusalem and publicly likened Israel to apartheid South Africa. Back in Chicago, Prince Asiel Ben Israel, dubbed the "International Ambassador" of the African Hebrew Israelites, also called a press conference, during which he referred to Israel as a racist state and threatened to overrun the country with "planeloads" of "Black men."[59] Notably, Prince Asiel led a fierce, anti-Israel and antisemitic political campaign in America, enlisting the support of Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.[60]

In 1972, the Supreme Court of Israel rejected a petition by eight Hebrew Israelites to obtain immigrant visas under Israel's Law of Return. The court ruled that they did not qualify because they failed to prove that they were Jewish.[61] It was at this point that AHIJ members became known in Israel as the "Black Hebrews."

In October of that year, Ben Ammi ben Israel consolidated his power, granting leadership positions to his closest allies and proclaiming "national guidelines" for members of the AHIJ community. Within these guidelines were a set of punishments applicable to all those who broke his rules—which, by his claim, were transmitted to him by divine revelation. Those who defied Ben Ammi were expelled from their apartments, excommunicated from the community, and in some cases beaten.[62] With most members lacking any identification or permission to work and live in Israel, excommunication obviated any means of subsistence.[63] One dissident was even killed during a beating, leading to arrests, convictions, and jail time for some of Ben Ammi's supporters.[64]

As the attacks continued, the tide of Israeli public opinion shifted from one of sympathy and kinship to one of disdain. After repeated confronta-

[59] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 398–99.
[60] Chireau and Deutsch, *Black Zion*, 74.
[61] "The Supreme Court Rejects a Petition by Eight Hebrew Negroes to Obtain Immigrant Visas," *Davar* (December 8, 1972), 5 (Hebrew).
[62] Ezra Yanuv, "Negroes from Dimona are Asking for Help in Returning their Wives," *Maariv* (May 8, 1975), 7 (Hebrew).
[63] Mordechai Elkan, "Thirteen Hebrew Negroes Detained for Fifteen Days," *Maariv* (October 5, 1973), 5 (Hebrew).
[64] Chireau and Deutsch, *Black Zion*, 67–68.

tions with Israeli citizens and the police, as well as a murder within the AHIJ community by one of their own, the local police, in apparent conjunction with the American government, began arresting and deporting community members who caused any trouble at all. In response, Ben Ammi denounced Israel as a "racist Jim Crow country" and organized demonstrations in which American passports were burned.[65]

The situation was coming to a head. Wholesale disappearances within American Hebrew Israelite communities in and around Harlem, Chicago, and Detroit were reported to the American and Israeli authorities. By June 1974, more than five hundred Hebrew Israelites were living in Israel, only a handful of whom had obtained legal citizenship. The AHIJ information minister boasted that group members would be admitted to Israel with a tourist visa, automatically available to them as holders of American passports, and then disappear.[66] Many cases were reported of young women, some married and others single, some pregnant and others with children, who announced that they sold all of their possessions in order to immigrate to Israel and then disappeared without a trace. Family members who tried to search for these women were sometimes confronted by Blackwell and other members of the community who were called *nesi'im*, or princes, of which there were twelve, including Blackwell, Ben Ammi, and Ben Yehuda.[67]

The "Council of Princes" was said to be part of the ruling body of the sect. Nonetheless, Ben Ammi ben Israel, who was called the "Prince of Princes," "Father," and "Our Master" by group members, functioned as an absolute ruler. Community members would bow down to him if they ran into him in the street. He was judge, jury, and executioner when it came to disputes within the community, including on matters of marriage and divorce. Only Ben Ammi ben Israel was allowed to speak with the authorities or the media, unless he granted someone else explicit permission to do so. According to the Israeli police, the community has their own system of punishment, including corporal punishment, confiscation of passports, and excommunication.[68] At least in the past, it was reported that women were kept within the AHIJ against their will.[69]

[65] Kestenbaum, "Ben Ammi Ben Israel's Spiritual Journey."
[66] Rosen, "African. Hebrew. Israelite."
[67] Naomi Gal, "Neo-Realism in Dimona," *Maariv* (December 10, 1975), 30 (Hebrew) and Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 162–63.
[68] Gal, "Neo-Realism."
[69] Gal, "Neo-Realism" and Ali, "The Hebrew Community in Dimona is Integrated into Israel,"

As Israel rejected AHIJ demands for more housing, jobs, and citizenship, the group exposed its Black nationalistic attitudes, further alienating themselves from Israeli society. By late 1973, deportations of AHIJ members had sped up, with three hundred members deported in the month of September alone. The Israeli government debated deporting the entire community, but Ben Ammi played the race card in the media and worked on Israeli fears of being depicted as racists in the eyes of the world. Ben Ammi, who was seen by the community as their "Messiah and Savior," even reverted to classic antisemitic tropes in the media to argue their case for legal immigration into the Land of Israel.[70]

On December 31, 1973, the AHIJ addressed a letter to the Black members of the United States Congress, accusing Israel of racism and injustice "against American blacks." The leaders called for an economic boycott of American Jewish businesses, a denial of aid to the State of Israel, and the release of all AHIJ members from Israeli incarceration. Ben Yehuda asserted that the "Black Congressmen in Washington are obviously controlled by Jewish people," and, later, on April 15, 1974, that the State of Israel is the benefactor of Jewish Americans who made their fortunes as slave merchants and slave holders at the expense of Blacks.[71]

In October 1974, in a communication with the US State Department, Israeli official Yaakov Keiman wrote that Israel did not want "to be blamed if United States citizens are cheated out of their money and property because of some group's false promise of paradise in our land." He suggested that Israel's enemies might be behind this infiltration, and that the reality of the AHIJ illegal immigration was one of "dirty buildings, clashes with neighbors, rebellious activities, internal strife, homicides, and enforced polygamy."[72]

In the meantime, illegal infiltration into Israel by the AHIJ continued, with their leaders stepping up efforts to gain recruits and help them avoid

Kan, Channel 11 (May 21, 2016) and Riad Ali, "The Hebrew Community in Dimona is Integrated into Israel," *IBA—Yoman* (May 21, 2016) (Hebrew). Note that the accusations against Ben Ammi ben Israel and the entire leadership of the AHIJ continued well into the twenty-first century. In July 2009 and again in September 2011, an exposé by Israeli journalist Esti Aharonovich laid out claims of child abuse, overcrowding, sexual harassment, humiliation, oppression, violence, malnutrition, polygamy, hunger, poverty, and massive theft by the leaders of the community on the weakest of the community itself.

[70] Kurtis, "Strangers." On Ben Ammi as "Messiah and Savior," see Gal, "Neo-Realism" and American Jewish Committee, "Black Hebrew," 4.

[71] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 168–69.

[72] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 163.

questioning upon arrival as tourists in Israel. The new members would simply come as part of a tour group and then disappear into the desert city of Dimona. Many of them would then renounce their American citizenship at the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv, becoming stateless and almost completely eliminating the possibility of being deported. In April 1977, in addition to outright rejection of those applying to immigrate, Israeli officials began turning away Black Hebrew tourists as well.[73] This did not sit well with the AHIJ leadership, and they went on the offensive, branding Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin as Hitler and announcing that "[m]oney is the God of the sinful, white Jewish dogs."[74]

The day after the AHIJ leadership compared the prime minister of Israel to Hitler, several Hebrew Israelites were violently arrested and deported, and the government announced that the remainder of the group would be deported as well.[75] With the patience of the Israeli people and government wearing thin, the future of the AHIJ community looked bleak. At this point, Ben Ammi and his disciples prophesized an "Armageddon" scenario in Israel, complete with destruction of the white Jews and their Israeli government, to begin on September 22, 1977.[76]

In response to a push by the mayor of Dimona, Jacques Amir, to force the Knesset to deal with the issue, on March 13, 1978, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress formed the Committee for the Examination of the Problem of the Black Hebrews Cult. The committee was formed at the request of Israel's minister of the interior, Joseph Burg, and chaired by David Glass. The final report was presented to the minister of the interior on June 13, 1980.[77]

The Glass report vigorously refuted the AHIJ claim of ancient Israelite origin and dispelled any link to Judaism or the Jewish people. The committee pointed out the illegality of AHIJ immigration, their poor relations with their new neighbors, and the ruthless rule of the self-proclaimed messiah, Ben Ammi Carter. The most damning part of the report deals with the alleged criminal activity of AHIJ members in Israel and of their associates within the United States, as well as the group's blatant and unrepentant

[73] "'Hebrew Negroes' Were Not Allowed to Enter the Country," *Maariv* (April 29, 1977), 63 (Hebrew).
[74] Kurtis, "Strangers."
[75] "Three Hebrew Negroes Deported," *Davar* (September 26, 1977), 3 (Hebrew).
[76] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 403–4.
[77] American Jewish Committee, "Black Hebrew," ii, 12.

antisemitism and anti-Zionism, including calls for the overthrow of the State of Israel. [78]

Prince Asiel Ben Israel, who sat on the AHIJ Council of Princes, was charged in 1986 in the United States with fraud and other financial crimes. He, along with three other members of his community, was found guilty and served prison time. Among the evidence that helped support the criminal case against him and other members of the community were hundreds of false documents, including identification, airline tickets, and checks.[79] Initial information, later to be confirmed, indicated shocking levels of criminal activity and abuse within the community in both Israel and the United States.[80] The State of Israel, faced with no good choices, decided to recommend that the current AHIJ members be allowed to stay in Israel as "long-term temporary residents," and that after a two-year period they would be granted "permanent residency status" on an individual basis at the discretion of the Ministry of the Interior.

Chairperson Glass put out a press release explaining that this decision was the lesser of two evils, as the committee feared that the threat of deportation might lead to another "Jonestown."[81] In August 1981, after reviewing the Glass report and hearing the Dimona mayor's desperate pleas to deal with the situation once and for all, the Knesset placed the AHIJ members' fate in the hands of the Ministry of Interior.[82] Aryeh Deri, the interior minister, finally went to Dimona in 1990 to meet with Ben Ammi, and he granted those AHIJ members already living in Israel "temporary residency" status in accordance with the Glass report and the decision of the Knesset.[83] This decision also aligned with the wishes of Illinois state legislators, who had gained support from the United States government to provide the AHIJ with a school and expanded housing in Israel.

[78] Fish, "Trouble."
[79] Fish, "Trouble."
[80] Dr. Daniels, *Dimona: The Black Hebrews* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2013).
[81] Landing, *Black Judaism*, 410.
[82] Jacob Jacques Amir, "Agenda Proposal: The Problem of the Black Hebrew," *Tenth Session of the Tenth Knesset* (August 12, 1981) (Hebrew), https://knesset.gov.il/tql/knesset_new/knesset10/HTML_27_03_2012_05-50-30-PM/19810812@19810812006@006.html.
[83] Roni Sofer and Ilana Baum, "Deri Set Out Principles for the Stay of the Black Hebrews," *Maariv* (May 22, 1990) (Hebrew), http://www.jpress.nli.org.il/olive/apa/nli_heb/?href=MAR%2F1990%2F05%2F22&page=13&entityId=Ar01301#panel=document.

AHIJ Theology: A Précis

The AHIJ—like Christians, Muslims, Messianic Jews, Samaritans, and Karaites, among others—perceives the Talmud, or Oral Law, as a nonauthoritative work. In contrast, for almost two millennia, the Jews have regarded the Talmud as the key to interpreting the biblical canon. The AHIJ's rejection of the Oral Law places the sect squarely outside Judaic thought and tradition. Despite this, members of the community refrain from work on the Sabbath and fast from sundown to sunup. Both men and women wear a form of tzitzit, although they are different from the traditional Jewish tzitzit. Community members admit to having married gentiles over the last two millennia, as well as sanctioning marriages in American churches and the rite of baptism. They do not perform the *Berit milah* ceremony for their male children, which the Torah commands be done on the eighth day after birth to sanctify the Jews' everlasting covenant with God. Instead, the community holds that circumcision in a hospital by a doctor satisfies the commandment. Nevertheless, they do claim to adhere strictly to the Torah.[84]

In this context, it is worth mentioning that Ben Ammi ben Israel held (on the basis of Isaiah 4:1) that Jewish law permits a man to have seven wives, so the AHIJ allows polygamy. Women are expected keep house and bear children, although sometimes they are also sent to work outside the home in order to bring income into the community. They are not permitted to wear cosmetics or perfume, and they may be punished for infractions by having their heads shaven.

Until his death in December 2014, Ben Ammi himself presided over all marriages and divorces in the community. The community is strictly gender-separated; males and females are forbidden to spend time together before marriage, and unaccompanied married women are forbidden to speak with men other than their husbands. In the 1990s, a number of women from the AHIJ communities in Israel went public to reveal that the men were brutalizing the women and children, that they practiced polygamy, and that they were all living in squalor.[85] In 2000, Fran Markowitz reported that a young girl in the community was charged by Ben Ammi of

[84] Gerber, *Heritage Seekers*, 86–90 and Chireau and Deutsch, *Black Zion*, 75.

[85] Fran Markowitz, "Millenarian Motherhood: Motives, Meanings and Practices among African Hebrew Israelite Women," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 3 (2000): 122–28.

being "disrespectful" for not wearing her headscarf in gym class and was punished with forty lashes. [86]

In recent years, there has been a move away from communal belief in the divinity of Jesus, although this belief is attested in many texts authored by AHIJ leaders.[87] For example, Ben Yehuda, in his 1975 book, links the AHIJ to various New Testament passages read as prophesies and likens Ben Ammi ben Israel to John the Baptist or even Jesus himself.[88] In a letter to the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, written in July 1978, Ben Ammi professed his people's adherence to the belief in the one God "of Jacob, Noah, David, Paul and John the Baptist."[89] In his book *The Messiah and the End of This World* (1991), Ben Ammi frequently supports his arguments with quotations from the New Testament.[90] The Christian saints, the messiah, and Scripture have been a part of the AHIJ religion from the beginning—from "Ezekiel to Jesus," as Ben Ammi stated in 1993. At a minimum, sect members believe, like Crowdy, Ford, Garvey, and Matthew, that Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet of the Israelite deity, whom they call "Yah." This teaching also parallels the beliefs of the Nation of Islam and Rastafarianism.

In his later years, Ben Ammi ben Israel sought to take AHIJ theology in a new direction, attributing this shift to his experience of the 1991 Gulf War.[91] For example, he tempered his longstanding view that Africans are the sole descendants of the ancient Israelites. Not all sect members appreciated these revisionist ideas. Nonetheless, since 1996, AHIJ community members have generally endorsed the idea that it is one's righteousness, not one's ethnic origin or race, that is the true sign of Israelite ancestry. This stance, which was a deliberate reorientation made by the AHIJ founder, represents a transformation in theology and is in stark contrast to most other AHIC groups worldwide. Notably, it opens membership in the AHIJ to non–African Americans.[92] It is worth mentioning that AHIJ members seem to be distancing themselves theologically and politically from other unaffiliated camps or extensions of Hebrew Israelite communities in North America that espouse extremist, hateful views against white people and Jews.[93]

[86] Markowitz, "Millenarian Motherhood," 127.
[87] Jackson, *Thin Description*, 317, 374.
[88] Ben Yehuda, *Black Hebrew Israelites*, 141–212.
[89] American Jewish Committee, "Black Hebrew," 5.
[90] Ben Ammi, *Messiah*.
[91] Ben Ammi, *Messiah*, 82.
[92] Chireau and Deutsch, *Black Zion*, 76.
[93] Jackson, *Thin Description*, 32.

AHIJ Lifestyle

Veganism is strictly observed among AHIJ members. They also abstain from alcohol, as well as tobacco and other substances that are smoked. Through the teachings of Ben Ammi, they have come to believe that veganism and exercise are the key to unlocking potential personal immortality. They adhere to a strict "holistic health maintenance" program that structures their diet with sodium-free days, sugar-free weeks, raw food days, solar cooking days (which involve cooking food solely with the sun's rays), enemas, periodic fasting (especially on the Sabbath), and mandatory physical exercise at least three times a week. Ben Ammi ben Israel himself wrote that this lifestyle will "allow man to enter the realm of immortality."[94]

The AHIJ refer to their unique diet as "Edenic," following their notion that it was the diet kept by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. In their belief system, the path to immortality runs through veganism. El Kannan even averred that no one from their community had ever died from "natural causes" or disease, and that the sect members could rejuvenate their cells perpetually and become immortal by changing their diet and behavior.[95] As the first generation began to pass away, the sect introduced the idea that those who had not followed their health principles their entire lives, including before they entered the AHIJ, or those who had strayed since then could die.

Members of the AHIJ refer to Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32 in the New Testament, which discuss "all things in common" and have served as the basis for several communities with idealistic socialist leanings.[96] These are also the key passages of Christian Scripture which every major nineteenth- and twentieth-century Christian sect that has moved to the Land of Israel in order to establish communal settlements has cited as their motivating spark. Like Protestant sects before them who settled in the State of Israel, the AHIJ refer to their villages as "urban kibbutzim."[97]

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[94] Ben Ammi, *Messiah*, 56.

[95] Chireau and Deutsch, *Black Zion*, 80 and Jackson, *Thin Description*, 140.

[96] Jackson, *Thin Description*, 8.

[97] Rachel Neiman, "From Slavery to Eurovision…: African Hebrew Israelites Mark 50 years in Israel," *Israel21c* (March 10, 2020), https://www.israel21c.org/from-slavery-to-eurovision-african-hebrew-israelites-mark-50-years-in-israel.

The Death of a Leader and the AHIJ Afterlife

On December 27, 2014, Prince Immanuel Ben Yehuda announced the death of Ben Ammi Ben Israel Carter with the words: "Abba has ascended."[98] With Ben Ammi's passing, the AHIJ has undergone striking changes. It appears that the strict rule over the community has subsided, and that the African Hebrews have been working, studying, and serving side-by-side with Israelis. AHIJ members have also begun to distance themselves, at least publicly, from the global AHIC organization, which is seen as antisemitic by the State of Israel and by most American Jewish organizations.[99]

Signs of change in the community and the public perception of them were already evident about a decade earlier. In 2003, 2,500 AHIJ members were granted permanent residency status.[100] Beginning that same year, AHIJ members who chose to be drafted into the military were assured citizenship along with their immediate families. In May 2004, sixty-three Hebrew Israelites reported to the Beersheva draft board and became the first from their community to enter the Israel Defense Force (IDF). In 2012, Interior Minister Gideon Sa'ar announced that AHIJ members who enlisted in the IDF could receive full Israeli citizenship within two years. Soon thereafter, many from the community enlisted, including Ben Ammi's own grandchildren. The AHIJ's emphasis on an "Edenic" lifestyle, which entails healthy living, positive thinking, and a form of mindfulness and veganism, has led to a non-confrontational attitude toward Israel. Group members continue to serve in the Israeli military, learn Hebrew in schools, legally work and seek employment, and increasingly participate in Israeli society.

As of March 2019, the number of AHIJ adherents in Israel may have reached 5000, of which approximately one hundred have full Israeli citizenship, although there is a pathway for the majority of legal residents to receive citizenship.[101] The Israeli Population and Immigration Authority has provided an official count of about 2000 AHIJ members in Israel.[102] Part of the

[98] Andrew Esensten, "Spiritual Leader of African Hebrew Israelites Dies," *Haaretz* (December 28, 2014), https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-spiritual-leader-of-african-hebrew-israelites-dies-1.5353031.

[99] Neiman, "From Slavery to Eurovision."

[100] "Israel Grants 'Black Hebrews' Permanent Residency," *Haaretz* (July 29, 2003), https://www.haaretz.com/1.5352554.

[101] Miller, "African Hebrew Israelites," 87, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11020087. For the number of 5000, see Rosen, "African. Hebrew. Israelite."

[102] Almog Ben Zikri, "Israel Orders 45 Black Hebrew Israelites to Leave Country in 60 Days,"

numerical discrepancy may be related to a deal made between Ben Ammi ben Israel and the Israeli Ministry of the Interior in the 1990s. At that time, all group members residing in Israel had to be registered, and an official list of members was given to the interior minister.[103] However, it seems that at least forty-five members of the AHIJ were never registered, and neither were their descendants.[104] It appears either that Ben Ammi did not want these people registered, or that members of the AHIC have continued to illegally immigrate to Israel. Since the African Hebrew Israelites first arrived in Israel, more than 1200 children have been born in the community. In May 2021, Yoel Lipovitzky, head of the Israeli Population and Immigration Authority, noted publicly that birth in Israel does not automatically confer citizenship, and that many AHIJ members are slated for deportation due to their illegal presence in the country.

Scores of AHIJ members in Israel have left the sect. Some of these individuals remain in the country while others have returned to America and maintain some connection with their "satellite communities" in Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC in the AHIC.[105] AHIC is a loosely affiliated global umbrella organization of African Hebrew Israelites outside of Israel. These groups never considered Ben Ammi ben Israel their leader, but they share theological and lifestyle beliefs with their AHIJ sister communities.

Today, AHIJ members are referred to by the global Hebrew Israelite community as "saints," and the community in Israel is called "the Kingdom." AHIJ enclaves exist in Arad, Tiberias, Beersheva, and Mitzpe Ramon. The main settlement, located in Dimona, is called "Kfar HaShalom" or simply "the Kfar." Members of the Hebrew Israelite community who open private businesses are expected to keep only what profit they need to sustain themselves and their immediate family, and to give the rest to the Kingdom in Mitzpeh Ramon and Dimona.

A new generation of Hebrew Israelites in the State of Israel is serving in the IDF, studying in Israeli universities, entering the Israeli workforce and assimilating into the mainstream Jewish population. Short of a mass

Haaretz (April 26, 2021), https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-orders-45-african-hebrew-israelites-to-leave-country-in-60-days-1.9746045.

[103] Zikri, "Israel."

[104] Zikri, "Israel."

[105] Nir Avieli and Fran Markowitz, "Slavery Food, Soul Food, Salvation Food: Veganism and Identity in the African Hebrew Israelite Community," *African and Black Diaspora* 11, no. 2 (2018): 205–20.

migration of other Hebrew Israelites from their diaspora communities in the AHIC, it is likely that the AHIJ will assimilate into greater Israeli society. Even if such a migration were to take place, however, the anti-white radicalism and antisemitism imbedded within the AHIC communities would probably not be well received by the AHIJ, whose members are now being recognized in Israeli society as Israelis, receiving citizenship in greater numbers, and thriving in the only country the new generation has ever known. There remains the issue of more undocumented immigrants in the community, which suggests that illegal overstays of tourist visas among other Hebrew Israelites were never completely halted. As late as May 2021, there were reports of new illegal immigrants overstaying their tourist visas from the United States. That situation may spur renewed tensions between the community and the State of Israel.

Since the final years of its founder, the AHIJ has made a remarkable volte-face. From its inception as an antisemitic, elitist, supremacist, revolutionary, eschatological religion, it has transformed into a religion of healthy living, positive thinking, wellness, acceptance, and veganism. It currently enjoys a thriving and legitimate business empire based on these core values. The members still practice polygamy, which is technically illegal in Israel. But reports of physical and sexual abuse are now few and far between. And the acceptance of Israelis who are not of African American descent into the community demonstrates a dramatic shift away from its earlier stance of separating itself from non-Black Jewish people.[106] It appears that the African Hebrews of Jerusalem may have succeeded in becoming full-fledged, contributory members of Israeli society.

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[106] I do not use the terms "white" or "Black" here because the majority of Israeli Jews are people of color with roots in North Africa, Ethiopia, and the Middle East, and those Ashkenazi Jews of central and Eastern European descent also have firm, albeit ancient, roots in the Levant.

From New York to Zion and Back

Mutual Lessons for Success in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care

Miriam C. Berkowitz

For much of the past century, the relationship between American Jewry and Israel mirrored that of a prosperous cousin magnanimously supporting the country cousin, providing primarily financial support to the fledgling country. The practical assistance went one way from the diaspora to Israel, with Israel providing intangible benefits like pride and identity. Jews worldwide were welcome to visit and go home inspired, or even cast their lot with the young state or pre-state by making aliyah, but *ki miTsiyon tetsei Torah* applied only to very specific areas of Jewish culture.

The twentieth-century thinker Simon Rawidowicz preferred a different model, proposing that Israel and the diaspora are two sides of an ellipse: "equal and critical gravitational centers that shape and define the Jewish people."[1] Even though this model has since been eclipsed by more nuanced approaches, this brief article leans on the dual center model of shared learning.[2] It outlines the evolution of spiritual care (*livui ruḥani*) in Israel, acknowledging the indispensable assistance American chaplaincy had in seeding the Israeli field, and points out differences as well as similarities between the professions as they have developed in Israel and the United States. It suggests how chaplaincy in North America can learn from some elements of the Israeli experience as well, particularly as religious life in the United States changes, as outlined by Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo; the Israeli approach of "spiritual, not religious" may become more relevant to American chaplaincy settings, as it already has in Canada, which uses "spiritual care" exclusively instead of the previous term "chaplaincy."[3]

The author wishes to thank Rabbi Mike Schultz and Rabbi Valerie Stessin for contributing their historical knowledge and helpful comments to this article.

[1] Justus Baird, "Israel and the Diaspora: Two Foci of a Single Ellipse," Shalom Hartman Institute (May 6, 2014), https://www.hartman.org.il/israel-and-the-diaspora-two-foci-of-a-single-ellipse/, originally published by eJewishPhilanthropy.com.

[2] On the history of the question, see Yehezkel Dror, "Diaspora-Israel Relations: A Long-Term Perspective," *Israel Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 86–91, here 88.

[3] See, e.g., the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, https://spiritualcare.ca/.

A Short History of Chaplaincy in the United States and Israel

Several books and articles have outlined the history of chaplaincy in the United States and/or the roots of spiritual care in Israel.[4] This section distills the basic elements of that history in order to make sense for a first-time reader.[5] In the United States, chaplaincy began as a subset of ministry. That trend is shifting slowly.

> In addition to a more humanized profession, the field of chaplaincy and its certification bodies are opening up more to people who want to be chaplains yet do not come from the traditional educational backgrounds that chaplaincy has historically drawn from. Due to the nature of professional chaplaincy and the developmental process that goes into becoming a chaplain, educational barriers continue to keep talented individuals out. Opportunities are increasing, however, for those holding a more diverse group of master's degrees. The profession is now seeking ways to include more people with master's degrees in philosophy, psychology, and social work. This is making way for more people to enter the field and incorporate more diverse skill sets and research, as well as use more evidence-based skills and interventions to enhance practice.[6]

[4] Einat Ramon, "The Development of Professional Chaplaincy in Western Countries and in Israel," in *Meeting in the Midst: Spiritual Care in Israel*, ed. Netta Bentur and Michael Schultz (Jerusalem: JDC-Eshel, 2017), 47–59 (Hebrew) traces the development of spiritual care in the United States and Europe, the entry of Jewish chaplains into the military and then hospital chaplaincy in the United States, the beginnings of spiritual care in Israel, and the training tracks and approaches of the various countries. See also Valerie Stessin, "Spiritual Care in Israel: A Decade of Quiet Revolution," *Israeli Journal of Nursing Care* 28, no. 3 (2015) (Hebrew) and B. M. Kinzbrunner and B. D. Kinzbrunner, "Spiritual Care in Israel: The Future is Now," *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* 3, no. 32 (2014).

[5] For more in-depth information, see "The History of Spiritual Care," Kashouvot: The Center for Spiritual Care in Israel, https://www.kashouvot.org/en/birth-of-clinical-pastoral-care/ and "The History of Spiritual Care," Kashouvot: The Center for Spiritual Care in Israel, https://www.kashouvot.org/en/history-of-spiritual-care-in-the-jewish-world/. See also N. Bentur, S. Reznitzky, and A. Sterne, "Attitudes of Stakeholders and Policymakers in the Healthcare System towards the Provision of Spiritual Care in Israel," *Health Policy* 96 (2010): 13–19; A.T. Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Story of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936); and E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Realization* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1983).

[6] Wendy Cadge and Shelly Rambo, *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care in the Twenty-First Century*

In Israel, the field started bottom-up with several training courses that trained caregivers in theoretical and on-site practical work; graduates then sought work and tried to develop professional opportunities as caregivers, although there were two liberal rabbis who functioned as chaplains under the radar years before: Rabbi Philip, leader of the liberal Emet Ve'emunah congregation, who visited patients at Hadassah hospital in the first half of the 1900s, and Rabbi Pesach Krauss, a Conservative rabbi, therapist, mediator and certified chaplain who volunteered at Hadassah Ein Kerem's small hospice department in the early 2000s. These two functioned as *de facto* chaplains in Israel when no one else in the country of any stream or background or training did, although without official recognition as rabbis. Krauss had been a pioneer of Jewish chaplaincy in the US before moving to Israel in 1991, and he helped inspire Rabbi Chaplain Jonathan Rudnick to found Beruach, the spiritual care training course at Shaare Tzedek Hospital, with the support of Dr. Nathan Charney (also spelled Cherny). (Chani Kroizer took over later as director of the program, in English called "By Spirit").[7]

After a fact-finding mission and conference in 2005, the New York UJA (United Jewish Appeal) Federation began supporting training programs in Israel. UJA helped seed fledgling Israeli organizations, and NAJC (formerly National, now Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains), under the leadership of CEO Cecile Askeoff, provided early stage professional guidance, courses (in Israel, in the United States, and online), training for supervisor-educators, and establishment of criteria for the certification process. In the initial years, US Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor Rabbi Zahara Davidowitz-Farkas came to Israel to teach CPE over several summers; a group of Israelis joined on-line interfaith clergy CPE with Rabbi Mychal Springer of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS); and Kashouvot brought a group of Israelis to learn with Reverend Mary Martha Thiel at Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston. Since then, individual Israelis have traveled to the United States to complete or continue their learning beyond the minimum two units required for certification in Israel.

Even now that the Israeli institutions have established their independence, students and certified caregivers continue to learn in formal and

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 265–66. See also W. Cadge, J. Freeze, and N. Christakis, "The Provision of Hospital Chaplaincy in the United States: A National Overview," *Southern Medical Journal* 101, no. 6 (2008): 626–30.

[7] Ramon, "Development," 54 and Einat Ramon, "The Patients' Rabbi," Makor Rishon, May 29, 2019 (Hebrew).

informal ways from their colleagues and mentors in the United States (and Europe), including attendance at conferences, as well as in-person and online learning with leaders in the US chaplaincy scene.

Israeli spiritual care provision is taking place in hospitals and nursing homes, as part of government-provided services such as those for bereaved families, and in private clinics and home visits. Certified caregivers work in over fifteen hospitals, in elder care, and in bereavement support. Hospitals, nursing homes, some day centers for the elderly and other sites benefit from the student interns who do approximately four hundred hours of field work, spread over two years. Often the work site's positive experience with student interns opens the staff's eyes to the benefits of spiritual care, which hopefully will encourage the sites to request professional caregivers, or a blend of professional and students, in future.

There are two hundred certified spiritual caregivers in Israel, of whom ten are Arab (one Druze, two Christian, and seven Muslim). Several more Muslim students are currently learning in Kashouvot's program at Poriyah Hospital in Tiberias and under Rabbi Mike Schultz's supervision at Rambam Hospital in Haifa. Caregivers come from a range of backgrounds. Some are educators, physical therapists, nurses, social workers, yoga teachers, while others hail from nonrelated fields such as tour guiding, translation, high tech, or law. (See Non-Clergy Spiritual Care below for more details.) The average age is between fifty and sixty, about 80 percent female. As of publication, there are five accredited training programs, each with its own flavor. The programs have a wide geographical reach and more applicants than available spots. Other programs are in the accreditation process.

One reason there are not more students is that it is hard to find work after one's training is complete; most work one day a week and retain their previous employment or, if they are retired, do other activities on the other days.

One positive development during the Covid-19 pandemic was that Kashouvot's caregivers received a grant from Bituaḥ Le'umi (Social Security) to work with staff so that they would become stronger and learn to avoid burnout during this especially stressful time. Staff raised questions like: "How can I say goodbye? If a person dies, is it a failure on my part? How should we mark the passing of patients or residents? How do my beliefs affect my work and relationships with colleagues?" Spiritual caregiver

educators created workshops to help staff process these themes individually and in groups.[8]

Other encouraging developments include the inclusion of spiritual care in the array of therapies from which relatives of people who died from violent death (murder, car accidents or suicide) are able to choose, under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare and Merkaz Elah. Despite this impressive activity, caregivers and students are present in only a fraction of departments and hospitals. They not represented at all in prisons, the army, and many other community or medical/elderly settings.

Diversity in Israeli Spiritual Care

In large part because the Israeli field grew out of the efforts of American Jewish chaplaincy and American Jewish philanthropy, and because the early leadership teams did not include any Israeli Arabs, the field did not initially take root in Israeli Arab society. Significant efforts in recent years have begun to rectify that oversight, but the gap is still substantial. Medical settings in the Palestinian Authority are completely separate, and to the authors' knowledge, no cooperation has yet been initiated except a day-long training co-led by Rabbi Mike Schultz and Kashouvot staff at Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem, a Lutheran hospital that serves many residents of Gaza and East Jerusalem and has recently initiated a specialty in palliative care.

Jewish *melavim ruḥani'im* still do not reflect the demographics of the Jewish population of Israel. People who come to study tend to come from middle or upper economic classes, because they have to pay for studies (approximately 8,500 NIS for each of two years) and invest the time for classes, fieldwork, reading, and assignments without any guarantee of work at the end. There are also more Ashkenazim than their proportion of the population, as well as more kibutznikim. There are some Russian speakers, but the number is not proportionate to their percentage in society. Minority groups such as Ethiopians are poorly represented. Many of the Jews identify as secular or traditional, with some open-minded religious and a handful of ultra-Orthodox. Many have an eclectic spiritual life and find some inspiration in Jewish Renewal, Buddhism, and/or anthroposophic philosophy, following spiritual practices like meditation but not religious rituals.

[8] Stessin, "Spiritual Care," 32.

Rambam has been able to attract some Arab speakers to the program in Haifa, a mixed city with good interfaith relations and many Arab towns surrounding it. Kashouvot now has its first two Muslim students in the Poriyah Hospital program near Tiberias and is making it a priority to attract Arabic speakers for future training by experimenting with an introduction to spiritual care mini-course in Arabic (if funding permits) and by integrating students, with scholarships, in the regular courses in order to enrich the experience for all and provide more tools for intercultural care.

Similarities with Pastoral Care/Chaplaincy in the United States

The basic function of a chaplain is to convey: "I'm here, I'm listening, I care."[9] What Israel and the United states have in common is more significant than what divides us. Both countries share the basic approach to spiritual care, which entails a commitment to supporting people during life transitions, illness, loss, or the end of life; respect for each care seeker's system of beliefs, culture, personality and life story with no agenda to influence, convert or pressure the care-seeker to adopt the caregiver's world view; genuine interest in other cultures and faiths, and in each individual's understanding of their life's purpose, gift, challenges, and meaning; and finely-honed skills in listening, reflection, and interpersonal relationships, as well as other tools useful for a chaplain/spiritual caregiver, such as prayer, poetry, music, art, nature or writing.

Differences from the United States

Yet, because of the diversity of Israeli culture, with the richness of Jewish life and learning across the religious spectrum, and specific challenges and opportunities in the structure of the medical and religious establishment, spiritual care in Israel has developed on a different path than its American chaplaincy sibling. The main differences between the two involve entrance requirements for students seeking to study spiritual care (higher and more academic in the United States), the need for theological background/degrees or ordination as a prerequisite (in United States until recently), the length of training (most certification bodies in the United States require four units compared with two in Israel), the self-definition of caregivers as neutral/

[9] Russell Stagg, "Jewish Chaplaincy: Prescription for Change" (MA thesis, Gratz College, 2008), 1.

spiritual/religiously motivated (more in Israel), the extensive presence of caregivers in medical and other settings and awareness among patients that pastoral visits are an option (accepted and even mandated in the United States but less well known and less pervasive in Israel), presence at end of life (*de rigueur* in the United States but not part of the protocol in Israel), and inclusion in interdisciplinary care plan meetings, holiday events, and events of national import (a US very important parts of the chaplain's role in the United States but rarely in Israel, where the main role is individual support for patients, families, or staff and some workshops for staff). Most important for this article, spiritual care in Israel is disconnected from religion. Study is open to anyone who has a Bachelor's degree in any subject at all, and at times this requirement is even waived for people who can prove "significant, relevant life experience" such as nonacademic or therapeutic training.

Challenges in Israel

The vast majority of the population in Israel is unacquainted with the profession, and efforts to explain it often founder due to the lack of a clear and apt title for it. The word "spiritual" is problematic. For some it can raise curiosity and interest, give a feeling of openness and possibility, and set the field apart from religion, which is often perceived as monolithic, serious, imposing its rules on the individual, or irrelevant to matters of the human spirit. Yet, for others, it raises concerns that this profession is new-age, flaky, and detached from reality, or that it involves religious coercion or sudden changes in lifestyle.[10]

The Association for Spiritual Care in Israel (known as "the Amuta") is the primary professional body that oversees the standards for care provision, works to develop service provision in the field, and brings professionals together for peer learning and support. The Association has taken a key role in regulating the field, establishing standards for certification of caregivers and accreditation of training programs and, more recently, for training educators. All training and service provision organizations partner with the Association to advance these goals, but success depends on many external factors. It would take a vote by the Knesset and buy-in from the Ministry of Health to turn it into an official health care profession, with governmental

[10] Stessin, "Spiritual Care," 30.

supervision and potentially funding. Yet there is no wellspring of pressure on the Knesset, and the Ministry of Health does not want to take on additional expenses. These factors, combined with lack of political power, instability of governments, and other more pressing items on the national agenda, mean that the process of establishing the profession is unlikely to proceed very quickly in the coming decade.

Furthermore, spiritual care is still not accepted by all medical and therapeutic staff, although there is greater awareness and appreciation than a decade ago. Organizations of psychologists and social workers have expressed caution and even hostility about the inclusion of spiritual care as an official role. The original hopes of the Association that "within 10 years we will become part of the mainstream healthcare system" have thus not been fully fulfilled, although much progress has been made, and it is not clear when and how this transformation will (or could) proceed exponentially without a significant change in the underlying factors.

In Israel, caregivers usually begin work at a hospital in a single department. The arrangement for an institution to offer spiritual care for the first time is usually initiated by a personal connection between the caregiver or external nonprofit or training center rather than on an institutional basis.[11] It usually takes place in one department rather than an entire hospital. Even students who provide "free labor" are therefore present in only a small range of medical settings. Encouragingly, while most earlier courses took place off-site with each student doing practical training in a different center (with the exception of Beruach which was based in Shaare Tzedek and the training course at Ramban Hospital in Haifa), more new courses are hospital-based, such as Kashouvot's courses at Poriyah, Barzilai, and Ichilov Hospitals. A training cohort of ten might therefore be spread across up to ten hospital departments, exposing a larger number of staff to their work. As for professional chaplains, they are often paid by small external nonprofits, and their continued presence is dependent on fundraising efforts despite the hope that hospitals will eventually adopt spiritual care as part of their own budgets. The Ministry of Health did issue a paper mandating that hospitals and elder care centers introduce some palliative care and include some spiritual element as part of it.[12] Yet, according to the World Health Organization definition, this paper has no teeth, the word "spiritual"

[11] Stessin, "Spiritual Care," 38.

[12] "Guidelines of Palliative Care and End of Life Situations," State of Israel Ministry of Health, https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/SeniorHealth/Pages/palliative_care_code.aspx.

is not defined, and most settings that are introducing palliative care focus mainly on the medical aspects and rely on social workers and psychologists for the emotional (not necessarily spiritual) aspects of care.[13] Unless major macro changes are made, such as the requirement in the United States that hospitals provide spiritual care in order to receive accreditation, it is hard to see how the field will grow quickly.

Non-Clergy Spiritual Care

From its founding, the field of Israeli spiritual care decided to take a "spiritual but not religious" approach and to accept aspiring professionals who were not clergy.[14] Fewer than twenty altogether (10 percent of all the certified caregivers), are clergy, all of them Jewish, from different movements: Conservative, Reform, and Orthodox, including female rabbis, who are still a novelty in Israel. Indeed, according to the Association's standards, caregivers are forbidden to introduce themselves as clergy unless they are in a private clinic or specifically religious or parochial setting.[15] Even then, they are allowed to share this background only in response to the patient's questioning, and only if it would contribute to providing the best possible spiritual care for that patient. Even if they do not have a clergy background, applicants to Israeli spiritual care training programs still have to be a good match for the work in a number of ways; they must, for example, have a strong enough foundation for their personal spirituality to nurture them through this sometimes challenging work, even if they do not come with the kind of theological training expected in the United States. Instead, the training programs themselves must incorporate substantial study of how various cultures and religions, and the students themselves, relate to elements of life such as suffering and death.

According to Schultz,

> There are at least three reasons why the Israeli field did not base itself on a clergy model. First and arguably foremost, doing so would have excluded women to a dramatic

[13] Livia Kislev and Yakov Bachner, "Where is the Spirit Blowing? Attitudes of Nurses toward Spiritual Care for their Patients at End of Life—The Gap between Law and Reality," *Israeli Journal of Nursing Care* 29, no. 3, (2017): 17–27.

[14] This difference is reflected by the widespread term *livui ruḥani* ("spiritual accompaniment") instead of chaplaincy or even the more active "spiritual support."

[15] Ramon, "Development," 55.

> extent. Outside of the Masorti and other progressive Jewish denominations, which are relatively smaller in Israel, the other Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druze clergy are almost entirely male. Secondly, there are such substantial religious-secular tensions in Israel, and so many non-religious Jews carry the scars of being forced to follow the Orthodox establishment approach at key moments in their lives, that we worried that Jewish clergy would have a hard time making a healing connection with them. Finally, as the American field of chaplaincy is increasingly realizing, spirituality is truly broad, encompassing religion but not limited to it, and as such we should not exclude talented potential professionals who are not coming out of a religious framework.[16]

This approach reaches a similar conclusion to Western spiritual care, though for different reasons.[17]

There are positives and negative aspects of both the clergy and the non-clergy approaches, which can be illustrated in my own personal story. I did my CPE training in the United States, at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York and Hebrew SeniorLife [*sic*] in Boston, and in Israel, including two summers at the Schechter Institute and three years of JTS's extended clergy unit online, with fieldwork at the French Hospital and Beit Alicia Russian-speaking nursing home. Since Lenox Hill was my first and formative experience, and since I generally value academic degrees and rigorous training, authority, hierarchy and hard work, I readily accepted the model of chaplains being clergy or people with advanced degrees in theology. Even though few of my patient visits centered around God, theology, theodicy, or even ritual, I feel it is important to be grounded in the texts, prayers, and rituals of my faith and knowledgeable enough to facilitate similar experiences for and with people of other faiths.

I thought that the originally Protestant CPE centers had made significant efforts to expand the discourse in order to make it relevant to people of other faiths, and that the inclusion of master's degrees in theology alongside clergy

[16] Personal correspondence with Rabbi Mike Schultz in preparation for this article, March, 2023.
[17] T. Bard, "Reshaping the Chaplain and Spiritual Counsellor for the Twenty-First Century," in *Thriving on the Edge: Integrating Spiritual Practice, Theory and Research*, ed. A. Schmidt, T. O'Connor, M. Chow, and P. Berendsen, (Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, 2016), 15–25.

opened chaplaincy to women who were not willing or able to become clergy, such as Orthodox female Jews, Catholic lay leaders who did not want to take vows, or others who for a variety of practical, financial, spiritual, emotional, or other reasons did not want to become clergy.

I understood the fear that, if CPE were presented as a religious-only profession, the Orthodox rabbinate might want to regulate it and close it to all others. I also understood the fear that liberal clergy or Jews were not considered "authentic" in Israel and more religious patients would not open up to them if they presented their official credentials. Yet my experience in the field taught me that patients were very open to talking to whatever chaplain appeared, however he or she was dressed and whichever social group he or she appeared to belong to—including ultra-Orthodox men and women patients, who welcomed the visits, conversation, and prayer of Conservative female rabbi spiritual caregivers (of whom there are at least four, three of whom are on the staff of Kashouvot). Amazing interpersonal meetings took place, which had such potential to break stereotypes and show the power of liberal Judaism as an authentic alternative. I think that forbidding chaplains from mentioning that they were clergy is missing an opportunity to legitimize liberal clergy and earn them respect in the important roles of bridge-builders and healers; it also tacitly reinforces the status quo in Israel that only Orthodox Judaism is legitimate.[18]

I also thought that the spiritual but non-religious approach missed out on a key component of chaplaincy, expressed eloquently and succinctly by Rabbi Gary (Tuvia) Lavit:

> When the Chaplain listens and tries to understand the person, there is an implication that God is paying attention

[18] When I directed Kashouvot, three of the staff were Conservative rabbis ordained in Israel, one was an open-minded orthodox rabbi ordained at Yeshiva University, one was an ultra-Orthodox woman, and two others were educated Modern Orthodox women with academic backgrounds. There were many moving encounters. A Muslim Arab taxi driver in the neurology department at Hadassah hospital asked to learn Talmud with his spiritual caregiver, who was a Belgian, female Conservative rabbi, and a Haredi man in the same department looked forward to praying during regular visits with the same caregiver. A fiercely secular Argentinian man at the French Hospital asked for the priestly blessing from his spiritual caregiver, who was a French, female Conservative rabbi; after he asked how she had come to this work, she was "allowed" to reply that it was a natural outgrowth of her work as a rabbi. At this, he exclaimed, "Now it is beginning to get interesting!" A secular woman with advanced cancer at Asaf Harofeh Hospital asked to pray with this same rabbi as her spiritual caregiver and was thrilled with the rabbi's suggestion that the patient write an ethical will for her young daughter.

> and listening. When the patient relates his/her life story and struggle and fears to the Chaplain it somehow feels more like God is paying attention, than when the very same conversation takes place with a secular practitioner such as a Social Worker.[19]
>
> A psychologist can give highly valuable emotional help to persons. It is different, however, when the Chaplain, despite—and because of—his known religious values, listens and validates the patient's personhood. For the patient, this is not only emotionally helpful; it can be an existential and spiritual experience—because it is someone, who represents the attention of God, that is validating and respecting the patient. In summary of this point, even when a Chaplain or a Social Worker might *do* the exact same thing with a patient, the *identity* of the Chaplain gives his/her intervention a different, spiritual and existential meaning.[20]

It also seemed to me that Israeli caregivers relied too much on tools such as cards with pictures that the patients could choose to talk about, guided meditation, or breathing and were too scared to ask whether the patient wanted a prayer or blessing (traditional or extemporaneous), thus missing out on a central tool of chaplaincy.[21] As Lavit expresses: "Another way in which the Chaplain has something to add professionally, which just isn't

[19] Gary Tuvia Lavit, "The Difference between Chaplain, Social Worker and Rabbi" (unpublished manuscript), 2.

[20] Lavit, "Difference," 3.

[21] George Fitchett et al., "Development of the PC-7, a Quantifiable Assessment of Spiritual Concerns of Patients Receiving Palliative Care Near the End of Life," *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 23, no.2 (2020): 248–53, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6987727/, identify a list of concerns that are the most common and most relevant for chaplaincy interventions (in the United States). These include the need for meaning in the face of suffering; the need for integrity, a legacy, a generativity; concerns about relationships with family or significant others; concern or fear about dying or death; and issues related to making decisions about about treatment, religious/spiritual struggles and other religious/spiritual dimensions (Table 1, 250). Many of these concerns can be addressed by a "spiritual but not religious" chaplain, but the chaplain must be unafraid to face issues such as "the patient wonders whether he/she is being abandoned or punished by God…is concerned about God's judgment, forgiveness and/or love…questions God's love for him or her… feels God is not answering prayers, expresses anger with God, is alienated from formerly meaningful connections with religious institutions or leaders, identifies a need for assistance to perform important rituals, and has other spiritual concerns" (250).

part of the professional role of the Social Worker, is prayer."[22] Fixed prayer and ritual may be meaningful:

> • For the person who prays regularly, standard liturgical recitation and ritual may give a sense of being grounded in the familiar—even while everything else in life is falling apart.
>
> • For the person who doesn't pray regularly, but who has memories of prayer and ritual, the standard recitation, with familiar melody, may be associated with events and significant persons from the past, which can arouse memories, and emotions of identity with those persons and events. Secondary to the emotions is the valuable spiritual experience of "being connected" to one's own past self.[23]

Lavit also discusses the benefits of extemporaneous prayer, which the chaplain can create or co-create with the care recipient, in response to the recipient's hopes and concerns.[24]

I agree with this heartily, and the parts about spontaneous prayer are even more moving coming from a personally traditional, Orthodox-ordained rabbi.

Of course I agreed with the Amuta's mission of offering spiritual care to people of all faiths and backgrounds and the ethical imperative not to impose one's own world view on the care recipient, but I did and still do not see this as problematic for clergy people who are strongly rooted in their own faiths. Indeed, it is a basic element of chaplaincy in most countries.

Over the years, my attitudes have softened somewhat. First, I see the personal qualities of kindness, presence, patience, empathy, artistic creativity, song, human touch, and willingness to learn and grow that many of the caregivers bring to their work. I see that there is a great need for hundreds, even thousands, of spiritual caregivers in all manner of settings, from Kiryat Shmona to Eilat, and I applaud the people who are willing to study at their own expense for two years and volunteer or work for symbolic

[22] Lavit, "Difference," 3.
[23] Lavit, "Difference," 3.
[24] Lavit, "Difference," 3-4.

salaries (40–100 NIS per hour, with an average 70) in public settings. I think the need for practitioners is immense, and we need all the qualified people we can in order to spread the profession and eventually advocate for its inclusion as a recognized profession and part of the array of care options.

I understand the wish to carve out a profession beyond the oversight of the chief rabbinate. And I understand the cultural sensitivities that might make a Jewish patient in Israel initially cautious about receiving pastoral care from a Christian or Muslim or clergy figure, or even a Jewish one from a different stream, especially if they are not familiar with the concept of spiritual care. I see that just accepting an M.A. in theology instead of ordination or changing some Christian language are not sufficient to invite and welcome previously marginalized groups to training and professional roles.

I see that Israeli caregivers might offer a blessing or ask the patient "what would you wish for yourself?," which is a step toward prayer, albeit a hesitant one, that might suit circumstances in which the care recipient has made it clear that prayer would not suit him or her. Furthermore, I do not fully accept Cadge and Rambo's assertion that, despite limitations and accessibility, "[t]heological institutions are the best prepared to offer this training, we argue, even as they have struggled to keep up with rapid changes in American religious demographics, because they remain the primary educators of religious professionals."[25] I think CPE centers based in hospitals or university-based programs such as Scotland's chaplaincy certificate offered through Nursing Schools can transmit the necessary tools, although I do think that chaplains should supplement their learning to make sure they are familiar with the main tenets, prayers, and rituals that are likely to be important to their care recipients.

As a middle ground or synthesis, I can say that I fully accept non-clergy tracks for spiritual caregivers as long as students gain significant exposure to the rituals, beliefs, texts, and traditions of their own and other world religions; awareness of the nuances within each faith group; and humble curiosity to ask about the individual's world view, even when they think they know the patient based on the official identification. I also think that chaplains who are clergy should not have to hide this fact, especially because the powerful interpersonal connections they make and the trust they build in pastoral encounters can shatter stereotypes and lead to long term societal change. As a general rule, I believe in taking the best of both worlds: bridg-

[25] Cadge and Rambo, *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care*, 13–14.

ing the styles of the United States and Israel and responding to each patient or care recipient as appropriate and helpful to the specific circumstances.

As spiritual care in the United States evolves to be less hierarchical; more racially, culturally and religiously diverse; less focused on hospitals; more inclusive of caregivers from different backgrounds, and more focused on "spiritual, not religious" approaches and care recipients, we could even argue that Israel was prescient in skipping the clergy stage and going straight to the postmodern 2020s model that will continue to gain ground in the United States and western Europe, where secularism is almost a religion in itself. As Cadge and Rambo note:

> We extend this invitation to think about the work and educational preparation for chaplains because we believe there is a growing role for chaplains in North American religious leadership given shifting religious demographics. While many people historically sought counsel from leaders in places of worship that reflected shared beliefs, shifts in religious life suggest that this kind of support—if it continues—will be provided differently.[26]

Thus there is certainly room for multiple approaches, just as we embrace multiple sources of wisdom and loci of influence.

Mutual Learning

North America and Europe were the sites of many innovations that trickled into Israel several decades later.[27] Israel has a great deal to learn from developments in these other places. The connection between chaplains and other medical staff will be a critical part of building trust, team relationships, and a culture of dialogue. I especially hope that Israel can learn to see a chaplain as an integral part of an interdisciplinary team and not a threat to other professions. As Lavit writes regarding the United States, but with the intention that this idea be universal:

> Each has an indispensable role to fulfill. All of the clinical professionals help patients and their families or loved-ones

[26] Cadge and Rambo, *Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care*, 14.
[27] These include (but are not limited to) holistic medicine, medical clowning, and palliative care.

> get through the *physical* and *emotional* challenges of very hard times. The Chaplain has the unique role of making a positive difference to suffering persons in a *spiritual* and *existential* way. The tools and methods used are different for each of the professions. All taken together, in a collaborative approach to care, can make for the best, integrated, and comprehensive care of suffering people, when they need us most.[28]

The learning is not unidirectional. The United States also has something to learn from Israel in light of increasing secularization, diversity, and democratization of access to spirituality in the United States. One thing Israel has to offer is a slightly different toolkit, which is more likely to include poetry, guided meditation, breathing, artistic prayer cards, and creative new rituals perhaps more suited to "spiritual not religious" patients in all countries or to interfaith work.[29] Another important lesson is the power of non-clergy spiritual caregivers and the need to reevaluate the traditional track of theological backgrounds, advanced degrees, and clergy training as a prerequisite for most chaplains in the United States. Lessons can also be drawn from Canada and Europe as well as other countries where chaplaincy is emerging in numerous grassroots models.

Much remains to be done in terms of having the profession in Israel recognized and funded, as well as including caregivers in medical and other settings such as disaster relief, prisons, army, schools, shelter; diversifying the populations served; and widening access to students of more backgrounds. B. M. Kinzbrunner and B. D. Kinzbrunner insist that (extensive, medically based) research is an essential component in advancing the profession.[30] I agree that convincing hospitals and health insurance companies that it is worthwhile to them economically (because of reduced interventions, increased compliance, and improved well-being) is the main way to hasten the profession's official recognition and incorporation into the health system. Yet this article provided an occasion to look back over the past decade and a half and celebrate the labor of love that launched spiritual care in Israel and has continued to tend and grow it, year by year. Valerie Stessin offers an optimistic assessment that the startup nation will use its resourcefulness

[28] Lavit, "Difference," 4.
[29] Based on Stessin, "Spiritual Care," 33.
[30] Kinzbrunner and Kinzbrunner, "Spiritual Care," 3.

to advance this field and find ways to negotiate the question of funding. She even suggests that spiritual care has the potential to heal not only individuals' hearts and souls but the heart and soul of the country itself.[31] I and my colleagues hope that, by the time the next article is written, spiritual care will be more integrated into medical facilities and will have made inroads into prisons, schools, army, rehab, shelters and other settings, as well as more popular in private visits for in-home aging and end of life support for individuals and their caregivers and families.

Rabbi Miriam (Carey Knight) Berkowitz was certified in the first cohort of Israeli spiritual caregivers in 2014 and is one of the few Israelis to be certified also by the NAJC. She founded Kashouvot: Advancing Pastoral Care in Israel in 2010 with Rabbi Valerie Stessin and co-directed it until 2019. Berkowitz has provided pastoral care, mentored chaplains worldwide, offered training for synagogue bikkur holim groups, and taught as an adjunct professor of chaplaincy. She currently performs boutique lifecycle events for visitors to Israel (www.ravmiriam.com; www.israelbatmitzvahs.com) and is completing the Israeli tour guide course.

[31] Stessin, "Spiritual Care," 38.

Yashan Noshan

From the Archives of Conservative Judaism

The Biblical Basis of Democracy

Conservative Judaism 4:4, June 1948

Robert Gordis

The Mainstream of Biblical Emphases

THERE is an old saying that the devil can quote Scriptures for his own purpose. This in an oblique way of stating the truth that the Hebrew Bible is not the work of a political sect or a religious denomination, but the distillation of the experience of a people. Hence between the covers of the Bible we may expect to find every variety of opinion from the most radical to the most conservative on all the basic questions of life and thought. For this reason it has been possible for some unsympathetic students of the Bible to find some passages on the basis of which they have branded it as fundamentally reactionary and unprogressive.

Thus the author of the statement in Proverbs: "My son, fear God and the King, and meddle not with those who seek change," (Pr. 24:21) was certainly not a fellow-traveler of the revolution. The common Biblical phrase by which the king is described as "the annointed of God" (I. Sam. 24:7) has been utilized for centuries as evidence of the divine right of kings. Similarly the existence of Biblical laws regulating slavery were used by apologists until the days of the Civil War in order to justify the institution. Passages of this type led a critic like Leonard Woolf to the statement "Democracy is essentially anti-religious and anti-Christian."

Nonetheless, this conclusion is based upon an inadequate and faulty reading of the text. The Hebrew Bible, like Judaism as a whole, is a mighty river with many currents and eddies beside the main stream, and these variations must be clearly told apart, their relative importance being carefully gauged. He who reads the Bible with understanding and sympathy will

recognize that the passages we have cited do not represent the main stream of thought in Biblical religion. The phrase "the anointed of God" was an old idiom by which the Hebrew thinkers of old never justified the doctrine that the king or dictator can do no wrong. On the contrary the Biblical historians and prophets were overwhelmingly convinced that the kings generally do wrong and would be punished for their iniquities.

Similarly, the regulations of slavery in the Bible make it clear, beyond a doubt, that while the Divine Legislator did not abolish slavery as such, His sympathies were against the institution. Thus, according to Exodus 21:1 pp: the service of a "Hebrew slave" was limited to a six year period. Recent research interprets the phrase as referring not merely to an Israelite, but to the entire migratory population of the Near-East during the second millenium, who were wont to sell themselves into bondage. Yet even the conversion of slavery into limited bond-service does not tell the full story. The Biblical condemnation of slavery reaches its apogee in the Biblical fugitive slave law. Before the Civil War, Congress adopted a law, compelling all American citizens to restore fugitive slaves fleeing from the South. But thousands of Americans violated the law, in obedience to a greater law of God—"Thou shalt not restore a fugitive slave unto his master," (Deut. 23:16) .

Thus, the main current of Biblical thought and Jewish tradition is fundamentally democratic, and what is more, has helped to mould the democratic ideals of western civilization.

At the outset, it is worthy to note that the words "democracy", "politics", and "economics" are all of Greek origin, and an ancient Hebrew would not have understood any of them; yet it is equally remarkable that the basic ideals of our democracy, political, social and economic, are to be derived from the tradition of Israel, rather than from the culture of Hellas. The Greeks may have had the word for it, but the Hebrews had the substance.

Israel's Historic Experience a Democratic Factor

In the Preface to his translation of Scriptures, John Wyclif stated that the Bible believes "in government of the people, by the people and for the people"—a phrase destined to echo down the centuries. So too the Puritan Fathers were standing in the authentic Hebraic tradition when they declared "Rebellion to tyrants means obedience to God". These words incidentally were proposed by Franklin, Adams and Jefferson for the Great Seal of the United States.

The reasons that made the Bible the foundation of the democratic ideal are to be sought in the historic experience of the Jewish people. There were two main factors which moulded the life and psychology of ancient Israel and gave it a unique development that has proved of fundamental significance for the world.

The first of these factors was the period of the bondage in Egypt. Every page of the Bible recalls the period of misery and suffering Israel had undergone. The Hebrew never forgot that his ancestors had been slaves, and he was taught to identify himself, in the Talmudic phrase, with the persecuted rather than the persecutors. In the psychology of the Jew a sense of sympathy with the under-dog became deeply ingrained. This spirit permeates the pages of Scripture.

Thus no less than thirty-six times the principle is laid down: "One law shall there be in thy land for the citizen and the alien within thy borders," — an ideal far from fulfillment in the twentieth century, let it be noted to our shame.

The same motivation comes into play in some of the most stirring and moving passages of Scripture: "Thou shalt not oppress the stranger, for ye know the soul of the stranger, for ye were the strangers in the land of Egypt." (Ex. 23:9) and even more "Thou shalt love him the foreigner as thyself" (Lev. 19:34). With Divine nonchalance the Bible forbids the Hebrew to hate even the Egyptian because the Israelite had been a sojourner in his land (Deut. 23:8) ! The Sabbath, with its insistence upon rest for free and slave, man and beast, was another example of how this great national memory with which the collective experience of Israel had begun, penetrated the life and institutions of ancient Israel.

A second factor which played an equally decisive role in moulding the thought and idealism of Israel was the nomadic period in Jewish history. According to tradition, the Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness. Modern scholars are disposed to believe that the period lasted much longer. Even after the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, a considerable portion of the people remained in Eastern Trans-Jordan under nomadic conditions.

Students of American history are indebted to Professor Turner for recognition of the importance of the frontier in the development of American institutions. Similarly, Hebrew life and thought was shaped by the desert, which was both a memory of the past and a reality in the present. Doubtless it was idealized, but it was no less potent on that account.

During this nomadic period of Jewish history, there developed an in-

teresting structure of society common to all peoples in this stage. In many respects, it was crude; in some, it was limited, but in others it possessed the seeds of a fruitful development.

The first characteristic of nomadic peoples is that they are fiercely equalitarian; they have no hierarchy of kings and rulers. Each member of the clan is on a par with his fellows — in a time of crisis, such as war, some leader will emerge because of greater sagacity or courage, but he remains at all times *primus inter pares.* When the crisis has passed and the war is over, he reverts to his previous position in the ranks. There is no hereditary monarchy or nobility to be found in the group. Decisions are reached by the assemblage of all adult males of the tribe. This primitive democratic institution, reminiscent of the New England town-meeting, *mutatis mutandis,* made all decisions of peace and war, executed judgment in civil and criminal matters, adopted laws and regulations, and was the ultimate source of authority. Its Hebrew name *edah* or *kahal,* erroneously translated "congregation" in our Bible versions, should be rendered "commonalty" or assembly".

The second characteristic of the nomadic stage is the fact that there is a virtual communal ownership of property, or at least of wealth-producing property. The flocks, for example, were not the property of an individual but belonged to the tribe as a whole. The rights to pasture lands and to wells were vested in the tribe as a unit, and private property was virtually non-existent.

Lastly, this communal ownership of property and high sense of equality was accompanied by a strong sense of mutual responsibility. The law of the tribe, then as later, is "one for all and all for one." We are familiar with the feuds which Arab tribes may maintain for centuries, begun because of an offense committed against a single member. Tribal morality in ancient times was, to be sure, limited to the members of the tribe alone. Within the tribe, however, there was a high sense of mutual responsibility, which took the form of a passion for fair and equal treatment and brooked no interference from high or low.

Now, these traits of the nomadic society, plus the recollection of the enslavement of Israelites in Egypt, were the historic memories which moulded the life and thought of the Jewish people, the effects of which are writ large in the pages of Scripture.

As a matter of fact, however, these two factors alone never would have sufficed to produce the unique heritage of Israel. All ancient peoples have passed from the nomadic to the agricultural and urban stages, but the ideals of the nomadic period have disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace behind.

Normally, too, a nation, like an individual, would strive to forget, rather than emphasize a lowly past, and strive to invent an exalted origin instead. We know that the ancestors of the Nazis were by no means the blonde supermen of Aryan pseudo-science, but were, on the contrary, like all the ancestors of the human race, savages who lived in terror of a fearsome environment. To forget the unpleasant is a deeply rooted human characteristic.

The Prophetic Viewpoint on Social Ethics.

That the Jewish people did not forget their bondage in Egypt, and were constantly reminded of the ideals of the desert period was due to the emergence of a group of men without parallel in the history of mankind. It was the Hebrew Prophets who, at every turn, reminded the Jewish people in a more advanced economic and social stage of their development, of the simpler yet nobler ideals that had prevailed in earlier days.

The Hebrew Prophets of Israel were not nostalgic advocates of a bygone past. Israel had those too in the semi-monastic orders of the Nazarites and the Rechabites. The Prophets operated with the past, creatively; that is to say, they retained those elements of the past that were vital, its sense of equality and justice. They rejected those elements that were of purely external character, and hence of no real consequence, like the long hair and abstinence from wine, characteristic of the Nazarites, or the dwelling in tents practiced by the Rechabites. Above all, they deepened such nomadic ideals as family morality beyond the physical to include love and loyalty and extended the ethics of the tribe to include the nation. For them, the tribes did not exist, only the people of Israel, worshipping one God, and the division of the Two Kingdoms was a major crime nationally and religiously. Nor did their expanding loyalties halt at the frontier. Their patriotism went beyond the nation to include the entire human race. Thus the Prophets were the creators of Jewish nationalism on the one hand, and the concept of world citizenship on the other. All too often, it has not been understood that these two aspects of their thought, far from being contradictory, complement and reinforce each other.

If these three unique factors are understood, we shall be in position to recognize why the Jewish people were able to extert so profound an influence upon the concept of democracy. Obviously it is not the forms of democracy that come into consideration, for the Bible is two thousand years old and more. What the Judea-Christian tradition was able to do was to mould the ideals of men, so that when the objective political and social

conditions made political democracy possible, men were able to accommodate it to their world-view, which had grown up almost unconsciously in the centuries.

It is important to remember that the Prophets, as legislators, historians and poets of Israel were not interested in political, social and economic questions, per se. Their entire outlook and contribution to democracy stems out of their faith in God as the Creator of the Universe and the Father of Mankind. Since all men are God's children, they had an equal right to share in the blessings of the world, "for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24:1). The equality of men demands justice for all.

Since man is created in God's image, and even the lowliest of men has a spark of the Divine, there is an imperishable spirit in man, who for all his pettiness and weakness "has been made little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:6). The dignity of man demands freedom for all.

Justice and freedom were thus God's will for his children and the inevitable goal of history. For the Prophets, the unbroken succession of events was all a part of a divine process, the Author of which was God, Who was utilizing evil to destroy evil and usher in the good.

Aspects of Democracy Revealed in the Bible.

Human history, therefore, was not a tableau but a drama, nothing static, but on the contrary, dynamic. It was filled with change and movement, ultimately to flower in the creation of the Kingdom of God. This vision of the Kingdom of God that the Prophets had before them, supplied them with a standard of judgment by which they could, on the one hand, criticize the weaknesses and sins of their own society, and on the other hand, enumerate the ideals of the just society of the future. A few of the contributions of Biblical Judaism to the development of the democratic concept may now be indicated. Aside from the primitive democratic political institutions already mentioned, there is a strong and unmistakable undercurrent of opposition to monarchical rule in the Bible. When the Israelites asked the Prophet Samuel for a King, they wanted to be "like all the nations", but the Prophet delivered to them an impassioned attack upon royalty, in which he described the price that they would pay for the doubtful luxury of a monarch. (I. Sam. chap. 8) . When, nevertheless, the monarchy was instituted because of the need for a strong central government, it should be noted that in Israel, and in Israel alone, there was no such thing as absolutism in government; the

monarchy remained strongly limited in its powers. This is clear from the legal restriction upon the king laid down in the Torah (Dent. 17:14-20). Nor was it merely a matter of theory, as the record shows. Perhaps the most "wicked" king of Israel was Ahab, who had married the Phoenician princess Jezebel. Ahab coveted a vineyard adjoining his estate and belonging to a farmer named Naboth. His wife, Jezebel, was accustomed in her home country to regard the king's will as law. If the monarch wanted something, he had merely to take it by force. But even this, Ahab was unable to do. He offered to buy it and the peasant refusing to sell, Ahab sulked like a frustrated boy. Jezebel came to the rescue, but even she had to respect the framework of Justice. She had to concoct a false charge and have Naboth tried on perjured testimony, and only then could the king confiscate the property. The incident of David and Uriah, whose wife the king coveted, aside from its deep human interest, is another illustration of the fact that in ancient Israel there was no absolute power that the king could invoke. The monarchy in Israel never became absolute as it did virtually everywhere else throughout the world.

The heart of a democracy, as our age has discovered to its cost, does not reside in the ballot box. The great dictators of our day have been past masters of the art of the plebiscite and the election booth. The essence of Democracy is two-fold — the power of the majority to execute its will and the right of the minority to maintain and express its point of view in the face of a dominant and hostile majority. It has not been noted adequately what a signal contribution Biblical thought makes to the doctrine of freedom of speech and the right to dissent. The Prophets of Israel were the great dissenters of all time. They were feared and hated and maligned, they were imprisoned and exiled, but they never were silenced. This was true of Amos, whom the priest Amaziah expelled from Bethel, of Isaiah, who opposed the political alliances with Egypt or Assyria, and denounced the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few and the consequent impoverishment of the many, of Micah, who castigated the political and religious leadership of his day for its corruption, of Jeremiah, who announced the doom of the state. The twenty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah is particularly instructive for it contains the record of the prophet's trial for treason. During the proceedings, the example of his predecessor Micah is invoked by the defense as proof of the Prophet's right to declare the truth as he sees it without fear or favor.

There were examples of lynch law when a mob would override the law and murder a prophet (Jer. 26:20) , but the right of a Prophet of Israel to proclaim the truth was never shaken. The right to dissent is a basic contri-

bution which the world owes these intrepid defenders of the right.

There are other fundamental aspects of democracy that go back to ancient Israel. We Americans are justly proud of the ideal of universal, compulsory education. It is, however, a matter of historical record, that the first system of compulsory education for all the male population was established in ancient Israel two thousand years ago at about the beginning of the common era. Yet long before that period, the emphasis upon education, the bedrock of democracy is to be noted in ancient Israel. The evidence appears quite accidentally, and therefore all the more credibly. In the early period of the Judges, the Bible tells that Gideon decided to take vengeance of the town of Succot. He picked up a boy, who wrote down for him the names of the leading citizens. (Judg. 8:14) . In this primitive age, an urchin on the street was able to write, an indication of a relatively high degree of literacy in ancient Israel.

The great affirmation of faith: "Hear, 0 Israel, the Lord our God; the Lord is one. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy heart and with all thy might." The text is followed immediately by the injunction to teach the children. No other commandment has exerted a greater influence on the lives of Jews. To it is to be attributed the democratic character of the Jewish religion, which knows no fixed creed, or infallible authority, and which in the Talmud possesses the world's greatest monument to controversy and independent thought. What came to fruition in the post-Biblical age, has its origin in the Biblical insistence upon freedom resting on a foundation of knowledge, the two indispensable elements of true democracy.

These aspects of democracy, which could be extended in countless directions, do not exhaust the contribution of Judaism to democracy. It is a truism that democracy is at the cross roads. Upon its future hangs the hope of mankind. The problem facing the free nations of the world today is not merely the retention of the external forms of democracy, but rather the deepening of its spirit and the broadening of its character to include other areas beyond that of politics alone. Here the Bible and the vital elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition which derive from it, can offer both direction and inspiration to the modern age. First and foremost is the unfailing insistence upon social justice, which is to be found on virtually every page of the Prophets. This imperative has never been voiced with equal vigor or passion since their day. They opposed the exploitation of the people by the few. They left for us unforgettable pictures of luxury and corruption contrasted by poverty and want. They flayed the corruption in government, the degeneracy of religion and the decay of morality. Most important than all,

the Prophets based their cry for justice, not only on the principle of class hatred, raising one group against the other, but rather on their conviction that this was the law of God. The Prophets were aware that an unjust society does violence to the exploiters as well as to the exploited, for they were sensitive to the injury done to the spirit of the former, no less than to the damage wrought upon the body of the latter.

Time and again the Hebrew Prophets emphasized that the great law of the universe was justice. In the words of Isaiah: "The Lord of Hosts is exalted through righteousness." The establishment of justice is a religious obligation because the physical and mental welfare of men is the prerequisite for their spiritual and moral well-being.

The Torah as a Safeguard for Social Democracy.

Yet the great and glowing utterances of the Prophets, are, strange as it may seem, regarded in Judaism as secondary to the Law, to the Five Books of Moses. In this respect, Judaism has manifested penetrating judgment. For greater than the enunciation of abstract ideals, is the effort to realize them in life. This the Torah sought to do through the first system of social legislation of which we have record. Consider, for example, the status of labor. Throughout the ancient world, virtually all laborers, barring a few craftsmen and day-workers, were slaves. It required a bloody Civil War as little as eighty years ago to free America from the curse of human bondage. In ancient times, slavery was regarded as the permanent bed-rock of the economic system. Thus Plato, in his "Republic", in which he looks forward to the ideal future of society, regarded both slavery and war as inevitable and includes both a slave class and army which would keep the "barbarians" perpetually at bay. So too, Aristotle, has a reasoned defense of slavery. Because he believes that the fullest development of man requires leisure, Aristotle justifies the slavery of the many, to provide the leisure for the few. The enslavement of the greater portion of the Greek people was the unsavory basis of the brilliant society of the "Golden Age" of Greek culture.

The approach of the Bible to the problem of slavery was poles apart. Moses would probably have agreed with Aristotle that leisure is important to the full unfolding of the human personality. On this promise Aristotle condoned slavery, but Moses established the Sabbath. Through this institution, which Sir William Osler called the greatest Jewish contribution to civilization, every human being, whatever his rank and society, might have one day in seven when he would be free from the exigencies of toil and thus be able to fulfill his higher nature.

We have seen how the entire institution of Hebrew slavery was virtually abolished in Israel by limiting service to a six year period. There were countless other safeguards for the safety and human dignity of the slave, culminating in the Fugitive Slave Law, which forbade the Israelites to restore a slave that had escaped. Thus, the Bible made its contribution to the doctrine that all men have an inalienable right to freedom.

As in so many other instances, this attitude was carried further and deepens in post-Biblical Judaism. According to the Bible, if the slave, at the end of the six-year period, refuses to go free, he was brought to the gate of the city and there his ear was bored through. The great sage, Jonahan ben Zakkai, who lived in the first century of the Common Era, explains this peculiar form of branding the following terms: According to Jewish traditions, all the unborn generations of Israel stood at the foot of Sinai and took a vow of allegiance to the Torah. Hence, this slave too, was a party to the pact and his ears had heard God proclaim: "Unto Me shall the children of Israel be slaves, not slaves unto slaves." Since, in spite of Divine proclamation, he is prepared to accept human bondage, he deserves to have his ear bored through as a punishment.

The attitude toward property is equally interesting. The Bible does not advocate the abolition of private property, but it recognizes that wealth is not the possession of the individual, but rather a trust bestowed by God, who is the true owner. To translate this attitude into life, specific forms of legislation came into being. In order to overcome the dangers of monopoly, the Bible establishes the institution of the Sabbatical year of release. Every seventh year all debts were deemed cancelled, thus preventing the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few (Deut. 15:1 ff.)

The Bible goes even further in establishing the far-reaching provision for the Jubilee Year. Every fifty years, all property which had been sold during the intervening period, reverted to its original owner, who had doubtless been compelled to part with his land because of ill-health or other reverses.

In order to justify this remarkable law, the Bible lays down a doctrine of far-reaching implications even today. "The earth shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine and ye are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Lev. 25:23) . The land, therefore, remains the property of God.

This principle is emphasized in the related provision that the earth must be left fallow on the seventh year (Lev. 25:1 if) . This was more than a means of replenishing the vigor of the soil, a purpose achieved today by the rotation of crops and the adding of nitrates. The seventh year was "a Sabbath unto the Lord", when the farmer might not harvest whatever grew,

but leave it for the poor. By "the year of Sabbath", the true owner of the soil, who was God, was periodically asserting His title.

These ancient ideals have come back to life in Jewish Palestine. The Jewish National Fund is the land-purchasing agency of the Jewish people. It purchases, at inflated prices, incidentally, every inch of land the Jewish settlements occupy and then offers the Arabs, who sell the land voluntarily, other land elsewhere, if they wish to remain on the soil.

The J.N.F. then leases the land on forty-nine year terms to settlers, who must work the land themselves and cannot sub-let it to others. Not only is exploitation thus prevented, but speculation is ruled out, since the land remains the inalienable property of the Jewish people. Hundreds of settlements have been established on J.N.F. land, in which the principle of free, voluntary cooperation have replaced the competitive drive of our economic order. Thus the ancient Biblical ideals of social justice are being realized in the reestablishment of the life of the Jewish people in its homeland.

The social legislation of ancient Israel was concerned with poverty, which, as the Bible warned us, we always have with us. Welfare legislation is part of any just and forward-looking society. The Bible lays down the duty of help to the indigent, not as an act of benevolence, or condescending grace, out of the goodness of the heart. The Hebrew word for "charity" is *Zedakah,* which means "rigteousness". Helping the unfortunate is simply an obligation which falls upon us, and is a direct consequence of the recognition that our more fortunate position does not give us absolute ownership, only a trusteeship over our possessions, which we must share with our fellow-men. No religion has created a richer system of philanthropy through the ages than Judaism. Biblical law, however, did not content itself with urging the practice of charity. It established a system of poor relief through taxation. A farmer was commanded to leave unharvested a corner of his field which belonged to the poor, as did sheaves that were forgotten on the land. As we have noted, on the seventh year, when crops were not sown, whatever grew on the land also belonged to the poor as of right and not as of charity.

An exaggeration often highlights a truth. The Talmud tells that in a certain town, the charity overseers were approached by a man who asked for help, and some money was given him. A day or two later, the Charity overseers decided to visit their ward. To their indignation they found him seated at a table, eating a fowl and washing it down with wine. They were scandalized by his squandering the money he had received; but the beggar was not the slightest bit embarrassed. When they remonstrated with him

he calmly pointed his finger to heaven and said: "Am I eating what belongs to you? I am eating what belongs to Him", and he went on eating.

These and other aspects of the social legislation of ancient Israel are of more than historical interest. In extending the frontiers of democracy to the social and economic sphere, our age may draw inspiration from the prophetic ideals and guidance from Pentateuchal legislation, which attempted on the one hand to minimize poverty and prevent it, and on the other, to relieve those who fell into need.

Democracy in World-wide Perspective.

If democracy is to survive in the twentieth century, it must go beyond the borders of one land or region. It must become world-wide. That great truth was also recognized by the ancient Prophets. Not only were they the first to set forth the ideal of world peace, but they also indicated the techniques for achieving it a contribution which has been overlooked, in spite of, or perhaps because of the familiarity of the passages in Isaiah and Micah. The great obstacle to world peace today lies in exaggerated nationalism. This tendency has reached the peak of degradation and the apex of power in Fascism and Nazism and plunged the world into the most horrible bloodbath in history. The post-war world has by no means escaped the threat of aggressive nationalism. Revolted by this spectacle, many idealistic and sensitive men have tried to find refuge in a kind of cosmopolitanism which will wipe out national differences. They often advocate all men speaking one language (usually their own), one system of government, one world state, and one religion, if any. In spite of its superficial appeal, such a program is both impossible of realization and unworthy of achievement. Such internationalism is not practical because the entire history of the human race shows an ever greater group differentiation among men. At the end of the first World War, the Versailles Treaty created a dozen new nationalities in Europe. The Soviet Union has stimulated scores of peoples within its borders to national self-awareness. Throughout the Orient today, the emergence of nationalism is taking place among the Colonial peoples. Therefore, there is no evidence in the world that nationalism is growing weaker, and the goal of eliminating it, therefore, must be regarded as an illusion that would be dangerous.

Even if it could take place, it would be a grave set-back for human culture. Lincoln once said: "God must love the poor; he made so many of them." Similarly, God must love variety, because new species are always emerg-

ing. If there is anything that nature seems to abhor, besides a vacuum, it is monotony in type variations, tradition and culture. How colorless human culture would be without Hebrew Prophesy, Greek and English drama, Italian music, German poetry. All these elements of world culture fulfill the dictum of Santayana, "A man must stand with his feet firmly planted in his own country, but his eyes must survey the world."

This is the tragic dilemma to be resolved? On the one hand, aggressive nationalism may well destroy the human race. On the other hand, it shows no sign of abating in intensity, and if it did, the human race would pay for its physical safety by spiritual drabness and monotony.

The Prophets of Israel point to a way out. They looked forward, not to the elimination of nations, but to the moralization of their relationships. In the famous Vision of Peace in Isaiah. ch. 2 and Micah ch. 4, where the hope is held out that men would beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, it has not been noted that the words "peoples" and "nations" occur six times in four verses. It is the nations that "shall go and say: 'Come, let us ascend to the mountains of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the World of the Lord from Judaism.'"

For the Prophets, national loyalty would endure, but with it would come the recognition of the moral law, rooted in God, beyond what men are pleased to call "national sovereignty". A little-known passage in the Book of Isaiah illustrates the grandeur of the prophetic conception of history and their lively sense of the value of national loyalties. The Prophet Isaiah lived at a time when his little country was being ground between two millstones, the Assyrian Empire in the east and Egypt in the west, wrestling for world supremacy. Yet the Prophet, who loved his people passionately, was able to rise to the plane of vision and look forward to the future day. On that day there would be a highway linking Egypt and Assyria in a bond of peaceful intercourse, both dedicated to the service of the Living God, with Israel the third member in the family of nations. On that day God would bless the people saying, "Blessed is my people, Egypt, and the work of My hands, Assyria, and Mine inheritance, Israel" (Isa. 19:23-25).

The Prophets looked forward to the day when, purged of its militarism and greed, nationalism would become an enriching factor in human life. In this direction, as in so many others, the Prophets indicate the path which mankind must follow, if it is to conserve the values of the past and build an even more glorious future.

The Bible and the New State of Israel

This brief survey has attempted, all too inadequately, to present some of the Biblical contributions toward democracy. Whatever lives, grows, and political democracy, the Prophets would have insisted, must expand to include social justice. So too, they were keenly aware that there can be no freedom in one corner of the world unless it prevail everywhere.

One aspect, the historic contribution of the Bible to the democracy remains to be noted. These ideals did not originate in a vacuum. They were not the lucubrations of philosophers in an ivory tower or the dreams of poets. "All the prophets prophesied either in Eretz Yisrael or for its sake." These Hebraic ideals emerged out of the problems and struggles of national life upon the national soil. Palestine was the solid reality underlying the search for principles and solutions.

What was true of the Biblical contribution to democracy in the past applies to the expanding frontiers of democracy in the future, without which it cannot survive. Here, also, mere abstract formulations will lack the power to fire men's hearts and inspire them to action. The Biblical quest for social justice within the framework of freedom and voluntary cooperation is today the heartbeat in the life of the Yishuv in Palestine. In Bialik's fine utterance, there can be no more heaven above our heads than we have ground beneath our feet. The firm establishment of the State of Israel will represent the fulfillment of the unconquerable hope and desperate need of the Jewish people for security and honor. But it will be even more. It may well prove an indispensable prelude to the triumph of the ideals of democracy the world over.

For beyond all else, the most precious gift of the Prophets for our frightened and confused age lies in their unconquerable faith in the future of mankind. To modify slightly the words of Lincoln, in whom the spirit of the Bible lived anew, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. The world cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect that it will cease to be divided."

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Walking the Land:
***A History of Israeli Hiking Trails*,**
by Shai Rabineau.
Indiana University Press, 2023.

Reviewed by Daniel Chazin

As an experienced hiker in the United States, I am delighted to review *Walking the Land: A History of Israeli Hiking Trails*, by Shai Rabineau. This well-written book makes it clear that the history of the marked hiking trails in Israel is far different than the history of such trails in the United States. Here in the United States, we view hiking trails as vehicles for recreation. But in Israel, as the book demonstrates, they have historically been viewed as political statements, and, to some extent, they continue to be viewed in that manner today.

The book begins by explaining that, during the years of the British Mandate, hiking was considered an aspect of *yedi'at ha'arets*—becoming more familiar with the sacred land. Rabineau points out that the area the early hikers chose to explore was the Judean Desert, and he notes that the reason this area was chosen for exploration was precisely that it was not well known. Paths through the desert had existed for hundreds of years, but they were unmarked and could not easily be followed by inexperienced hikers. Initially, Bedouin were hired to lead treks (*masa'ot*), although the Jewish leaders of the Palmach soon acquired enough familiarity with the terrain to lead groups by themselves. A series of incidents involving hikers in 1947 convinced Israeli hiking pioneer Hillel Birger, along with a group of Palmach scouts, to mark the first hiking trail in the Judean Desert: the path up the mountain known as Ras Feshkha, which was part of the route from Beit Ha'aravah to Masada. This was the start of the *simun shivilim* (marking of paths/trails) movement in Israel.

Ironically, the marking of the trail up Ras Feshkha began on November 22, 1947. Just one week later, the United Nations General Assembly approved a plan to partition what was then known as Palestine, and a civil war began between the Arabs and Jews. The marking of the trail was not completed, and the trail itself became a part of the Jordanian-occupied West Bank. Of course, with the establishment of a State of Israel that did not include the Judean Desert, hiking trails had to be established elsewhere. Rabineau discusses the first large-scale effort in April and June 1959 to mark trails up Masada and in the area of Ein Gedi—the portion of the Judean Desert that remained in Israeli hands—as well as the expansion of the effort in 1961. He continues by

describing the marking of trails in the Eilat Mountains in the southern Negev in 1963.

When the entire West Bank once again opened to hiking in the wake of the Six Day War in 1967, the *simun shvilim* movement returned to the northern Judean Desert and marked a network of trails in the area. Indeed, Rabineau states, "the expansion of the Israeli trail network in the northern Judean Desert…established the first large-scale Israeli civilian presence" in the area. Rabineau goes on to discuss the establishment in 1973 of Israel's third trail network, in the Golan Heights. Here, he points out, the Israel Defense Force's Northern Command took an active role in selecting the location of the trails, as the area had been heavily mined by the Syrians. Next, he points out, a network of marked hiking trails was established in the Mount Carmel area in 1976. *Yedi'at ha'arets*, which emphasized hiking by "scouts" and "fit walkers" in "desolate areas," was no longer the primary motive; rather, the purpose of this new trail network was to enable "families and individual hikers" to explore green spaces closer to home.

After discussing these various trail networks, Rabineau goes on to describe how the *Shvil Yisra'el*, which is often translated as the Israel National Trail, was established in 1995. He explains that the concept originated in a newspaper article in which a veteran hiker referred to the Appalachian Trail as the "national trail" of the United States (a characterization with which I do not fully agree) and suggested that a similar trail be established in Israel. Even here, Rabineau points out, the decision of where to route the trail was influenced by political considerations. The final route stays within the 1948 borders of Israel and avoids any "politically contentious areas," including Jerusalem, although two "add-on" trails, *Shvil haGolan* and *Shvil Yerushalayim*, were subsequently established.

Finally, Rabineau discusses the establishment of the Jesus Trail, created for the benefit of foreign tourists, that extends from Nazareth to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee; the Nativity Trail, which connects Nazareth with Bethlehem; and the Palestinian Heritage Trail in the West Bank. These trails were all established by non-Jewish individuals and organizations and were not designed to cater to Israelis.

Interestingly, Rabineau points out that the standards established for marking trails in Israel were based on those established in Europe—namely, a single colored stripe on a background of two white stripes. (This is not the standard for marking hiking trails in the United States.)

Rabineau also discusses the marking of the Israeli hiking trails on topographical maps and the publication of these maps as a guide to hikers. As one who is deeply involved in the creation and publication of hiking trail maps in the United States, I fully appreciate the significance of this effort as essential to making the trails available to the general public.

In sum, I found that the book not only provides a well-written and interesting history of the marking of hiking trails in the Land of Israel but also explains how the role of hiking trails in Israel has differed historically from their role in the United States and elsewhere.

Daniel Chazin, a retired attorney living in Teaneck, New Jersey, is an avid hiker who writes a column on hiking for a local newspaper and has written or edited many books on hiking, including the Appalachian Trail Data Book, 50 Hikes in New Jersey, *and* 50 Hikes in the Lower Hudson Valley. *He also is Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 226, chartered to the Teaneck Jewish Center, and is the Secretary of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting, on which he has served for over 40 years.*

Atḥalta. Musar umesoret beʿeidan shel koaḥ Yehudi
(The Dawn of Redemption: Morality and Tradition in an Age of Jewish Power)
by Mikhael Manekin.
E-vrit, 2021.

Reviewed by Michael Pitkowsky

When I was a student at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I remember attending public lectures of Professor Aviezer Ravitzky, who often spoke about Judaism, the value of peace, and the challenge of Jewish power. One source that Professor Ravitzky would often quote is found in Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, a dialogue between a rabbi, a priest, an imam, and the Khazar king. The text that Professor Ravitzky would quote (I:113–14) directly addresses the absence of Jewish power throughout most of Jewish history and its effect on both Jewish behavior and how Jews see themselves. After the rabbi praises the degradation and downtrodden state of the Jewish people, the king responds and says that "This might be so, if your humility were voluntary; but it is involuntary, and if you had power you would slay."[1] As I read Mikhael Manekin's *Atḥalta*, I kept thinking of this text from the

[1] *Kitab al Khazari*, translated by Hartwig Hirschfeld, 1905, https://www.sefaria.org/Kuzari.1.119?lang=en&with=all&lang2=en.

Kuzari. Is the lens through which we discuss Jewish power tainted by powerlessness? Are texts that were formulated in a reality when Jewish sovereignty was absent relevant to our present when Jewish sovereignty has been restored?

In the first chapter of *Atḥalta*, Manekin writes that, "[i]n recent years I have been bothered by the question 'How to be a Jew in Israel'" (16).[2] He goes on to say:

> I want to be an active Jew, a good Jew. I close my eyes and try to imagine the image of a Jew that I strive to be. I see a person with a commitment to divine truth, a gentle person, thoughtful, compassionate, reticent to use violence, loving other people. I imagine a learned person, attentive, curious and a lover of knowledge. I see a believing person (16–17).

Manekin then describes the dissonance that he feels between his image of the Jew and the reality of Judaism in the State of Israel. "This Jew is from the pre-Israeli past, a Jew who doesn't find their identity in terms such as 'national pride' and 'sovereignty,' rather in terms such as 'humility' and 'compassion'" (17).

Atḥalta is a very personal attempt to address the tensions between morality and sovereignty, between a Jewish tradition that emphasizes compassion and humility, on the one hand, and an Israeli Judaism that sometimes makes these and other values subservient to power and sovereignty, on the other. Manekin weaves together his own personal experiences, both as a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces and a member of the Religious Zionist community, along with discussions about Jewish texts, Zionist history, and Israeli political and religious culture.

Toward the end of the book, Manekin formulates what in his opinion is the root of the problem.

> In the decision that the sovereign state is a substitute for a king anointed by a prophet, Religious Zionism denies the logic behind the morality of the laws of war in halakhah. The Sages built a halakhic framework that was based upon a suspicion of any war, and therefore required the explicit participation of God in every decision about going to war. This doesn't mean that they oppose a defensive war, rather, they do not attribute to it any religious meaning, and surely they don't attribute to it a religious command. On the other hand, the rabbis of Religious Zionism claim that the secular state represents the entire-

[2] All translations from *Athalta* in this review are mine. There are plans for an English translation of the book to be published.

> ty of the Jewish people, and that its wars are religious wars, since the state is the state of the people (113).

For Manekin, this attribution of divine authority to the decisions of the secular state causes the "religious soldier…to nullify his independence of ethical thought" (113). He emphasizes that "[the] problem is not, as many tend to believe, that religious beliefs are causing the secular state to deteriorate, rather, it's that the sanctification of secularism is corrupting religion and making it subservient to the changing needs of the state" (113).

Religious values are meant to challenge the secular institutions of sovereignty and not to sanctify them. Once the trappings of secular statehood are sanctified, its policy decisions are no longer to be found in the realm of fallible decisions made by human beings but should be sought in divinely sanctioned actions that in due course attain a status that is beyond both human reproach and reason.

Was the Khazar king correct that "if you had power you would slay?" Is the Jewish people destined to be like so many other nations in the ways of nationalism and war? *Aṯḥalta* is a attempt to say "no," and to emphasize that, despite the vast gulf that may exist between the political and social reality of the State of Israel today and most of Jewish history in the past, many of the values that shaped Jewish thought and law in the past are as relevant as ever in today's reality of Jewish sovereignty.

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***Stories for the Sake of Argument*, by Robbie Gringras and Abi Dauber Sterne. FSA Publications, 2022.**

Reviewed by Mason Voit

Stories for the Sake of Argument by Robbie Gringras and Abi Dauber Stern is a powerful resource that introduces an innovative and aspirational framework for teaching and learning about Israel. Its purpose is to help learners to develop the technical skills, emotional resilience, and content knowledge to engage in healthy arguments that lead to growth in their understanding of and relationship with Israel. This book, and the accompanying resources and facilitator training workshops, should become part of the repertoire of all Israel educators and anyone searching for methods to understand and engage in the most challenging and interesting issues in and about Israel.

The approach taken by Gringras

and Stern notes the overarching societal trends such as political polarization and the general decline in civil discourse, along with the increasing anxiety and contentiousness associated with conversations around Israel and Zionism. They challenge the stance that arguing risks healthy relationships, and they offer an alternative to the consensus approach to teaching and learning about Israel. They seek instead to create a culture of healthy disagreement characterized by arguments that are differentiated from debates (intended to persuade) or negotiations (intended to solve), arguments that instead create broader understandings of and clarity on what values and information comprise various perspectives.

To do this, Gringras and Stern provide a collection of twenty-four short stories helpfully tagged as "warmup," "Israel," or "allegory"—each including a brief introduction, followed by guiding questions and some background information on the story's topic. The first story, a warmup titled "Monstrosities," describes a child's perspective on her grandfather's refusal to shake the hand of the synagogue president because of his political views. Readers are prompted to argue about the legitimacy of the character's actions, and the prompt addresses the costs of choosing to argue versus not to argue and the boundaries of acceptable disagreement. An example of the allegories in the volume is "The Brothers' House," in which Jonny lives in the family house, while David lives abroad and disagrees with changes Jonny has made to the house during David's absence. The argument between the brothers is an allegory about the relationship between Israeli and diaspora Jews. Among the stories in the "Israel" category is "Why the Heck Should I Vote?," about the factors that inform the choice of a Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem to vote in a municipal election, and "Praying at the Kotel," about a devout woman's perspective on women who pray at the Kotel in nontraditional ways. Many of the stories have been adapted as professionally produced animated videos to accompany the texts.

The stories are brief and engaging, are intended to produce disagreement and create opportunities for robust argument among readers. They address challenging topics by inviting readers to take a side and express disagreement while providing a structure and framework that make room for uncertainty, provide opportunity to change positions, and invite readers to ask questions and seek more information, as well as experience disagreement as an experience that unites rather than divides.

This project is the latest contribution to a growing collection of recent educational resources advocating for a Jewish approach to healthy disagreement and civil discourse. *Civilly Speaking: A Curriculum on Civil Discourse* (Covenant Foundation, 2021) by Joel Lurie Grishaver and Ira J. Wise, is a six-unit curriculum for middle and high school aged learners to adults to "bring more kind and empathetic discourse—and possibly more peace—to our classrooms and our world." Facing History and Ourselves offers *Fostering Civil Discourse: How Do We Talk About Issues That Matter* (2022), a guide for educators to help prepare students to engage in reflective conversations on topics that matter. Additional educational resources include "Jewish Values and Civil Discourse" on JTeach.org and Behrman House's series of "Hot Topics" guidebooks. The most robust of these curricula is the Pardes Mahloket Matters curriculum directed by Sefi Kraut at the Jerusalem-based Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, which takes a text-based approach to fostering a culture of healthy disagreement and includes curricular resources for a variety of age groups and educational settings, as well as educator training programs. While compatible with these resources, *Stories for the Sake of Argument* is different because of its focus on Israel content and its intention to create and elevate disagreement as a primary goal.

This resource may best be used by educators as an introduction or anticipatory set to explore contentious or evaded topics within a larger Israel education curriculum. The technical skill of participating in healthy arguments is valuable and transferable. In my experience using this resource with middle and high school aged students, the stories are engaging and largely successful at sparking interest and buy-in about the topics, as well as motivating deeper understanding of the issues. The twenty-four stories in the book address a range of topics and levels of complexity. Educators must carefully choose stories that best initiate disagreement among their specific learners. The process is most effective when there is heat—passionate disagreement—and least effective when there is consensus. This requires that the educator know their audience. Those in educational settings characterized by an ideologically narrow approach to, or high level of anxiety around, Israel education may experience resistance to this approach. Some may critique specific stories or their framing because the presentation of various positions is perceived as unbalanced or because it includes views that are not invited into the conversation in their setting. *Stories for the Sake*

of Argument invites learners to express, hear, and understand a range of views on contentious issues. The learning outcomes are based on the breadth and depth of understanding and caring about the issues, not on the learners taking a specific side. Not all educators embrace this approach. An exploration and argument for this learning approach in the form of a dialogue is included in the Appendix III of the book. The workshops supporting educators to facilitate this curriculum are opportunities to further explore this pedagogical method.

Funded in 2022 by a $1.1 million grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation, the book is the first of a three-part educational project described in Appendix IV as "an innovative educational project aimed at harnessing the energy of interactivity of live disagreement for the health of the Jewish People in general and Israel engagement in particular." In addition to the book, drivers of activity include the creation of "argument circles" led by facilitators trained in the curriculum and pedagogical approach and the development of a new pedagogy of argument that aims for learners to acquire the information, emotional stamina, and confidence to have healthy arguments about Israel and Israel's issues.

Stories for the Sake of Argument is especially timely and relevant as Israel is experiencing a political crisis that impacts both Israelis and those who care about Israel—in July 2023, the authors added *Democratya*, a booklet of four new stories on Israel's judicial reforms and the protest movement. As educators search for resources to help learners engage with and care about the most challenging questions about Israel and understand the underlying causes and complex issues driving the current political disagreements, *Stories for the Sake of Argument* is an essential tool for engaging learners in Israel's current events, as well as in the more enduring questions and topics about Israel.

Mason Voit has served as the Director of Education and Jewish Family Life at the Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale (CSAIR) since 2003. In the field of Israel education, Voit was a post-graduate fellow of the Melton Senior Educators Program of Hebrew University and received an iCenter Graduate Certificate in Israel Education at George Washington University. He participated in the first cohort and served as a mentor in the Qushiyot Israel Education Fellowship of the Jewish Education Project, in the inaugural cohort of the Pardes Senior Educator Learning Fellowship (SELF) and is a recent graduate of the Mandel Educational Leadership Program.

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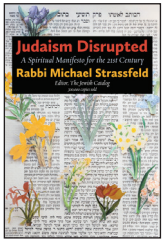

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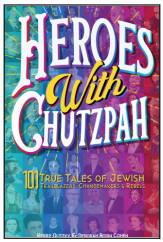

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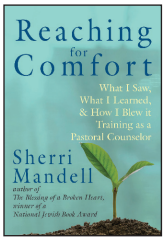
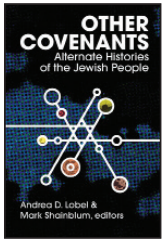


Reaching for Comfort: What I Saw, What I Learned, and How I Blew it Training as a Pastoral Counselor by Sherri Mandell. In 2004, Sherri Mandell won the National Jewish Book award for The Blessing of the Broken Heart, which told of her grief and initial mourning after her 13-year-old son Koby was brutally murdered. Years later, with her pain still undiminished, Sherri trains to help others as a pioneering pastoral counselor in Israeli hospitals. “What a blessing to witness Mandell's and her patients' resilience!” —Rabbi Dayle Friedman, editor, *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources*

Just Jewish: How to Engage Millennials and Build a Vibrant Jewish Future by Rabbi Dan Horwitz. Horwitz, drawing on his experience launching The Well, an inclusive Jewish community for young adults in Metro Detroit, shares proven techniques and models ready to be adopted by the Jewish world’s myriad organizations, touching on everything from branding to fundraising to programmatic approaches to relationship development, and more. “For anyone who has sought to understand the black box of engaging Millenials, *Just Jewish* is a must read! This book will shape the conversation as to how we think about the Jewish future.” —Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove, editor, *Jewish Theology in Our Time*.



Other Covenants: Alternate Histories of the Jewish People by Rabbi Andrea D. Lobel & Mark Shainblum. In *Other Covenants*, you’ll meet Israeli astronauts trying to save a doomed space shuttle, a Jewish community’s faith challenged by the unstoppable return of their own undead, a Jewish science fiction writer in a world of Zeppelins and magic, an adult Anne Frank, an entire genre of Jewish martial arts movies, a Nazi dystopia where Judaism refuses to die, and many more. Nominated for two Sidewise Awards for Alternate History