RELIGIOUS ZIONISM REVISITED: A SYMPOSIUM

The massacre in Hebron this past Purim placed a spotlight on the tiny number of Jewish militants who are followers of the late Meir Kahane, many of whom are self-styled Orthodox Jews and Religious Zionists. Because of this and the fact that some of their more militant doctrines seem, here and there, to have found a positive response within some small sections of the larger Orthodox community over the years, attention has recently been focused on Religious Zionism as a whole. Tradition therefore asked a number of prominent thinkers from the wide range of Israeli and Diaspora Orthodoxy to address the issue. The responses of those who agreed to respond follow the questions.

—E.F.

1. Has the leadership of Religious Zionism and that of the more general Orthodox community been clear enough in teaching the difference between the philosophy of a movement that is willing to fight militarily for the establishment and maintenance of the State of Israel, on the one hand, and that of a group whose symbol is a fist and in which violence has been an ever-present threat, on the other?

2. What are the fundamental differences between Kahanists and those for whom a rejection of “land for peace” is an integral tenet of Religious Zionism?

3. Has Religious Zionism failed to take seriously the criticisms posed by non-Zionist Orthodoxy? Has it been guilty of unjustly denigrating “traditional galut” values? Has it erred in its theological or halakhic judgments and presuppositions?

4. Has Religious Zionism been guilty of cultivating a negative stance towards Gentiles? How can Israel’s chosenness (behirat Yisrael) be so formulated as to avoid its being misinterpreted as either another form of secular nationalism or an endorsement of negative attitudes towards non-Jews?
MARC D. ANGEL

1. This question implies a monolithic leadership of Religious Zionism and the more general Orthodox community. This premise is incorrect. Religious Zionism and Orthodoxy include rabbinic, political and lay leadership who are doves and hawks, who see the peace process in a positive light and who see the peace process as a great danger. The teachings of some leaders may lead to violence, while the teachings of other leaders lead to a profound commitment to peace.

It is truly unfortunate that Religious Zionism today is often characterized as militant and nationalistic. While it appears that there has been an increasing movement towards right-wing positions within Religious Zionism, this does not mean that Religious Zionism is synonymous with right-wing positions. It astounds me that current discussions of Religious Zionism seldom draw on the teachings of such outstanding figures as Rabbi Benzion Uziel and Rabbi Hayyim David Halevy, both of whom represent the highest ideals of Religious Zionist philosophy. It is also surprising that Oz ve-Shalom is not more widely supported. For years, Oz ve-Shalom has been publishing materials strongly critical of irrational militan-
tism, against Kahanism, against violence. Certainly, these positions deserve wide currency within the Orthodox and general communities. It is a massive failing of modern Religious Zionism that these voices are often drowned out by the more militant elements of the community.

2. I agree with those halakhic authorities, such as Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who place the security of the people of Israel above the need to hold every inch of land. Whether or not Israel should cede any territory as part of a peace plan is something which must be determined on military and political terms. A strong case against “land for peace” can be made purely on the basis of security concerns. I think it is a mistake to frame the debate on “land for peace” in religious terms.

3. For nearly two thousand years, Jews prayed for the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. In May of 1948, God answered these prayers. A Jewish state was established after centuries of difficult exile.

Non-religious Jews have viewed this incredible phenomenon merely as a nationalistic rebirth of the Jewish people. They celebrate the rise of Israel, but see it as a victory of the heroism of the Jewish people; they do not see Divine Providence in the establishment of
the State of Israel. On the other extreme, non-Zionist Orthodox Jews also do not see the establishment of the State of Israel as a miraculous sign of God’s Providence. While valuing Eretz Yisrael as the Holy Land, they ascribe no special religious significance to Medinat Yisrael.

Only Religious Zionism has had the religious vision to see God’s hand in the establishment of the State of Israel. Only Religious Zionism has understood that a dramatic revolution in Jewish life has occurred, that centuries of prayers have begun to be answered, that the covenant between God and Israel has been renewed.

The criticisms of Religious Zionism posed by non-Zionist Orthodoxy have been taken seriously. In my opinion, they have even been given too much weight. A weakness of Religious Zionism is that many Religious Zionists still feel somewhat uncomfortable with the new challenges inherent in Jewish sovereignty. Many people find it more comfortable and more secure to pretend that nothing new has happened with the rise of the State of Israel. I have often cringed when hearing leaders of Religious Zionism refer to Israel as “Eretz Yisroel.” By using this phrase, they consciously or subconsciously negate the modern reality of Israel. They use the old Ashkenazic pronunciation, instead of the modern Israeli pronunciation. By referring to Israel as “Eretz” instead of as ‘Medina’, they tacitly reveal their discomfort with the Medina, feeling more at ease with the classic religious terminology. If Religious Zionists are not comfortable using modern Hebrew, and if they find it difficult to say “Medinat Yisrael,” then they have not really made peace with the religious significance of the modern State of Israel.

To deny the religious significance of the State of Israel is to be guilty of profound ingratitude to God. God has given His people sovereignty in their historic homeland after many centuries of exile. Religious Zionists have the merit of being able to appreciate the religious significance of Israel and the religious decency to thank God for the Medina and to praise God with Hallel on Yom ha-Atzmaut. It is deeply to be pitied that non-religious Jews and non-Zionist Orthodox Jews have been unable or unwilling to see the light.

4. Religious Zionism qua Religious Zionism has not been guilty of cultivating a negative attitude towards non-Jews. If individuals who call themselves Religious Zionists do cultivate such attitudes, this is to be lamented and criticized.

Even before the rise of the State of Israel, Rabbi Uziel had emphasized that all human beings, Jewish and non-Jewish, are created in the image of God and are entitled to respect and dignity.
Rabbi Hayyim David Halevy has written important responsa (Ase Lekha Rav 8:687, 69) in which he demonstrates that Judaism rejects racism and discrimination. He has also described the positive responsibilities of Jews towards non Jews (7:70, 71, and 9:30). Other Religious Zionists have spoken in similar terms.

The great enemy of Religious Zionism, as of true religion in general, is fanaticism. Fanatics insist that only they have the Divine truth, that all who differ from them are to be battled and discredited. Fanaticism narrows people’s options, limits the boundaries of thought. Fanaticism, not religion, leads to violence—physical or verbal—against others.

People who espouse Religious Zionism must, by definition, oppose religious and nationalistic fanaticism. Unless fanaticism is confronted directly and forcefully, Religious Zionism will have missed one of its central responsibilities.

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LOUIS BERNSTEIN

When discussing contemporary Religious Zionism, it is necessary to distinguish between its ideological component and its political arm. This was not always the case. A generation ago the ideologists were among the foremost leaders of Religious Zionism. An outstanding example and survivor is S.Z. Shragal. Even the various factions within the party had strong ideological conclusions.

Today this generation of Mafdal leadership is totally pragmatic. It has all but abandoned other issues but the political one. Its slogan in the last elections, “Only with the Likud,” reveals just how far the movement has moved away from its original ideological underpinnings. Even if a Yeshaya Bernstein or a Moshe Unna were to emerge today, the political machinery would never permit him to be influential and would grind him to pieces. The movement has all but ignored crucial issues in the areas of religion and education. Its voice is seldom or never heard on these issues. It has forfeited the Chief Rabbinate, one of its mainstays and sources of pride. As a result, the Chief Rabbinate is plummeting into a sharp decline. The vacuum created is being filled by the Haredi community. Reform and Conservative movements may already be on the verge of challenging
institutionalized Orthodoxy, even in the crucial areas of marriage and divorce.

The mainstream of Religious Zionism was never identified with extremism. Even today four of its six members in the Knesset cannot be termed extremists. Memad and the Kibbutz Hadati are as much Religious Zionists as Gush Emunim. Dr. Joseph Burg, the sagacious elder statesman of the movement, remains a pragmatist par excellence, realistically critical of the Oslo agreement, whose proponents concede its chances of success are less than rosy. On the other hand, he is equally critical of rabbinical bans on land for peace.

One should not even mention Kahanism and Religious Zionism in the same breath. There is a world of difference between them. Religious Zionism, with a history of more than ninety years, has furthered its goals through constructive means. It is the creator of scores of religious settlements. It has fostered a great and far-reaching educational network. Its youth organization is probably the very best of its kind. It is a movement of tens of thousands, not that of a handful of individuals.

And, of course, it does not preach violence as a means of obtaining political goals. Immediately after the Hebron massacre, forty-four of its rabbis from the extreme spectrum—from Rabbi Yehuda Amital to Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch—denounced the act. The world of “Rebbitzin” Shulamit Aloni and Yossi Sarid has been successful in labeling the entire Religious Zionist movement as extremist. Even the questions posed by the Tradition editorial board seem to project this factoid as a given. But Religious Zionism, its political arm and rabbinic leadership were united in unqualified condemnation of the Hebron massacre.

From the beginning of the Zionist movement, Religious Zionism has been acutely sensitive to non-Zionist Orthodoxy. Religious Zionists came from European yeshivot and European Orthodox homes. As the years passed, the points of contact have become fewer, but at every level there is a sense of identity. As long as Jews pray in the same synagogue and recite the same prayers, there remains a deep and significant relationship.

The relationship would be even more cordial but for the fact that there are political parties in whose interest it is to sharpen differences. These differences are not limited to Religious Zionism and Haredim, but within the latter world itself where Agudas Israel competes with Degel haTorah.

How does one relate to the Shas phenomenon? It is certainly a religious non-Zionist party. It represents an ethnic group which
regards itself as being discriminated against for decades. There is more than a grain of substance to that sentiment. Of all the political movements and groupings in Israel, Religious Zionism has the least to be ashamed of in that regard. Potentially, it is the only bridge between ethnic religious groups.

In relationships there are always two sides. An important part of the issue, is how does the non-Zionist world relate to Religious Zionism? Religious Zionists have turned to the rabbinical leadership of the Hasidic community for consultations and occasionally for mutual religious interests. The Rabbinical leaders might find such contacts with Religious Zionism welcome and desirable. The political leadership has been the obstacle in the past and there seems to be no opening in the present.

The basic difference, the centrality of Zionism and, subsequently, of the State of Israel, looms ever larger. The Haredi world, on the ideological level, has yet to come to grips with the Holocaust and Jewish statehood. When the editorial board of Tradition worries if Religious Zionism has been guilty of “unjustly denigrating traditional galuti values,” whatever they are, the answer I believe is that the current generation of Religious Zionists would not know what they are talking about.

Even The Holocaust and the events of 1948 are becoming ancient history for Israelis. Religious Zionists are young people. The galut is becoming more remote in distance and in time. Empirically, there is practically no contact between the Religious Zionists in Israel and in the Diaspora. There is no intellectual dialogue. Religious Zionism in Israel has absolutely no interest in the galut.

No, Religious Zionism has not erred theologically in its steadfast support of Jewish statehood. With the exception of a handful of Neturei Karta, the state and its centrality in Jewish life are now accepted de jure by the entire Orthodox spectrum. For example, those who, five decades ago, issued bans on elections, on women’s participation in them, are today part and parcel of these trappings of statehood.

Religious Zionism stands and falls on Jewish statehood. It recognized from the outset of Zionism that this entailed cooperation with non-religious elements in the Jewish world. For this, it paid a heavy price of steady condemnation by the non-Zionist Orthodox. Today even Degel haTorah has acknowledged de facto that Jewish survival demands playing by the rules of the game.

Contemporary Religious Zionism, because of its concern with Israel, has never given any concentrated thought to relations with
Symposium: Gerald J. Blidstein

Gentiles. The issue, when it does arise, is dealt with *ad hoc* and is peripheral to the main issues of security and defense. It is content to leave the issue to the rabbinate, as in the recent exchange of diplomats between Israel and the Vatican. This is not the optimum situation, but unless some critical issue arises it will not receive any particular attention in a Religious Zionist forum.

It is not always desirable or wise to anchor a religious-political system in words. Religious Zionism just has to be itself. It must live up to its own ideology of *Torah vaAvoda*. At its best it can be a shining light to secular Jews. Gentiles will understand it as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and of Israel’s preordained role of being a light unto the nations.

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GERALD J. BLIDSTEIN

Unfortunately—from my point of view and, it would seem, from the perspective from which this symposium was mounted—the number of followers of Meir Kahane within the Orthodox community is not tiny, nor has his militant doctrine found a positive response among only small sections of our community. On the contrary: central aspects of his world-view or at least of his basic attitudes, are shared by large segments of observant Jewry in both Israel and America. This very fact—or, perhaps, impression—makes our symposium all the more timely. For it is an opportunity to discuss not only the doctrine itself but, more crucially, the educational implications and roots of its success.

Before turning to the discussion, which concerns us most intimately, we must define Kahanism itself. Specifically, where lies the difference, which the symposium-question assumes, between Kahanism and classical Zionism? Indeed, both radical right and radical left claim that no meaningful difference does exist. For the radical right, Kahane merely continues legitimate political. Zionism, which always—both before the creation of the State and afterwards—used force as a necessary instrument of survival. And for the radical left, too, Kahane is merely an unmasked version of what Zionism always was—racist, brutal, rapacious.

Thus it is important to state that classical Zionism did (and does) use force to enable the establishment and survival of a Jewish
state and society. Yet that is all too bald a description. For one thing, classical Zionism—whether of the religious or secular variety, and despite their conflict around this very point—was involved in building a culture, an ethos, in which the use of force was a component, but not the totality nor the central value. For Kahane, force, violence, and domination seems the very content of Jewish experience, its peak, as it were. Moreover, classical Zionism is committed to the proposition that the Jewish state is a democracy—that Jews and Arabs can live together with equal legal and political rights, as can religious and non-religious Jews. These commitments are not always honored in practice, nor have we a political theory which successfully navigates their many shoals and rapids. But the commitment exists, and it even thrives at time. Kahanism denies this basic commitment and its fruits. Democracy is not a basic value; neither Arabs nor non-religious Jews ("dogs" and "Hellenizers," as I heard Kahane call them) are to live as equal citizens—if they are to survive at all—in its commonwealth. In essence, Kahane denies "the other" the right to exist—in Israel.

Are there "fundamental differences" between a rejection of "land for peace" and Kahanism? The matter is not all that simple, to my mind, since the rejection of "land for peace" is not all of one piece. My working assumption is that the ideal called "the full Land of Israel" (a more accurate translation of "Eretz Yisra'el haShelema" than "the greater Land of Israel," as Dan Elazar has pointed out), of full Jewish rule thereof, assumes the continued political inequality of the Arab population of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Why? Because nobody expects to grant them citizenship or a vote in the Knesset—if they stay—given the political and cultural disaster such rights would bring in their wake. But the exercise of democratic rights are, in today's world, central aspects of human rights and of "the divine image" (zelem Elohim). There is a clear moral problem here, as the working assumption of "the full Land of Israel" is, really, that the Arab should not exist—at least not in the sense that the Jew does. In the nature of things, or at least of modern history, moreover, this must bring about continued violence and killing on both sides. All this is inherent in the very situation, as it was inherent in the settlement movement from its inception as an agency of political control and not merely of religious fulfillment or agricultural opportunity. How is this situation, its physical and moral price, justified?

One justification is the argument from history, from survival and security. Israel and its citizens are endangered by an independent Arab presence in the West Bank, and must do whatever is nec-
necessary to preserve its security. Perhaps a safe compromise can be worked out, but until it is, we must simply hold on. We do not have the luxury of gambling. I find it difficult to fault this position morally or Jewishly. I do not see it as inherently, organically, one with Kahanism. At times, indeed, it seems eminently reasonable! Whether it is a true reading of the facts is a legitimate matter for debate.

But then there is another justification for “the full Land of Israel,” the ideological justification. Since Eretz Yisrael is ours by divine grant—which I fully accept, of course—there is nothing to discuss. If this is so, there is not room for compromise on a meaningful level. In reality, as I understand its proponents, this justification is also an ultimate argument—that is, no other value seems able to contend with it successfully. It certainly seems to take precedence over the loss of lives and much else. For we are, since 1967 (the argument goes), merely actors in the divine drama which has already begun to unfold and which it would be traitorous and blasphemous to reject. This justification, which makes full possession of the full Land of Israel a virtually supreme value, and is willing to pay—and especially to exact—the price necessary for that achievement, leads fairly inexorably to the political program of Kahane, much as it does to his human agenda, to his vision of Judaism and Torah.

Naturally, I am speaking of the inner coherence of the positions, not of the views which are in fact held by all proponents of the position as a matter of fact. Indeed, I know that many proponents of the settlement movement on ideological grounds do not make these connections, though I think they are inherent in the position. Naturally, I too find that relinquishing any part of Eretz Yisrael is an extremely painful—indeed traumatic—experience, a virtual amputation. To oppose Kahane is not to deny one’s love for the Land, or one’s pain at its loss.

My impression, as I stated earlier, is that many Orthodox Jews do subscribe to (or at least sympathize with) the Kahanist view. I sense this in both the educational apparatus as well as in our synagogues and social gatherings—in both Israel and the U.S. On a local, specific level, we seem extremely focused on the centrality of the land and more especially, on the centrality of power. This last has been a problematic aspect of Zionism from its inception, but the constructive aspects of the enterprise have always kept it in balance and, indeed, even endowed it with positive moral value. I now sense a growing infatuation with power and even violence, perhaps as a backlash of the Holocaust, perhaps—among young Jews in the U.S.—as an aspect of American and indeed modern culture.
But there are other considerations here, considerations which are more directly related to our schools, to our young people, and perhaps to our intellectual/spiritual public discourse as a whole. For it currently seems that only the particularistic is legitimate in our community, not the universal. And so, rationalism is suspect, a poor relation to the non-rational, for rationalism is universal. Ethics can be derived solely and totally from revelation alone. Democracy is an alien value, to be tolerated and indeed exploited around the world, but it does not really oblige us in our deepest being. Now, I know full well that Jewish cultural history has always known narrower and broader ideals, that some Jewish communities have been intellectually open and others have been closed and indeed intolerant. Why then—aside from personal preferences—do I find the current intolerance not merely impoverished but also sinister?

For two basic reasons. First, because we are speaking about a Modern Orthodox community which educates in secular skills and professions and, indeed, prepares its young men and women to function in the secular Western world. Now, they can do this only by adopting democratic, humanistic modes of behavior and thought, much as the Jewish community itself exploits these modern phenomena for its own benefit. Exploiting values cynically, benefitting from them but not committing oneself to them or internalizing them, ought to be unacceptable.

Second, it is one thing to deny the full humanity of your gentile neighbor when you have no realistic nationalistic ambitions or interests. That, by and large, was the Jewish situation until 1948 (and perhaps it remains the platform of the Haredi community now—I don’t know). But to educate towards both an anti-democratic ideal and a vigorous nationalistic agenda at the same time, indeed to inspire your nationalism with this ideal, is dynamite. Its upshot is that when it comes to a Jewish land—for it is there that we express our truest selves, our dream—only Jews have rights; and, ideally, only observant Jews. There, the world—or ethics or democracy or rationalism—cannot tell us what to do. There, to put it another way, we can actually do what we think has been everybody else’s prerogative save ours, until now. The jack in our box can now finally spring.

Ironically, it was R. Yehuda haLevi who articulated this most ominous possibility. Towards the end of the first essay in the Kuzari (par. 113-115), the Sage tells the Khazar King that Jews are closer to God when they are powerless, as in the condition of Exile, than when they were among the world’s mighty. The King responds that this would be an accurate evaluation if Exile were freely chosen and if
power were freely rejected by the Jewish people, but “it is something that has been forced on you, and when you will gain power you too will kill your enemies.” The Sage is hard-pressed to answer the King’s prediction about Jewish morality in an age of national fulfillment.

Are we now assimilating an infatuation with violence and power, bigotry and hatred, values that Jews both feared and despised, from the world culture around us? It would be ironic indeed if Kahanism and its fellow-travellers turn out to be the true “Hellenizers” and succeed in placing their idol in our sanctuary.

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REUVEN P. BULKA

1. Violence should not be confused with self-defense. Self-defense is a legitimate action to prevent or blunt an attack which threatens personal or collective well-being, safety or existence. Violence is indiscriminate attack that is associated with revenge, hate, envy, greed, or desperation. In Jewish tradition, violence is an evil. We do not condone violence of any sort.

It should be noted that violence is not restricted merely to the military battlefield. By our definition, violence is of the non-battlefield variety. There is all too much violence that exists within the framework of the family. Unfortunately, on occasion there has even been a tendency amongst some Jewish religious leaders to dismiss violent abuse, to excuse it, or overlook it, without understanding the devastation that violence does to the dignity of the victim, usually the wife in the marital relationship or a child in the parent/child relationship. We have not been forceful in condemning this violence and fighting to eliminate it. This is independent of anything associated with the present realities in Israel.

Insofar as Israel is concerned, there is a similar pattern, related to the lack of resoluteness in condemning the talk of violence.

We may have thought that for a peace-loving people with a tradition of eschewing violence, a strong adherent of tradition who threatens violence is merely talking, and has no intent to carry out the threats. But talk of doing something wrong is in itself wrong, and obviously should have been renounced with more passion and vigor.

Hopefully this will not recur, as we have learned to our horror that we are frail human beings, capable of violence. Talking about
violence does not ventilate anger. Instead, such talk becomes a mental and emotional rehearsal, a first step towards translating violent talk into violent action.

The universal condemnation of the ugly episode in Hevron by leading rabbis is hopefully not only a reaction, but also a recognition that a violent mindset is a simmering volcano, ready to explode, and imperative to defuse.

2. It is not necessary to enter into debate on the merits of the “land for peace” issue. There is merit in the arguments of both sides, and sincerity about the long range repercussions for Israel. Hearing and appreciating both sides, I find it hard to come down definitively in favor of either view.

The question is not the stance on the “land for peace” issue, but the music that accompanies the lyrics. If they are accompanied with invective, denigrating remarks about the adversary, and refusal to talk or to have anything to do with the adversary, (up to and including throwing them out of the country), this is more than rejection of land for peace. It is accompanied by the not-so-sweet music of hatred and venom, totally inappropriate and un-Jewish behavior.

3. Religious Zionism identifies the centrality of Israel in Jewish life as a spiritual value. The criticisms of non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Orthodoxy should not affect Religious Zionism’s dedication to Eretz Yisrael.

There is a role for galut in the life of Israel, and there is a need to build up strong Jewish communities both in Israel and outside it. But the criticisms of non-Zionist Orthodoxy are essentially unfair. For, whatever one may say about the religiosity or lack of it among Israel’s political leaders, there has been an unprecedented growth and regeneration of Torah in Israel. Both Zionist and non-Zionist Jews run to Israel to study and to be imbued with the environment of Israel. The very people who criticize both the government of Israel, and the State of Israel, at the same time gain so much from it.

If anything, Religious Zionism has not been forceful enough in rejecting the charges of the anti-Zionists, and is sometimes even sheepish in their presence. Such matters as being able to thank God for the great deliverance which gave everyone a safe haven, the celebration of Israel’s independence, have become a matter of controversy. Religious Zionism must take a forceful lead in affirming that there is nothing to be ashamed of in Israel’s reality, and much of which to be proud. Further, the refusal to take such an affirmative approach is to deny the good that others have done, a behavior that comes in for special rebuke in Jewish tradition.
The more that we denude the celebration of Israel’s re-emergence of any religious implications, the more we deprive Israel of the spiritual impetus that it needs to continue in its role as a spiritual re-invigorator of Jewishness. Religious Zionism may have under-estimated the power of the non-Zionist and anti-Zionist Orthodoxies, to the point that Religious Zionism is a minority view within the Orthodox world.

But this should not be taken as a reason to resign, rather as reason to fight back, and reclaim the necessity of Israel as central to Jewish existence. If the Religious Zionists do not launch this effort, it will not be done, to the detriment of the Jewish community in Israel and outside it.

4. Firstly, the notion of chosenness is quite problematic. Although there are undoubtedly references to the fact that God chose us, it must be stressed that this was after Israel chose God. The famous midrash about God offering the Torah to the nations of the world is critical in this regard. It establishes that God would have accepted (i.e. chosen) anyone who chose to live by God’s word.

The notion of chosenness is therefore misleading and fraught with danger, as if to imply some inherent genetic or biological virtue that is merely an accident of fate. Being chosen is the end result of choosingness, much the same way that the bride’s choice to agree to the request of a groom to marry her is predicated on the presumption that she has already been chosen, an assumption inherent in the groom’s question-request entreaty.

Further, although the choice of our ancestral patriarchs and matriarchs led to God’s reciprocating, this does not automatically transfer to those who reject God’s word. They cannot expect any special treatment, any more than an unfaithful spouse can expect love and devotion from the betrayed soul mate.

The idea that God chose us, following our choosing God places great responsibility upon Jews in every generation, to be worthy of having been chosen, to continue to reaffirm the original choice of Israel for God. The fact that God chose us, that God expressed confidence that we could honor the commitment made to live by God’s word, places an extraordinary burden upon us. That burden is to show that we are worthy of our commitment, that we can carry through on the commitment of our ancestors honestly and sincerely. It is no easy task, and must be approached not with false pride or bravado, but with due humility.

Additionally, it is readily evident that Israel plays a singular role in the unfolding not only of its own destiny, but in the destiny of the
world. Our concern for the world is most eloquently expressed in the Talmudic understanding of why seventy offerings were brought on Sukkot, i.e., to effect atonement for the breaches of all the nations of the world (T.B. Sukka, 55b). It is essential to appreciate the full gravity of this Talmudic observation that a vital religious component of Sukkot, the festival of supreme joy, is daily offerings for the world. We need to look no further to realize how central the well-being of the world is in Jewish tradition.

We are under no obligation to forcefully convert non-Jews. On the contrary, we must carefully avoid any coercive conversion practices. However, it is another matter when the issue is enlightening the world with Judaic values. Although non-Jews should not observe the Shabbat, they should nevertheless adopt one of the philosophies behind the Shabbat, namely that no one should enslave others to the point that they do not have at least one day a week for themselves. Indeed, the idea of Shabbat has been integrated into modern civilization as we know it, with some even "improving" upon the theme by introducing a three or four day weekend.

Additionally, sexual ethics, respect for life, respect for property, and respect for justice, are some of the values expressed in the Noahide laws, which Judaism sees as obligatory for the world at large.

We must avoid any sense of superiority for being Jewish, as we avoid imputing inferiority to others not Jewish. We view the values of Judaism as God's word, and consider it a great responsibility to try to live up to God's word, a responsibility that because of its awesomeness, we approach with humility. True humility does not breed superiority; it breeds a sober attitude, not only about oneself, but also about others.

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SHALOM CARMY

“What is the cause of sin, if not the diabolical habit of man to be mistaken about his own self?”

(R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah” Tradition 17:2)

Mainstream Religious Zionist thought has never prized the exercise of force as an end in itself. It wanted Jews to be physically secure,
viewing helplessness as a spiritually debilitating diminution of dignity. We were taught that violence could be condoned only as a regrettable requirement of state-building and self-defense. We were taught that *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* was a goal that justified strenuous effort and sacrifice. I see no reason to abandon these convictions.

If the Rav is right, and the source of sin is self-deception, what we need to confess is not a mistaken profession of faith but a failure of insight. Our actions and emotions have often belied our preaching. Self-deception is not the singular flaw of Religious Zionism. The very same criticisms that are true of Religious Zionism are no less characteristic of secular Zionists and the non-Zionist Orthodox. Self-deception, as the Rav says, is the inexorable result of man’s fallen condition. Enchanted by rhetoric, we are tempted to absolutize ideals and sentimentalize people.

Absolutes destroy themselves. If Israeli Jews have a right to security, which necessitates resort to force, then more security is even better, and total security is best of all. This logic translates into military adventures that imperil a generation of soldiers in an elusive quest for ultimate safety. So unlimited military assertion is futile, but so too is the idealism that dreams of peace at all costs. Impatience with anything short of total peace, aglow with singing schoolchildren and legions of tourists, rationalizes a stance of appeasement and risks achieving a parody peace, as transient as it is illusory.

We alternately sentimentalize and demonize the Arabs, and we romanticize ourselves no less. In the heady days after the 1967 victory we were confident that the Israeli occupation would be consistently humane, like none other in history. We readily congratulated ourselves on our good intentions and credited them as statements of fact. Reality is still catching up with our wishes. Photographs of rapturous Arabs dancing with the late Meir Kahane (they loved him because he understood them so well, we are earnestly informed) are hardly more extravagant than similar sentiments frequently heard in Shul. A decade before the Balfour Declaration, Isaac Breuer had warned that the power conferred by halakha on male Jews over women, slaves and aliens, imposes an awesome responsibility, and that only the most rigorous discipline would prevent its abuse. But a conviction of our own sweetness enabled us to avert our eyes from the coarsening and corruption that accompanied the relatively benign imposition of our rule on millions of unwilling subjects. Believing in the religious and political significance of *yishuv ha-Aretz*, we were oblivious to the moral price exacted by the one-sided pursuit of our ideals.
Dr. Breuer is only one non-Zionist thinker whose insights might facilitate our work of self-examination. In the wake of the Yom Kippur War my revered teacher R. Aharon Lichtenstein observed that we should be less given to brittle optimism and less swayed by the roller coaster of history had we taken to heart Hazon Ish’s austere conception of bittahon as faith in God’s Governance, as opposed to confidence that He will fulfill our aspirations. Forty years ago it was R. Yosef Henkin who foresaw a major component of Kahanist theology when he argued that a secular Zionist reading of Tanakh, wholly detached from the spiritualizing orientation of Hazal, would breed chauvinism and hillul haShem. R. Kook (not a card-carrying Zionist!) diagnosed “that hatred of mankind . . . characteristic of the evil passion which does its work under the banner of nationalism” and knew that this hatred “eventually becomes an inner curse; the hatred of brothers increases and destroys all national weal.”

May we permit such thoughts to enter our minds without betraying our Zionist commitment? Here, as ever, maran haRav zt”l serves as our model. By identifying himself with Religious Zionism, he broke, consciously and painfully, with those nearest to him. Yet this did not deter him from carefully examining, appreciating and, to some extent, incorporating his uncle’s objections to the Zionist outlook. Many Religious Zionists, despite their generous embrace of irreligious thinkers as diverse as General Sharon and Elyakim Haetzni, display an intellectual narrowness towards Orthodox perspectives, sometimes implicating them in outright revisionism. Were Religious Zionism less addicted to its litmus tests, it would not reject so vehemently the halakhic legitimacy of territorial compromise, and it would be unnecessary to edit out the Rav’s public support of “land for peace” as a halakhic principle.

But our widespread imperviousness to Haredi critique is not only a predictable aversion to painful admonition. It reflects the defects of the monitors and the deficiencies of their message. One perennial sore point is the question of army service. Naturally it is difficult to bear the guidance, with respect to unprecedented challenges that literally touch upon life and death, of those who seem studiously removed from the line of fire. The disdain with which the opinions of non-Zionist Gedolim are dismissed in a book like Giyyus kaHalakha (edited by Yehezkel Cohen) is tragic and embarrassing, but understandable nonetheless.

Moreover, the bulk of Haredi literature does not measure up to the standards of the masters mentioned above. Usually the writers seem more bent on polemics than on genuine reproof, which always
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entails self-criticism as well. *Talmidei hakhamim*, including too many who ought to know better, seem so interested in delivering red meat to their agitated partisans they fail to notice how they discredit the Torah in whose name they speak.

Lastly, and despite triumphalist post-Hebron claims to the contrary, *Haredi* society does not offer a satisfactory corrective to the failings of the Religious Zionist mentality. If, for example, the muscular Jew complex, driving Kahanist types to violent interaction with Gentiles, is largely absent from the halls of Ponivezh and Lakewood, the lamentable tendency to dehumanize the Goy is not. R. Kook cautions against a religiosity that spurns what he called “natural morality;” and the search for technical loopholes that would allow mistreatment of non-Jews is surely one of the issues behind this symposium. Yet it is behind the walls of the *Haredi* world that the sullen and lawyerly distrust of natural morality is most sedulously cultivated.

By now it should be clear that the major focus of self-examination is not, in my opinion, our formulation of *behirat Yisrael*. We have just mentioned the value of “natural” moral intuitions. Even more crucial is the need for self-knowledge. We like to think that our Zionism is determined by our commitment to Torah. But it is also a product of our natural needs and aspirations as human beings and as members of the Jewish people. To that extent, our motivations are similar to those of other national groups. If, for instance, as Liah Greenfeld has recently maintained, modern nationalism is born from a sense of resentment, then we must honestly confront and evaluate that component of our Jewish national feeling.

Inevitably our quest for self-understanding will bring us back to the sources of Torah. It will be our task to systematize and conceptualize the data of halakha, aggada etc. Our work of self-analysis will help us to distinguish between the radical meaning of Jewish chosenness and those concepts imported by Jewish thinkers, for better or for worse, from the culture of their day. One example: partly because Jewish identity is not currently tied to religious commitment, the perennial dialectic between destiny and fate (the Rav’s *yeud* and *gorat*) has shifted in favor of the latter pole: the ramifications need to be worked out critically. Lack of space precludes detail, but this must be said: if such an enterprise is to carry conviction it cannot be an exercise in apologetics and cannot be performed in an intellectual fishbowl for the sake of political correctness.

I once entered maran haRav zt”l’s apartment to find him in high spirits. A grandson had just phoned prior to an extended period of active military service. It was a time of greater than usual jeop-
ardy. An old man (let alone a Brisker) contemplating his flesh and blood exposed to mortal danger: one might have expected the dominant mood to be apprehension. Yet the Rav was cheerful and serene. “When I think of young people who love Eretz Yisrael, who want to defend her, who want to live there, I am convinced that there is something to the whole [Zionist] idea."

Measured against the overheated apocalyptic rhetoric to which we are fairly accustomed, this is not much of a pronouncement. But it underlines what is perhaps the most important point of all. Despite everything, it is Religious Zionism that has faithfully inculcated love and commitment for Israel. If I have taken my cue from my teachers, I draw inspiration from my talmidim and their peers, who represent the last, best hope for an Israeli society that is both Jewish and humane. If we require self-examination, it is in order that their commitment shall not be in vain.

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AHARON FELDMAN

Jewish social history is to a large degree a product of the tension between two opposing forces. There is, on the one hand, a deep desire by Jews to maintain their identity and cultural and religious heritage. On the other hand, the dictates of survival create an opposingly deep desire to mimic the culture of the surrounding nations.

Historically, there have been two ways by which this conflict has been resolved. One is a begrudging adjustment to the realities of the times while maintaining a commitment to the genuine Jewish ideals. For example, clothing and language assimilation, mingling with non-Jews in the market place, studying the culture of the non-Jews even within the framework of Torah education, have become commonplace. These are basically an adjustment of externalities, without changing the internal Jewish values. Although none of these would exist in an ideal Jewish society, Diaspora is not an ideal situation.

The other form of solution attempts to remake the Jewish nation and thereby strikes at the fabric of the Jewish people. The Reform, Haskala, and Conservative movements, for example, attempted to redefine Judaism by investing it with foreign values.

The most blatant and successful of the second sort of compromise in modern times has been secular Zionism. This movement was
conceived by Herzl as an attempt to “normalize” the Jewish people by making them acceptable to the non-Jewish nations around them. In Herzl’s diary (Shocken Books, p. 35) his initial vision of the solution of the Jewish problem had the entire Jewish population of Vienna converting en masse to Christianity in the central square of the city. His Das Judenstaat portrays the Jewish state he foresaw as consisting of a Jewish high society which spoke German and attended the opera.

Except for a few scattered rabbinic voices, Jewish leadership as a whole saw Herzl’s Zionism as a threat to Jewish survival. The spiritual giants of the times—Reb Yitzhak Elhanan, the Hafetz Haim and Reb Haim Brisker—refused to enter into a partnership with it. They saw the underlying motives of Zionism for what they were: an attempt to remake the Jews in the image of the non-Jew.

Only Religious Zionism believed it could reach a modus vivendi with Zionism. To be sure, it abjured any compromise of the second sort which would tamper with basic Jewish values. But Religious Zionism believed—absurdly, as it turned out—that it could join with secular Zionism to achieve a compromise of the first sort, where the substance would remain and only externalities would change.

Zionism succeeded dramatically, rallied the nation around it, and ultimately achieved its goal: a sovereign Jewish state in the land of Israel. Religious Zionism saw in this success a vindication of its path. The State was the instrument of God in bringing glory to the Jewish people. It was the at-halta digeula—the beginning of the ultimate redemption—and everything associated with it was ipso facto sacred and had to be supported. Those who refused to do so, even if they were recognized Torah authorities, were branded some Yisrael—enemies of the Jewish people.

To be sure, there were problems with this view. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrant children were forcibly removed from their Judaism by a militantly anti-religious state. An entire nation grew up without knowing what Shma Yisrael meant and educated to despise those who did. The Bible was emptied of its religious content and converted into a bible of militarism and socialism. Nevertheless, to the Religious Zionist the momentousness of the at-halta digeula era required that an eye be winked at all of this.

As for the explicit Torah warnings that forgoing mitzvot will cause the Holy Land to Spit out its inhabitants and that refusing to serve God will effectuate the warnings recited morning and evening that “va-avadetem mehera (you will be banished from the good land)” all became irrelevant. For reasons never explained, it was believed that
in the *at-halta digeula* era the rules are changed. The land of Israel no longer spits out sinners; there would never be a third destruction.

Today it is clear that secular Zionism is a deep failure, fully exposed to be what it set out to be: an agent for the redefinition of Judaism. It not only lacks concern for Jewish values, it lacks concern for the integrity of the Jewish nation (Russian immigration is by conservative estimates 50% non-Jewish); for the Jewish land (it delivers on silver platters to its enemies); and even for its citizens (it willingly jeopardizes the lives of 100,000 Jews settled in Judea and Samaria). Zionism has been shown to be not only a failure in terms of Judaism and the Jewish people; it is even a failure in terms of its own goals: the creation of a secure state for Jews.

It is also clear today that Religious Zionism erred in propping up secular Zionism and that its theology, which guaranteed permanent Jewish dominion over the Land of Israel, is seriously marred.

How is religious Jewry to respond to all of this? For one thing, it must finally lay to rest the absurd notion that a movement like secular Zionism, determined to make Jewry "kekhol hagoyim (like all the nations)" can be a positive force for the Jewish people.

Religious Zionism must make an abject soul-reckoning. Its must recognize that its definition of Judaism is really the same as that of all of religious Jewry and diametrically opposed to those of the secularists. It must open its windows to the spiritual leadership of *gedolei Yisrael* who articulate what the Torah has to say about Jewish goals.

Baruch Goldstein was an outgrowth of Religious Zionism even though Religious Zionism did not support him. His path was twofold: a belief in militant Zionism and a rejection of the opinions of *gedolei Yisrael* as irrelevant. Had he sought advice from them he would have been told to desist from his actions. But Goldstein held that his militaristic teachers understood better.

It is time for Religious Zionism to remove its blinders, to stop mouthing discredited platitudes and cliches, to look honestly at itself and at the State of Israel, to divorce itself from its disastrous marriage with secular Zionism, to take courageous steps to join with other believers in God and Torah, and to seize the opportunity to create authentically Jewish lives on this precious Land without compromises of either the first or the second kind.

One of the signs of greatness is to admit failure. In the midst of the present-day madness of secular Zionism, Religious Zionism has a chance to claim greatness for itself.
HILLEL GOLDBERG

The introduction to this symposium smacks of denial. "Tiny number of Jewish militants," "self-styled Orthodox Jews," "seem, here and there," "some small sections": Whew! We have a problem, admittedly a painful one, perhaps too painful to be faced squarely.

Put the shoe on the other foot. What if a compassionate physician, a student of Louis Farrakhan, a person who had treated black dope addicts and innocent victims of drive-by shootings in a formerly Jewish neighborhood, marched into the one remaining synagogue and gunned down 29 Jews in prayer—and then was cheered by a noticeable segment of Farrakhan’s followers?

This analogy is hardly perfect, but imagine the Jewish outcry against any black spokesman who responded to such a massacre by describing the murderer as a "self-styled" follower of Farrakhan, or the popular cheering as emanating from "some small sections of the larger Nation of Islam." Attempts to qualify or otherwise minimize Dr. Baruch Goldstein’s atrocity—which, tellingly, is not even mentioned by name in the symposium’s introduction and questions—evades painful truths.

Another analogy, perhaps a bit tighter: At Emory University in 1978, a colleague taught a course on the interaction of religions. He asked me to sit in as a "Judaica expert" on that part of the course devoted to the interaction of Judaism and Christianity. As it turned out, I did not need to answer the toughest question. My relief, it is clear in retrospect, was premature.

A graduate student at Emory’s Candler School of Theology, preparing for the Christian ministry, addressed me without animus, with genuine conviction—which only made his question all the more frightening. He asked: "How can you blame the Church for the Crusades? The Crusaders were not Christian. They did not represent true Christianity. They were distorting true Christianity. Let the Jews stop laying a trip on the Church for the likes of the Crusades."

I was stunned. This was no rabid anti-Semite. This was a sincere, educated man in his late twenties, with some experience in life. Before I had a chance to fumble for an appropriately pointed yet cool answer, my colleague, a decent man of Christian heritage from Mississippi, took the question naturally, without missing a beat, answering out of years of self-scrutiny, answering undefensively, with learning and simplicity. His response had an authority that only a person of his background could bring. He spoke to this effect: "The distinction between a supposedly pure, ethereal Church—some per-
fect Church somewhere in the sky—and the brutal acts undertaken in the name of the Church on this earth, has been a favorite technique in parts of the Church for avoiding its real, historical responsibility for the brutalities it has perpetrated against the Jews.”

I wanted to bend over and kiss my colleague.
Now I want to cry.
Then I was elated not only because my colleague’s words got me out of a tough spot, but because they issued from painful acknowledgement of historical truths, from difficult self-scrutiny. Especially in the context of the Holocaust, the Jewish people has come to take it for granted that it is a collective Christian obligation to confront its own hateful history, to accept the moral category of collective responsibility, to weed out theological rot, to condemn perpetrators and bystanders, even when they are embodiments of sacred Christian tradition. We have a right to expect all this, but all the more must we expect it of ourselves—God’s chosen people—if we fail, even if our failing is hardly comparable to the anti-Semitic monstrosities of Christian history. Precisely because the act of Baruch Goldstein was, in its commission in the name of the Torah, unprecedented, it requires the chosen nation to look hard at itself, all the more so in light of the resonance of Dr. Goldstein’s act in parts of the Orthodox community. The same methodology of analysis that Jews have successfully urged on morally sensitive Christians cannot be dismissed in the face of a Jewish dereliction of radical proportion: mass murder in the name of the Torah.

It is denial to term Dr. Goldstein’s Orthodoxy, or those Orthodox Jews (Kahanist or otherwise) who expressed solidarity with Dr. Goldstein, “self-styled.” If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, swims like a duck, it is a duck. If it keeps Shabbat, studies Torah, raises its children to observe the Torah, honors Eretz Yisrael, fasts on Tisha beAv, et cetera, it is an Orthodox Jew. And if it murders in cold blood, or salutes murder in cold blood, it is an Orthodox Jew that does so. Then, if I am an Orthodox Jew, I am implicated in the act of every other Orthodox Jew. I cannot evade responsibility (“self-styled,” “here and there,” “some small sections”); I cannot accept the concept of arevut only in the relatively innocent context of kiddush or the feel-good contexts of kiruv rehokim and fighting for oppressed Jews everywhere. While I can readily acknowledge the dire, personal and political provocations that moved Dr. Goldstein—including the Rabin government’s unconscionable deligitimation of Israeli settlers and settlements—I cannot admit any of this as relevant to a Jew’s, and a Jewish community’s, obligation to follow the
Torah, except insofar as the failings of Rabin and others also fall under a Jew’s arevut responsibilities.

True, arevut embraces all of Klal Yisrael and the failure of Dr. Goldstein is a failure of the whole, but, as my Mussar masters taught repeatedly, defects in the outer circles of Jewish commitment reflect defects in the inner core. As Reb Yisrael Salanter is said to have put it, if Shabbat is violated in Paris, Torah learning is defective in Lithuania. All the more, if mass murder emanates from an Orthodox Jew, something is drastically wrong at the core of the Orthodox Jewish community. Just as we may conceive of the kedusha at the core of the Orthodox community as emanating in concentric circles—with one superior talmid hakham’s level of knowledge and piety radiating outward and affecting first disciples then their families and friends and ultimately all Jews—so may we conceive of defects at the core of the Orthodox community. They radiate outward. It makes no difference how “tiny” the number of Kahane followers is, if their doctrines do radiate. And they do! Dr. Goldstein is the tragic evidence! It is impossible to delete his name from a symposium on religious Zionism. The extreme that Dr. Goldstein represents is the effect of a prior core defect (Kahanism), with Dr. Goldstein becoming the symbol of a still more egregious defect. It is primarily Orthodox Jews who must stop the spiral. We must apply arevut even when it hurts. We must face our own responsibility as members of a Jewish community that prides itself on mutual responsibility, both as social reality and theological sine qua non. Our responsibility for Dr. Goldstein’s act is surely not equivalent to his own; just as surely, our community yielded a radical violation of the Torah—the very same Torah otherwise upheld by Dr. Goldstein and his mentor, Rabbi Kahane. I cry for this radical violation of Torah, for the need to turn the scalpel of scrutiny on my own community.

Of course, the judgment of Baruch Goldstein is God’s alone. But as Reb Yisrael Salanter pointed out, there is a radical distinction between God’s evaluation of extenuating circumstances for any individual, and between society’s objective, Torah-based evaluation of the contribution of any individual. Ours is not to judge Dr. Goldstein, but ours is to judge what he did, how he violated the Torah, how this violation grew out of doctrines held by some Orthodox Jews, how all Orthodox Jews abetted or tolerated the growth of these doctrines—how, at a minimum, we are responsible for preventing a recurrence of Dr. Goldstein’s atrocity.

The general Orthodox community has successfully reversed its decline, but this has entailed a virtual embargo on self-scrutiny. A
community fighting to survive has not the luxury of self-criticism. The virtual absence of self-criticism, however, has yielded distortions. One is a tolerance of observant Jewish leaders, such as Meir Kahane, who do not accept halakha’s authority structure, or who use halakha as post-facto rationalization for decisions made on other grounds. I term this “charismaticism”—the projection of individuals for the notoriety or prestige they bring the Orthodox community, regardless of whether their public activity is wholly rooted in halakha. To the extent that the Orthodox community has indulged in charismaticism, it has obliterated those differences, too obvious to need to enumerate, between (among other things) affirmative militance and atrocity, between loyal opposition and cold-blooded murder.

To the extent that Religious Zionism denigrates galut values by claiming to know, apodictically, that the arrival of the Messiah is guaranteed by the reestablishment of the State of Israel, or by the return to the Land of Israel, Religious Zionism has erred theologically. Among other difficulties, this certitude can lead to the justification of any act, no matter how radical, on the grounds that it advances a process that is inevitable in any case. Baruch Goldstein’s atrocity was a form of antinomianism catalyzed by, and just one small step ahead of, the view that since Israel is inevitably a Messianic development, anything that is conceived to speed the Messiah’s arrival is justified. Wonder and miracle in Israel are evident, but so is much else; the apodictic characterization of the State or settlement of Israel as Messianic is dangerous. The theological skepticism of non-Zionist halakhic leadership opposed to Religious Zionism’s claims of Messianic certainty, is warranted. Baruch Goldstein, though a caricature of Religious Zionism, is also a logical, if unintended, extension of its Messianism.

To the extent that Religious Zionism reintroduces theological humility—love of Israel, including yearning for the Messiah but excluding certainty over his appearance in any given context—Religious Zionism will yield an affirmation of Israel’s chosenness that cannot be misinterpreted as another form of secular nationalism or as a source of negative attitudes toward non-Jews. Concrete suggestion: use the British chief rabbinate’s distinctly ungrandiose prayer for the State of Israel, which omits the phrase, reshit tzemihat ge’ulatenu.

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IMMANUEL JAKOBOVITS

Religious Zionism has clearly been derailed long ago, abandoning the historic tracks laid by its early pioneers and their followers.

In its original form—as the Mizrachi—it was always a movement, or a political party, committed to moderation as a cardinal principle, a bridge-builder seeking the middle ground between extremes, whether religiously by making undeviating Orthodoxy compatible with the Zionist enterprise, or politically by opposing all forms of extremism and militancy.

Today the National Religious Party (NRP), with a few fading exceptions, finds itself firmly allied with other extremist right-wing groups, inside and outside the government of Israel. Oddly, the same radical shift towards the right has occurred within the Agudah and the major Hasidic movements—all of them once political moderates now, overwhelmingly, supporters of the most militant policies.

This applies even to those groupings which continue to deny religious recognition or legitimacy to the State of Israel—a contradiction dramatically demonstrated by Lubavitch in particular.

That these trends should have encouraged the emergence of a movement like Kach committed to violence was perhaps inevitable. Its active supporters may be few, but those who are at least ambivalent in denouncing it as utterly un-Jewish are not so insignificant.

To state these facts may be easier than to explain them—let alone to reverse them. Some conclusions seem inescapable.

Apart from the shrinking remnants of genuine ideologues who believe in Greater Israel for purely religious ("halakhic") reasons, the bulk of the rest hold their right-wing view on nothing but secular grounds: "You can never trust the Arabs"; "The only language they and the world understand is military power"; "The old borders are indefensible" (as if ruling over two million Arabs were not, Jewishly if nothing else, at least as indefensible), and so forth. The political philosophy of Orthodoxy, then, is now completely secularized as well as radicalized.

Maybe this has something to do with the shift of power and influence to America and away from other Diaspora communities. Itself a more volatile society than, say, Europe, the demand for power is far more in evidence among American Jews than elsewhere. Neither Kach nor Lubavitch could ever have been indigenous to Israel; perhaps even Gush Emunim owes its strength to American support.

I see the eventual solution only in the gradual disengagement of religion from political parties, and of the rabbinate from state
control. Apart from gaining far greater public acceptance as custodians of true religious thought and leadership, this might also shift the overriding concerns of the religious community from political manifestation towards mobilizing Israel's spiritual forces—no doubt the ultimate determinant of Israel's destiny.

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SHLOMO RISKIN

The concept of Israel's chosenness (*behirat Yisrael*) is neither another form of secular nationalism nor a chauvinistic expression of negative attitudes towards non-Jews. It is true that Rav Yehuda HaLevi, in his *Kuzari*, would seem to endorse the Kabbalistic notion of a qualitative difference between Jew and Gentile, a *segula* or *inyan Elohi* factor within Jews—if not in their genes then at least in their souls—which serves to provide them with a special link to the Divine and enables only them to reach the highest spiritual level. However, the overwhelming majority of Biblical and rabbinical sources would support the very opposite view, that of Maimonides, who maintains that it is only the study and practice of Torah which sets us apart from the other nations of the world, and it is exclusively Torah which provides us with our uniqueness.

After all, the Bible begins by introducing God as the Creator of heaven and earth who created the human being—not only the Jew—in His own image (Gen. 1:27), features a Gentile prophet, Balaam, and through the chastisement of Jonah demonstrates the Almighty's concern even for the people of Nineveh, Assyrian arch-enemy of Israel. The Mishnah declares, “Beloved is the human being who is created in the Divine Image” (*Avot* 3:18); the Jerusalem Talmud discovers the source of our one-hundred shofar sounds on Rosh HaShana in the one-hundred sobs of the mother of Sisera as she awaits in vain the return of her son from battle against Israel; our Sages enjoin us “to sustain the poor of the Gentiles together with the poor of Israel, to visit the sick of the Gentiles together with the sick of Israel, and to bury the dead of the Gentiles together with the dead of Israel” (B.T. *Gittin* 61a); and Maimonides establishes the preeminence of every human life when he rules that “anyone who takes the soul of any human being transgresses the negative commandment “Thou shalt not murder” (Mishna Torah, *Lav’s of
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Murder and Guarding Lives 1,1). The Biblical book that provides the utter incompatibility between Judaism and racism is the Scroll of Ruth, where the Jewish, Israel-born Mahlon and Kilyon are doomed to extinction in Jewish history because they forsook their land and faith, and the Moabite-born Ruth becomes the grandmother of King David and progenitor of the Messiah because she accepts Torah in all of its fullness. Indeed, one view in the Talmud even suggests that we were given the Torah not because we were better than the other nations, but rather because we were the most impudent of peoples and therefore required Torah to temper our naturally difficult characteristics (B.T. Beza 25b).

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook mediates between the more normative view of Maimonides and the more Kabbalistic view of Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi. He maintains that as far as individuals are concerned, everyone has equal potential before God; Jews contain no special spiritual power, and “a Gentile who occupies himself with Torah is equal to a High Priest in Israel” (B.T. Baba Kama 38a). However the Jewish nation qua nation, Keneset Yisrael, is endowed with a unique mission to spread ethical monotheism throughout the world, and this is what is meant by our national (and not individual) segula or inyan Elohi (Igrot RAYH, vol. 1, p. 80).

In a very real sense, our national dedication to the Torah and land of Israel is perceived by the Bible as the necessary gateway for our mission to the world. Abraham was sent to the land of Israel and elected to teach his household the Torah of righteousness and justice by God so that “through you all the families of the earth may be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). King Solomon dedicated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem to the prayers of all humanity (Kings I, 8:41, 42) and the prophet Isaiah emphasized “From Zion shall come forth Torah and the word of God from Jerusalem” to all the world (Isaiah 2:3). Our prophets perceived that it was only against the backdrop of a nation-state, with its possibility of creating a national culture and the concomitant challenges of a just economic system, proper use of power, and societal justice and compassion devoid of discrimination, that we can begin to influence a world of nation-states. Hence it may correctly be said that our nationalism is a means towards our universalism—and the messianic goal for which we yearn depends upon a sovereign Israel which succeeds in leading the world to a period in which “nation shall not lift up sword against nation and humanity shall not learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

It must also be emphasized that our vision of the millenium is not necessarily one of exclusive Jewish hegemony in which Torah
must reign supreme for all humanity. After the prophet Micah repeats virtually word for word Isaiah's description of the ultimate redemption, he adds: "And everyone shall dwell under his vineyard and under his fig tree devoid of fear, because the mouth of the Lord of Hosts speaks. For all the nations will walk—each person—in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for all eternity" (Mica 4:4,5). And Maimonides, both in Mishna Torah (Laws of Idolatry, Chapter 10) and Guide for the Perplexed, stresses the unconditional necessity for everyone to accept the seven Noahide laws of morality—but not necessarily the 613 commandments of Torah Judaism.

The optimistic belief that the Messiah and the Messianic Age will appear in historic time and from the seat of Jerusalem, Israel is an axiom in traditional Jewish theology, enunciated by our prophets, sought for in our prayers, and mandated by our Codes; when and how they will come about is an open question, dependent first and foremost upon human action, according to Maimonides, based upon Talmudic sources (esp. Mishna Torah, Laws of Kings, 11, 12). "There can be no redemption without return (teshuvah)—return to our homeland, and return to our Torah laws and values. This twin return must take place in the natural course of human events, without apparent Divine intervention, argues Maimonides. For him, this idea of "normative Messianism" is so fundamental that he utilizes it as a necessary argument for his invention of an electoral procedure for reactivating semikha (the original rabbinic ordination emanating from God) and reestablishing the Sanhedrin (Interpretation of the Mishna, Sanhedrin, Chapter 1, Mishna 1).

From this perspective a number of very important principles emanate. First of all, our return to Zion in modern times, by dint of human effort without waiting for supernatural transport, is very much an outgrowth of Talmudic-Maimonidean normative messianism, and should certainly have proven its efficacy for post-Holocaust Jewish survival to non-Zionist orthodoxy. I do not believe that anyone doubts that the most vibrant Jewish community today is to be found in Israel. Secondly, normative messianism may well require not only political negotiation but even military action in order to further its cause. After all, the Bible does mandate "obligatory warfare" against an enemy who threatens to destroy us (according to all authorities) as well as in pursuit of our legitimate rights to the land of Israel (according to many authorities). However, our goal is not war, but peace, and even obligatory wars may only be fought after all other peaceful means have been exhausted. When the Mishna
queries as to whether military armaments are an ornament which may be worn on Shabbat or a burden which can only be carried to protect a human life, the Sages insist that we dare never look upon weaponry as an ornament but rather as a disgrace, because after all our ultimate vision is to “beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks” (Mishna Shabbat 5,4). And it goes without saying that one must engage in battle only in accordance with the legal ethics of warfare, and we dare not lift a hand against those who are not actively engaged in battle against us. Remember that even in celebration of our Hasmonean military victories on Hanuka, our Sages mandated that our symbol not be the sword but rather the menora of peace and unity.

Finally, despite all of the wonderful signs of the beginning of the spreading of redemption which we see all around us, from the liberation of Jerusalem to the ingathering of the exiles even from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia (the tribe of Dan, see Isaiah 11:11), we cannot be at all certain that this initial light of the morning star will develop into the dawn of the era of the Messiah. The majority of the Jewish people still live in the Diaspora, and the prophet Zekharia warned the Jews who constructed the Second Temple that even at such a time redemption would be conditional: “So does the Lord of Hosts say: (Yes), the fasts (of our national destruction) . . . will be transformed for the House of Judah into gladness and rejoicing and festivals, but (first) you must love truth and peace . . . you must not oppress the widow and the orphan, the stranger and the indigent, and you shall not think evil regarding your brother in your hearts” (Zekharia 8:18,19; 7:10). Even from my most unique vantage point in Efrat, we still have quite a way to go . . .

Hence, both our uniqueness as a nation as well as the realization of our messianic ideal are dependent upon our commitment to Torah. However, the recent statements and actions of the more militant followers of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane only emphasize the warning set down by Nachmanides in his interpretation of the commandment ‘Thou shalt be holy’: it is not enough to study and practice Torah; unless one studies and practices Torah from the proper perspective it is possible to be a scoundrel ‘(who thinks he is) within the domains of the Torah’. I would therefore submit that our Torah authorities and religious educational institutions must unequivocally declare any justification of Jewish racism in any form whatsoever, or the harming of innocent Gentiles, as being totally unacceptable to normative Judaism.

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What role is violence assigned in the ideology of Religious Zionism? A more fundamental question needs to be asked. What measure of violence is allowed by religious Judaism in general? It is clear that it is not entirely proscribed; Judaism is not a pacifist religion. There are circumstances in which violence is permitted and even encouraged. A Jew has an obligation to take the life of one who is seeking to take the life of another, and more significantly, Judaism grants that there is such a thing as a just war.

An answer to the first question, however, requires, in a preliminary way, a definition of Religious Zionism. Several are available. At a minimum, Religious Zionism calls for the creation of a Jewish State—perceived in political terms—in the ancient territory of Israel, which would enable the Jewish people to successfully defend itself against those who seek its destruction and in which it could pursue the life required by the Torah in the most meaningful way. On this interpretation, the existing state and the government which it contains need not be regarded as the fulfillment of a halakhic imperative, but as a purely political institution whose function it is to enhance security and to facilitate a pattern of communal living guided by Torah principles. In the early years of the Zionist movement, this interpretation of Religious Zionism was in fact entertained by some who were strongly identified with its ideology.

Another definition also adopted in the past has become more popular today. It declares that the state itself and the government which it contains fulfills a halakhic mandate. The outstanding exemplars of Religious Zionism are the students of the yeshivot hesder whose commitment to the state derives from their perception that it possesses a religious character. This view is also reflected in the prayer on behalf of Israel, which asserts that the state is “the beginning of the flowering of the redemption.” Whatever else this phrase may mean, it certainly carries the connotation that the state has religious status.

There is another conception of Religious Zionism which is of current vintage. It emerged following the spectacular victory of the six day war. It claims that the messianic character of the state prohibits any concessions or compromise with regard to the land, because any surrender or retreat is incompatible with the messianic destiny of the state in the current phase of its history. This view does not claim that the land must be retained for reasons of military security, but rather because it is a religious obligation not to interfere with the messianic process.
It is obvious that according to any of these definitions of Religious Zionism, there is no mandate to take violent initiatives to accomplish its objectives. The creation of a state invariably requires the preservation of security and defense against an enemy. If an adversary should mount a military assault, it is clear that he must be met with a violent response. There is a sacred obligation, according to the Torah, to engage in self defense. No more than this is and needs to be demanded by Religious Zionism. It is true that on the third definition, which interprets Religious Zionism as the imperative to, under no circumstances, surrender an inch of land in virtue of its messianic significance, the likelihood of violent action is increased. Even in conditions in which other states would agree to relinquish territory for the sake of peace, the messianic Religious Zionist would oppose it. This circumstance notwithstanding, the frequent and indiscriminate use of violence can hardly be regarded as an imperative of Religious Zionism even of the messianic variety.

A problem arises when the Religious Zionist also adopts as another principle of Jewish social conduct a doctrine that is implicit in a phrase that has achieved great popularity since and because of the Holocaust, namely, “Never Again.” The problem is exacerbated by the fact that this phrase is often juxtaposed by the clenched fist. This symbolism implies a number of claims which are in truth irrelevant to the goals of Religious Zionism. First, it suggests that the violent posture has inherent value and that the Jew, because of the Holocaust and independence of the State of Israel, should adopt it. It declares in effect that the Jew must change his character. Given the devastating experience of the Shoa, he can no longer afford under any circumstances to remain quiet, passive and docile. He must take violent initiatives to guarantee his life and well being. Second, it may fairly be said that, for those who identify with this ideology, power is not a means of securing the State of Israel; it is rather that the State of Israel is a means of assuring the possession of power. The doctrine suggested by this symbolism is, after all, not indigenous to Israel. The group that fostered it emerged in the United States, first as a Jewish Defense League and then as an organization bent on liberating Jews who were in effect incarcerated behind the Iron Curtain of the Communist Soviet regime. Israel appears to have been the last item on its agenda.

The difference between the clenched fist crowd and the advocates of Religious Zionism is precisely the fact that while the former entertains a positive attitude to violence, the latter seeks to affirm the possession of power. The two are not identical. Power is some-
thing that is located in the category of the potential which accordingly can be used for constructive or destructive purposes, for self defense or for aggressive aims. The Religious Zionist clearly affirms the importance of power in its creative function. His commitment to the state is inherently a declaration that the possession of political power is vital to the well being of the Jewish community. He regards it as indispensable, in its military and political forms, for self defense and, in its economic and intellectual forms, to enhance Jewish life and the security of the state. Violence, on the other hand, is in the category of the actual, and as symbolized by the clenched fist, appears to imply something more, namely, that it is a desirable means, through the initiation of aggressive acts, to rid Israel of any elements that may possibly be inimical to its existence. This doctrine can be rejected even on logical grounds by the advocates of any of the forms of Religious Zionism delineated above. It is, as a matter of fact, by and large, repudiated by them for both religious and practical reasons as well.

So far is Judaism removed from the endorsement of aggressive violence that there are many segments of the community that are uncomfortable even with power. During the course of the Middle Ages, powerlessness was idealized among Jews. They took literally the prophetic dictum, “Not by power, nor by might, but by My spirit, sayeth the Almighty.” Even today with the restoration of the State of Israel, this perception, which at best reflects values characteristic of the Diaspora, is endorsed by many who consequently find it difficult to assign to the state halakhic status. It required a considerable amount of self transformation on the part of Torah Jews to reaffirm an attitude which, while biblical in origin, in that the Torah commands the creation of a sovereign power, was so incompatible with the psychological orientation of Diaspora Jews. The chasm between the idealization of powerlessness and the endorsement of an aggressive variety of violence is so deep that it is likely that the leap was taken only by those who are prone to extremes.

It is to be regretted therefore that some adherents of the messianic view of Religious Zionism find themselves fascinated by the clenched fist interpretation of the function of violence. This can be understood in light of a tendency of genuinely religious people to move to extremes. Sociologists have explained this phenomenon as resulting from an inherent dynamic of the religious mind. To counter this tendency, Judaism introduced a strong rational component which, in Jewish thought, means not the ability to demonstrate fundamental truths of Jewish belief, but rather the capacity to
restrain the inclination to go to excesses in favor of the posture of moderation. Those who lack this element of rationality are precisely those who adopt extreme points of view.

The generalization from the conduct of a few to the entire community of Religious Zionists is as unfortunate as it is erroneous. No inference can be drawn from a massacre in Hebron to the character of Religious Zionism and certainly not to the role of violence in the Jewish religion. The Torah personality stands accused because of this tragic event. It is therefore crucial to emphasize once more. We are not the people of the sword; we are the people of the Book!

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YIGAL SHAFRAN

We have not failed in our approach that saw Zionism as a Divine initiative, one that appealed to the saintly elite as well as to the simple masses and called on them to come home. We have not erred in our principles, become confused, or mistakenly missed any turn. We are traveling forward, entirely on course.

Torah Zionism saw a profound, Divine quality in our people’s return to their language, land and army. It educated in favor of establishing scientific enterprises and building universities, advancing medicine, research and industry along with settlement of the Land. And it taught that there is holiness in the mundane. Not only has this approach not failed, but, quite the contrary, I am certain that it will prove itself many times over. The Jewish People’s future depends on their consciously operating in synchronization with God, and it is precisely the way of Religious Zionism to work with God. Hence I am certain that our way will enlighten the nation and the whole world and our reward will be “exceedingly great in accordance with our deeds.”

It is true that in recent years the lustre of Religious Zionism has been tarnished by, among other things, acts of ruffianism, especially by a few people who never studied in the Zionist Yeshivot of Eretz Yisrael, individuals who linked up with us without ever really becoming part of us in the deeper sense.

But these ruffians are not our big problem. We have a great educational obligation toward them, yet greater still is our duty to
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educate others from within our own camp, those who err much more, helping to weaken our national fiber and lower our stature.

When the Zionist struggle culminated in a state, we thought (in accordance with Rambam, Sanhedrin 4:13) that the Israeli government fit the halakhic definition of malkhut, a “kingdom.” Because the first government and most of those that followed were chosen by a Jewish majority with the approval of a reputable Jewish court, we mistakenly thought a “Davidic” era had begun.

Truthfully, when we called the State the “first flowering of our redemption,” we longingly heard a sort of imaginary Divine voice responding that here, indeed, it was David’s offspring that was “speedily flourishing.” We were convinced that while this State was not perfect, Davidic redemption was in the wings, mighty and majestic in scope. Therefore, we innocently thought that if Religious Zionism would just persist in its role of adding the mezuza—and King David’s Psalms—to the process, the modern State would soon constitute the total end of exile, greater than the “Revealed End of Days” of Sanhedrin 98.

It now seems to us that this government is no kingdom and has no authority, title or glory. Hence some of us find ourselves saying that those who warned against singing praises to the “government of heretics (the Mapainiks of Ben-Gurion et al)” were right. Yet this perception is entirely wrong. Our error was not in viewing the Israeli government as malkhut. It is full-fledged malkhut, and whoever rejects this errs in axiomatic principles of the Torah.

Our mistake, however, is that we should never have viewed what was taking shape before us as the Kingdom of David, but rather as that of Saul. Saul—and not David—is the true prototype of the renewed Jewish kingdom in our day, the Israeli government. We, who erred in this regard must understand the difference between the two, because this difference says so much about our future path, and likewise provides answers to the important questions we have been invited to address.

Saul was a weak king and that made Samuel weak, too—just as the sickness of the present Israeli government weakens us. Saul did not understand his own position vis-a-vis the Jewish People. This weakened Samuel so that he himself refrained from standing firm against a small group of ruffians who rose up at the time. Our plight regarding our own ruffians is the same. Due to Saul’s weakness the ruffians could suddenly voice their demands for a more vigorous, brutal leadership, and for the same reason Samuel’s voice was not heard educating them to understanding and patience.
Thus, “Samuel set forth for the people the laws of the kingdom” (I Samuel 10:25); yet Saul, rather than inaugurate a proud, strong monarchy, “retired home to Giv’a” (10:26) surrounded by pure-hearted admirers: “There went with him the men of valor whose hearts God had touched” (Ibid.). Apparently they sang “Se’u Shearim” to him precisely as it was sung to the President of Israel in our own day when he visited Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav Kook. Simultaneously, however, “Certain base fellows said, ‘How shall this man save us?’ And they despised him . . . but he was as one who held his peace” (10:27).

This is not the place to quote the entire relevant section, but whoever looks there will find that Samuel did not come out against these “base fellows,” although he heard them and surely disagreed with their approach. The reason is as follows:

A king incapable of nationalistic valor and ignorant of the meaning of sovereign majesty diminishes the glory of the God of Israel and weakens the spectacle of His eternal might. Saul, incapable of “ascribing strength to his God” (Psalms 68:35), thereby denied to Samuel as well the fortitude needed to oppose those who said, “How shall this man save us?”

Samuel, sorrowfully aware of the truth in their words, could neither tell them that they were right nor that they were wrong. He knew that, on the one hand, their basic approach was indeed in accordance with Torah law, but that, on the other hand, applying their methods would have grave consequences, destroying the very kingdom rather than its perverse ways. Hence he was silent. The regime’s very weakness metaphorically placed its finger over Samuel’s lips and prevented him from speaking. Thus Samuel loved Saul—and wept for him.

Modern Israel’s governments have little understood their own importance in all that concerns the meta-history of the nation. Neither have they understood that, together with their day-to-day rule, they constitute genuine “messengers of God” in the great eternal ledger of the Jewish People. This, together with their very inability to rule with simultaneous magnanimity and force has resulted in the emergence of roughnecks with kippot.

When the government conducts itself without royal demeanor, “following the oxen” (I Samuel 11:5) with bent back and stooped walk, no one can prevent base men from saying, “How shall this man save us?” or from trying to take the law into their own hands. This is the price we pay when the kingdom is a weak one lacking majesty and pride.
When Saul was commanded to “smite Amalek and destroy all they have” (I Samuel 15:3), he disobeyed. Instead, “He and the people spared Agag and the best of all the sheep and oxen” (v. 9). In response, Samuel rebuked Saul as follows:

The Lord sent you on a journey and said, “Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.” Wherefore then did you not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but did fly upon the spoil? . . . And Saul responded, “Because I feared the people and hearkened unto their voice” (I Samuel 15:18-19,24).

With this Saul’s kingdom fell.

I am therefore certain that the present policy of the Israeli government will ultimately falter. In the meantime, however, I treat this government as having the definition of malkhut. After all, what alternative is there? It apparently has the support of a majority of the people and, to our amazement, the support of a truly exalted talmid hakham. The formal halakhic definitions that give a kingdom legitimacy seem to obtain here.

All the same, I am convinced that a government will eventually arise with a policy that is dominant rather than docile (see K’li Yakar; Deut. 17:15), a government with elements of “David, son of Jesse, the man raised on high” (II Samuel 23:1), a Davidic regime, bearing the consent of a perfect, reputable court, a government that indeed governs with the support of the vast majority of the Holy Nation.

In the meantime, we must recognize that we have erred and that we still live in an era paralleling Saul. It may well be that this era will go on for a long time, that other rulers will rise and fall, all with the imprint of Saul, and still the Son of David will not arrive. Even so, they will be considered malkhut.

For now, we lack the ability to rid ourselves of violent elements. As in Samuel’s day, the government is not healthy enough to give us the power for this. But it is only a temporary kingdom and things will change.

In Israel, the most popular song in our circles these days contain the words, “May he soon come and bring us joy” (Haftara blessings). We sing this song not as complacent, idle dreamers, but as persons who work with God and are involved in constructive, day-to-day activity, from the libraries and science halls to the combines in the fields: “May he soon come and bring us joy!”
To concisely address the original questions:

1) There is no doubt that we have taught a lot, yet we should have taught much more about the difference between our philosophy and that of Kahanism.

2) The difference is that we speak of the State as an expression of a gradual process leading to the “Revealed End of Days,” a process fraught with vicissitudes and complications, whereas they have not based their approach on this, and their grave errors have been the result.

3) Torah-true Zionism has not failed at all. It is the one and only Torah path, and is based entirely on faith in God alone. It is pure gold, devoid of dross.

4) We came to Israel not due to the motives of secular Zionism but because it was God’s will to halt the profanation of His name inherent in our very presence in the Diaspora (see Ezekiel 36). It was God’s will to arouse the nation and return it to its home. It was this which brought us here, although we were only barely conscious of all this at the time we came, and it is by virtue of this that we are here now. To be in Israel today is a sanctification of God’s name, as Ezekiel said (ibid.), hence we are fortunate to be here.

We have nothing against any “Mustafa” or “Muhammad” on an individual basis, but only against their perverse thoughts about controlling parts of Eretz Yisrael in a nationalistic framework, God forbid. The Torah commands us to combat such developments, and Diaspora Jewry bears this same duty as do we who live in the Land.

At the same time, as far as respecting the rights of Arabs as individuals, we must relate to them with complete humaneness and respect, for this is the Torah’s way, and all base, destructive racism is a wicked crime.

In the meantime, until the morning dawns, we shall continue our ascent, marching by the light of the teachings of our rabbis of blessed memory, and Torat Eretz Yisrael will surely rise up and prove its potential. Through us will be fulfilled, “A new light shall shine over Zion,” and the approach of Religious Zionism to Torah and science, faith and good character will flower and bear fruit.
Before addressing myself to the issues at hand, I would like to comment upon the context within which the questions of Kahanism vs. Religious Zionism are being raised and to draw the appropriate conclusions regarding the aspects of these questions which ought to concern us. *Heshbon nefesh* is a value which is never out of place; certainly an outrageous act such as the Baruch Goldstein massacre demands a spiritual stock-taking on the part of all Jews, especially those who feel themselves to be close, in some way, to the values in the name of which he (ostensibly) acted. Nevertheless, I would question whether, and to what extent, a proper *heshbon nefesh* is possible within the ideologically superheated atmosphere that surrounds the Israel-PLO accords and negotiations.

Insofar as *heshbon nefesh* is concerned with *harata al he-avar*, either acceptance or denial of responsibility on the part of Religious Zionism for the circumstances and environment which led up to the massacre is liable to suspicion, both in terms of its motivation and in terms of its impact. Within the climate of public debate in Israel following the massacre, the outrage and shame generated by Goldstein’s act seemed excessive and often motivated less by a genuine sense of *heshbon nefesh* than by a desire to settle political and ideological accounts. Breast-beating was all too often directed outward, towards ideological foes, rather than inward, towards oneself and one’s ideological colleagues. Statements and actions, whether of condemnation or of apologetic defense, followed predictable ideological guidelines, provoking backlash effects of yet more excessive condemnation, on the one side, and defiant sympathy for Goldstein or for Kach on the other side.

I doubt whether an honest attempt by Religious Zionism to assess responsibility for past occurrence can be conducted with sufficient detachment from the prevailing climate of accusation, defense, and apology. Moreover, either assumption or denial of responsibility—or anything in between—by an embattled Religious Zionism, is liable to serious misinterpretation by different sectors of the public, already prone to suspect Religious Zionism of serious moral failures in one direction or the other.

I believe that the challenge of *heshbon nefesh* today resides rather in *kabbala al he-atid*. We need to assess our current spiritual strengths and weaknesses in an attempt to determine what moral posture can best guarantee that outrages such as the Goldstein massacre will not recur. Here I believe that another word of caution is in
order. The Rav st’l taught us to distinguish between repentance rooted in moral revulsion and repentance founded upon intellectual recognition of the sin. Moral revulsion is a natural response to shooting over thirty Moslem worshipers kneeling in prayer; however, I believe, that in this case the emotional response to sin is an untrustworthy moral guide. Recognition that the massacre was preceded by a week in which calls to “murder the Jews” blared from the loudspeakers of the mosques of Hebron, that many of the worshipers in the Makhpela Cave had clashed violently with Jewish worshipers the previous day, does not in any way justify Goldstein’s act, but it ought to blunt, or confuse, the unequivocal instinct of moral outrage. Are our moral instincts sufficiently sophisticated to feel the proper amount of revulsion towards an outrage that may have prevented another outrage equally as deep? Can our moral emotions account sufficiently for the sense of abandonment of a community of Jews who feel—perhaps with some justice—that both their security and the spiritual heritage of Judaism and of Zionism are being compromised by a hostile and unfeeling government? These are issues which need to be addressed by a keen and sober moral intellect, and we should not rely upon our moral emotions until we are confident that they are obedient to the dictates of our moral judgment.

The foregoing comments should suffice to clarify my reservations regarding the formulation of questions 1 and 3, which focus on supposed past errors of Religious Zionism, and to explain my focus on questions 2 and 4, which relate to our outlook towards the future. Nonetheless, I shall try to integrate elements of questions 1 and 3 into my response.

Rav Kook taught that all philosophies have some kernel of truth within them. Hence, it seems to me, our attempt to confront a moral pitfall, such as Kahanism, which lies along our spiritual and ideological path, must begin with an appreciation of the kernel of truth which makes it viable. Listen to the man in the street in any Israeli city and you will discover that many non-Kahanists, indeed many sworn ideological opponents of Kahanism (such as the mainstream of the Judea and Samaria settlements), often display sympathy for Kahanist ideas. What renders Kahanism attractive is the stark simplicity of its views concerning Jewish values and current Jewish realities. Kahanism perceives clearly the realities of anti-Semitism in galut and of unyielding Arab hostility towards Jews/Israel in the Middle Eastern context. In the sphere of values, Kahanism is rooted in a profound sense of the tension between Jewish and Western liberal values. Emotionally, Kahanism is satisfying in its unrelenting
emphasis on Jewish pride and its keen sensitivity to instances of Jewish self-abasement. Perhaps above all: the insistence that Jewish blood is not cheap and needs to be defended and avenged. Needless to say, many Jews recoil from facing uncomfortable facts which provide *prima facie* support to these premises. Antisemitism and Arab terror are reefs on which democratic and liberal values have often foundered, and I believe we would do well to face up squarely to the tensions which underlie Religious Zionism’s simultaneous commitment to Jewish tradition, to Jewish survival and national self-definition, and to the best values of Western democracy. In underscoring the tensions, often uncomfortable, among these commitments, Kahane ought to serve us as a gadfly.

Kahanism’s conclusions from these premises draw their appeal from their simplicity: incompatible populations and incompatible value systems must be confronted by unremitting forceful opposition, until their ultimate and inevitable divorce from one another. The only alternatives, according to the Kahanist philosophy, are shameful compromise or proud, forceful resistance. Religious Zionism, including the activist “Greater Land of Israel” mainstream, opposes Kahanism both on philosophical and on practical grounds. Religious Zionism, from its inception and under the tutelage of Rabbis Kook and Soloveitchik and their disciples, has always viewed both historical reality and Jewish value structure as complex dialectical systems which cannot be reduced to simplistic formulae. Reductionist formulae reflect not only a failure of intellectual sophistication, but a serious deficiency of moral sensitivity as well. Our Torah Temima includes sensitivity to the *hillul Hashem* of Jewish vulnerability (e.g. *Petihta Eikha Rabati* 15), the occasional value of and need for vengeance (e.g. Amalek, Midian, viz. *Bemidbar* 31:1-3 and *Tanhuma* ad. loc.), and the inherent sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael*, as well as pursuit of peace (Ramban to *Devarim* 20:10, Rashi to *Devarim* 2:26) and regard for the rights of Gentiles (e.g. *Baba Kamma* 113, Rambam, *Gezela* 1:2). Torah and liberal democratic values do not always correspond, but they are also not unalterably opposed, and selective citations from Rambam (as the late Rabbi Meir Kahane was fond of doing) cannot exempt us from the need to delve deeply into the legal and philosophical roots as well as the practical ramifications of both systems in an attempt to determine where they clash and where the gaps may be bridged. Similarly, presenting the Gentile world as an undifferentiated sea of hostility is neither accurate nor helpful. We must blind ourselves neither to the deep-seated hatred nor to the pockets of goodwill—whether moti-
vated by ulterior or by altruistic concerns—which exist within the Gentile, even the Arab, world. Even when we may feel that developments warrant a hardline stance, we need to have the ideological suppleness to moderate our posture in accordance with subtle shifts in the local or global situation.

It is not only the premises, but the results, of Kahanism which we ought to (and usually do) find disturbing. Many of us within the Religious Zionism camp find ourselves, to our chagrin, pushed into an ideological corner in which our position parallels the Kahanist program to an ever-increasing extent. The headlong rush of the current Israeli government to sign and implement, at any cost, an agreement with a deadly, and as yet unrepentant, terror organization has been accompanied by a wholesale abandonment of cherished Jewish, as well as Zionist, ideals. Not only has our cherished moledet been irrevocably transformed into irksome “occupied territories,” but even the concept of security settlements, indeed of exclusive Israeli responsibility for security of Jews, has been seriously compromised. The ideal of “post-Zionism” is to carve out for Israel a leading role in the Middle Eastern sector of the technological-economic global village, and any vestiges of particularistic Jewish identity are attacked as atavistic barriers to full integration into the “new Middle East.” The blow is not only political, but ideological. The secular Zionist world with which we have long advocated cooperation is crumbling, and many in our camp feel the undertow of thoroughgoing separatist philosophies, whether of the Haredi (non- or anti-Zionist) or Kahanist (nationalistic) variety. Our brand of dialectical complexity may seem increasingly irrelevant as one pole of the dialectic grows so antithetical as to disappear beyond our spiritual horizon.

Here it becomes vital for us to clarify, in the light of increasingly parallel readings of the situation, why our approach and the Kahanist approach are asymptotes which can never meet. For our problem with Kahanism is not only with its conclusions but with its methods, and not only with its actions but with its attitudes. Force, violence, even vengeance, are sometimes required, but the Jew never glories in them—“they are nothing but a disgrace” (Mishna Shabbat 6:4). We may justifiably take pride in possessing the means to defend our survival and our national self-definition. However, the employment of these means must create a conflict and a tension within our souls. We bar the entry of weapons into the Temple or synagogue, and the Ramban warned of the spiritual corruption to which military camps are prone (commentary to Devarim 23:10). Rav Kook declared in a famous passage (Orot, p. 14) that we departed from
the arena of global politics due to a necessity informed by an inner desire, until the happy time will arrive when it will be possible to govern a kingdom without wickedness and barbarism.

We may have to oppose, bitterly and fiercely, ideological enemies within, as well as violent enemies without, but we need to do so without joy and without hatred. Both the Hazon Ish and Rav Kook taught that our Jewish ideological foes need to be addressed with love, without compromising our own values. This love is liable to be seriously tested in the ensuing months and years, but we dare not abandon it altogether.

Bahirat Yisrael is a central tenet of Religious Zionism, just as it is within Kaanimism. Here again the differences lie in the tension and complexity, as well as within the attitude adopted. Bahirat Yisrael is a yoke, not only a privilege. It does not grant us carte blanche to arrogate rights to ourselves at the expense of others (see Rashi to Bereshit 13:7). It has often (but not always, see G. Blidstein, “The Political Dimension of the Election of Israel in Rabbinic Literature” [Hebrew], in: Ra’ayan haBehira [Jerusalem, 5751]) been understood to guarantee us that we will rule over other nations. In some historical circumstances, it may demand of us to bear suffering and humiliation where other nations would not (Rambam, Hilqhot Issurei BiYa 14:1). I do not believe that Jews today are called upon to glory in suffering and humiliation, and “turning the other cheek” is not a hallowed Jewish value. However, while Jewish pride may have its value (Sota 5a, Halakhic Man, pp. 78ff), this is true only when this pride is counterbalanced by a profound sense of humility (Sota 5a, Rambam commentary to Abot 4:4). If and when we are forced to defend Jewish blood and Jewish honor, we should feel a sense of disappointment and not only a sense of pride. Perhaps behirat Yisrael resides, at least for our generation, in our ability to maintain this delicately balanced moral tension.

In sum, I believe that the challenge of Kahanism is worth addressing, less because of its impact on Israeli politics or Jewish thought, rather because it raises, in a very stark fashion, some genuine issues which need to be addressed by Jews and Israelis weary of the tensions inherent in serious moral life and serious moral thinking. Our task, as Religious Zionists, is to maintain these tensions in a delicate and creative balance. The middle ground has become less comfortable, and perhaps less viable—in practical terms—of late. However, as I have tried to indicate, even a militant political stance should be counterbalanced by an inward sense that there is another side of the picture which needs to be kept in view even when we
cannot give it expression. This balance should both serve as a check against the moral excesses to which monolithic philosophies are prone and to maintain our own inner spiritual balance. In short, my heshbon nefesh leads to some reassessment, redefinition, and realignment, but I believe that the underlying tenets of our philosophy are no less valid and yet more vital than ever.

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**AVRAHAM WEISS**

4. For large segments of the religious Zionist movement today, the "chosen people" idea is based on the ideology of Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi, who argued that the Jewish soul is innately superior to that of the non-Jew. This in turn has created a sense of second class citizenship for Arabs and the rest of humanity. Mainstream Jewish belief, however, has always been based on the principle that every person is created in the image of God. The Jewish soul is not superior to the non-Jewish soul.

In fact, the first eleven chapters of the Torah are universal. God chose humankind over all other species He created. But humankind did not fulfill the chosen role God had assigned to it. The world was destroyed by flood, and soon after, all of humanity was spread across the earth in the generation of disperson (Bereshit Rabba 39:5).

God then chose Avraham and Sarah to be the father and mother of the Jewish people. Their mandate was not to be insular, but to be a blessing for the entire world. It is not the souls of Avraham and Sarah that were superior; it is rather their task which had a higher purpose.

Ultimately, we became a people who are charged to follow halakha, the pathway to Torah-ethicism which leads to the redemption of the Jewish people, through which the world is to be redeemed. Our task is to function as the catalyst in the generation of the redeemed world. The movement of chosenness is not from the particular to the more particular, but rather from the particular to the more universal. Chosenness is, therefore, not a statement of superiority, but of responsibility.

Of course, those who wish to join the Jewish covenantal community are welcome. And there is nothing that precludes those who are outside of the Jewish family from personally reaching the highest
levels of spirituality. Quite the contrary: if we believed that they
could not reach these levels of spirituality, as Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi
states, our mission would be impossible to achieve.

The idea of our chosenness has always been associated with our
sovereignty over the chosen land. For the Religious Zionist, Israel is
important not only as the place of guaranteed political refuge; it is not
only the place where more mitzvot can be performed; and it is not
only the place where—given the high rate of assimilation and inter-
marrige in the exile—our continuum as a Jewish nation is assured. It
is rather the place, the only place, where we have the potential to carry
out the "chosen people" mandate. In exile, we are not in control of
our destiny; we cannot create the society Torah envisions. Only in a
Jewish state do we have the political sovereignty and judicial autono-
my that we need to be the or la-goyim, to establish the society from
which other nations can learn the basic ethical ideals of Torah.

1. Whether or not the government of Israel has religious signif-
icance given that its leaders are not halakhically observant is at the
very heart of the distinction between mainstream Religious Zionists
and Kach.

Rav Kook maintains that in the absence of the halakhic melekh,
the powers of the government revert to the people, who in turn
have the authority to invest these powers in whomever they choose.
The leaders of their choice then have the status of malkhut Yisrael.
(Mishpat Kohen 144:14-17) From this perspective, the government
of Israel has religious value and religious standing.

Kach disagrees. It insists that the government of Israel has no
religious authority. It believes that the government has only civil
authority. It is a government like any other, and our obligation to it
is determined by dina de-malkhuta dina.

From here a major distinction emerges. If the government has
the status of malkhut, an individual has the right to disagree with
government policy, but can never regard those policies as being null
and void. Dissent is acceptable; delegitimation is not.

For Kach, since the government only has civil standing, gov-
ernment policy is overridden by what in their opinion the Torah
requires. The Kach position is that when the government is wrong,
one has the right not only to dissent, but to delegitimate. In the vac-
uum that results, individuals have the right and obligation to do that
which they believe halakha demands, including taking up arms
against the enemy.

Since the Rabin government has come to power, some religious
Zionists have blurred this critical distinction between dissent and
delegitimation. An example is Rabbi Shlomo Goren’s decree that soldiers must defy any order to evacuate settlers. Rabbi Goren is within his bounds to encourage soldiers to conscientiously object to that which they find repugnant to their principles, but he stepped beyond the line when he declared that the orders must be defied because they are illegitimate, promulgated by an illegitimate government. It is one thing to defy a legal order of a legitimate government, and to be prepared to pay the consequences for violating the law; it is quite another to defy that order on the grounds that the government that issued it is illegitimate.

Theoretical differences may remain between those religious Zionists who believe the government is illegitimate and the followers of Kach. For all intents and purposes, however, their stance towards the legitimacy of the government is the same. The message that these Religious Zionists are sending out is that citizens can take the law into their own hands and carry out their own conception of what the halakha demands. This is ominous for the future of the state.

2. The central disagreement between those Religious Zionists for whom a rejection of “land for peace” is an integral tenet, on the one hand, and Kahanists, on the other, revolves around the treatment of Arabs living in Israel. It involves two commandments, one prohibitive, the other affirmative.

The prohibitive commandment is “lo yeshvu, They shall not dwell in your land, lest they cause you to sin against (Exodus 23:33) Me.” Kahanists understand this injunction as applying to Arabs. But the truth is, Arabs can live in Israel as non-idolatrous gentiles who observe the sheva mitzvot. As Rambam points out, although the bet din can not formally accept gerei toshav in the absence of the practice of yovel, there is no reason that these individuals should be deprived of the right to live in the land of Israel. (Rambam and commentaries, Yad, Avoda Zara 10:6).

Thus, it would be reasonable for an Israeli government to declare that any non-Jewish resident of Israel who commits homicide (one of the sheva mitzvot), or who attempts homicide, is subject to exile and may be deported. This, in contrast to the Kahanist position that all Arabs must go—by choice or by force—unless they publicly declare their “loyalty to the Jewish state” and their acceptance of the status of “permanent legal minorities.” This position goes well beyond that which is found in halakhic texts and, more importantly, is nothing but a charade. Rabbi Kahane knew well that these terms would effectively result in the forced transfer of Arabs.

Likewise, the direction of the Rabin government in the peace
process, which includes the return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Judea and Samaria, the securing of the area by tens of thousands of Palestinian police and the disarming of Jewish settlers, will make it impossible for Jews to remain, effectively forcing Jews to leave.

Kahanists speak about removing Arabs in trucks; the Rabin government’s transfer policy is more subtle but no less devastating.

The affirmative Torah commandment is to destroy those who bear the seed of Amalek. Since the halakha has ruled that Amalek does not exist today, the commandment can not be carried out.

Rav Haim haLevi Soloveitchik, however, maintained that there are two forms of Amalek. There is the genetic Amalek, and there is the figurative Amalek, which constitutes any nation wishing to destroy Israel. Basing themselves on this position, Kahanists argue that Arabs are figurative Amalek. Thus, whenever Arabs were indiscriminately killed, the classic Kahanist response was, “We were not involved, but we applaud the action.” Thus, after Ami Popper murdered seven Arabs, Rabbi Kahane suggested that a street be named for him. Thus, the Hevron massacre has been defended in some circles not on the grounds of national warfare, but on the grounds of fighting against Amalek.

Mainstream religious Zionists who oppose “land for peace” reject labeling Arabs as Amalek. Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik further distinguishes between the two forms of Amalek. (Kol Dodi Dofek, footnote 25). Every individual who bears the genes of Amalek must be wiped out. With regard to the figurative Amalek, on the other hand, one is mandated to engage in warfare against any nation that attempts to destroy the Jewish people. However, the law of killing every individual Amalekite, even those not at war with us, does not apply. Thus, for Rav Soloveitchik, Arabs are outside the bounds of timbe; lauding the murder of Arabs is contrary to Torah ethics.

3a. Religious Zionists have not failed to take seriously the theological critique of religious non-Zionists. There has been adequate rebuttal to their claims that state-building before the advent of the Messiah is forbidden.

However, the spiritual argument that Religious Zionists have been so focused on “the land” that the religious, spiritual quality of the nation has suffered, has merit.

Where is the Religious Zionist voice in reaching out to teach and touch souls? The reality is that the kiruv movement is almost entirely dominated by religious non-Zionists. By and large, Religious Zionists have excelled in kiruv adama, but have failed in kiruv neshamot. Our mandate must be to do both: while accentuat-
ing the importance of land, we dare not abdicate our responsibility to energetically and lovingly reach out to spiritually ennoble the lives of Jews everywhere in Israel.

3b. Religious Zionism has not been unfair in its critique of "traditional galuti" values, i.e. survival through shetadlanut. At its core, Religious Zionism posits Jewish self-empowerment. The establishment of the Jewish state with a strong army is, in some measure, our response to Jewish powerlessness during the Shoah. To be sure, the exercise of power carries with it an enormous responsibility to display that power within a deeply ethical framework. The Israeli Defense Forces have done just that. Despite isolated incidents, I.D.F. is the most moral army anywhere.

And as important as military strength is, Religious Zionists recognize the value of negotiations. Still, most Religious Zionists agree that it is potentially suicidal to talk with Arafat, whose hands are dripping with Jewish blood, who has yet to change the PLO covenant, and who has even now called for jihad. Even those Religious Zionists who favor "land for peace" are wary, as the "peace" process is seen as a blueprint for "land for chaos," "land for internecine warfare," "land for more Jewish blood spilled."

3c. Has Religious Zionism erred in its theological or halakhic judgements and presuppositions? No. Its position—that we are at the dawn of redemption, that human beings ought play an active role in bringing that era about, was always based on the principle that redemption comes kima, in small steps. This does not mean that we are always moving forward. There are moments when the process stands still; there are moments when it is in reverse.

Indeed, there is no certainty that reshit tzemihat ge-ulatenu cannot stop. It can. And if it does, it may have to be started up again. But as of now, we are, with God’s help, in process. Sometimes moving forward, sometimes not. But we’re in process.

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JOEL B. WOLOWELSKY

Religious Zionists see religious significance in the establishment of the imperfect State of Israel. When Rambam (Hil. Hanuka 3:1) explained the holiday of Hanuka, he noted that the Hashmonaim-Kohanim set up a king from among the kohanim and restored Jewish
sovereignty to Israel for two hundred years. It is against Torah law for a kohen to rule as king, but that did not stop Hazal from insisting that we sing Hallel in appreciation of God’s miracles. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook insisted that there was religious significance to the work of the secularists in restoring Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel. And the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, was hardly blind to the imperfections of the State he so strikingly supported in religious terms. The establishment of the State was by the hand of God; the imperfections were the failings of the Torah community in responding to the opportunities God had made possible.

It is this commitment to the Jewish State despite its shortcomings—not to mention our commitment to democratic ideals—that separates us from the Kahanists (to the extent that they are ideologues rather than simply troubled people expressing their pathology in the garb of ideology). Kahanists speak as if the Jewish State that exists has no integrity; they are still fighting for its establishment. That is why they can claim that military-type activities that were appropriate for the pre-State Irgun or Palmach remain valid today. It is true that Religious Zionists countenance the use of violence in protecting Jewish rights; as the Rav noted in Kol Dodi Dofek, the fact that Jewish blood is no longer cheap is one of the six beckonings of God in the establishment of the State. But the use of violence is now invested in the State, not individuals.

In ignoring the new reality of a sovereign Jewish state, the Kahanists are but the obverse side of the coin of the Haredi community. The latter have a commitment to living in “Eretz Yisrael” and observing the special mitzvot associated with it, but see no religious integrity or significance to the establishment of the modern Jewish State. Just as the Kahanists are still fighting for the establishment of their version of the ideal Jewish State, the Haredim are still waiting.

Because Religious Zionists recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish State without ever claiming to have invested it with the crown of perfection, we will be able to live with the fact that legitimately elected political leaders can make mistakes and still remain the lawful government. Thus, if the government issues an order that goes against their vision for the future of the State, Kahanists will see the authorities as British in Israeli garb and resist; Religious Zionists will recognize the legitimacy of the State and reluctantly obey. And as we have, I would hope, a commitment to living in a democratic society that recognizes the image of God in both Jews and non-Jews, we understand the moral and ethical problems of ruling over a conquered population—even if we might lament that current securi-
ty problems leave us with no choice.

Why should any part of the current situation cause us to question our theological presuppositions? We did not stop saying Hallel when the miracles of Hanuka had apparently faded from view because the grandeur of God’s gifts endured. We sing Hallel on Yom haAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim because we recognize God’s giving hand in the establishment of the State and the miraculous victory of the Six Day War. We never claimed that God would deny men and women the free will to discard His gifts.

Consider the following paragraph written by the Rav close to four decades ago in Kol Dodi Dofek. Substitute “Judea and Samaria” for “Negev,” and “Arafat” for “Nasser” and we have a description of the current situation:

All of the trepidation and concern for the geographical integrity of the State of Israel, on the one hand, and all our enemies’ proposals that are designed to exact territorial demands of the Arabs for boundary changes, on the other hand, are all based on one and only one fact: the Jews have not colonized the Negev and have not set up hundreds of settlements there. Were the Negev settled by tens of thousands of Jews, then not even Nasser would dream of the possibility of wresting it from the State of Israel. . . . The fact that Jews conquered the Negev does not suffice; the main thing is to settle it.

Reading that paragraph again makes at least some part of the railing from America (or even from within the Green Line) against “land for peace” ring a bit hollow. (The same can be said regarding protests from those who, claiming to see no religious significance to the return of Jewish sovereignty to Eretz Yisrael, continue to say Tahanun on Yom haAtzmaut or, hiding behind some imagined fear of pseudo-messianism or Shabtai Tzvisim, refuse to say even the traditional Prayer for the Medina.)

In any event, we certainly have been derelict in acquiescing so quickly in the current government and press campaign to equate “No land for peace” with Religious Zionism. Likud leaders like Messrs. Shamir and Netanyahu are not known for their halakhic piety, and gedolei Torah in the Religious Zionist community like the Rav zt”l and Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein shalita had disassociated themselves from “No land for peace” positions.

Some who oppose the current peace process do so because of their commitment to religious and/or secular Zionist principles; others do so “simply” because they think that the process is flawed
and will put Israel in grave physical danger. But allowing opposition to the current peace process to be cast as the position of all Religious Zionists permitted the government to exploit a deep-seated antipathy among secularists who might otherwise have opposed the current government’s policy. Of course, Mafdal (the Religious Zionist political party) contributed to this perception over the years by abandoning a broad vision of Religious Zionism and becoming a one-issue party. They—and we—have already paid for this in losing control of the Chief Rabbinate, as well as endangering the future of the whole mamlakhti dati/religious public school system.

Indeed, not addressing the problem of the great religious divide over the years is one of the major failings of many of our religious leaders in Israel. Caught up in their most appropriate campaign to settle Judea and Samaria, they nonetheless neglected their more basic responsibility to build bridges to the rest of Israeli society, educate those who disagreed with them, work towards the most inclusive community possible, and hear the opposition’s criticisms even when it was uncomfortable. By pretending that those who argued “land for peace” have no ethical content to their position, they failed to explore other possibilities for addressing those concerns. We are now paying the price of that neglect.

Symptomatic of these leaders’ complete detachment from broader Israeli society—and this is true of the Haredi as well as Religious Zionist rabbinate—was the response to Goldstein’s massacre in Hebron. Goldstein’s funeral was held in a Hesder Yeshiva. Some rabbis here and in Israel spoke with utter disregard to how they were being heard—not only by those who were outside of their bet midrash or shul, but by their own followers who were often repulsed by what they were being told. Religious leaders affiliated with Religious Zionism allowed themselves to be perceived as encouraging mutiny in the army; that they lost moral credibility with wide sections of Israeli society was irrelevant to them.

Few rabbis joined the public declaration by Rabbis Amital, Bin-Nun, Lichtenstein and Rabinowitz stating simply and unequivocally that no justification should be offered for the hillul haShem of the Goldstein murders. These four rabbis could unite on this statement despite the fact that they reflected the very broad spectrum of political opinion on the peace process, but most others insisted on adding a “but” denouncing the government policy, thereby undermining any ethical impact the statement might have. All this allowed the secular Israeli government to succeed in quite cynically creating the impression that secularists have the high moral ground in Israel and
that all religious people are actual or at least potential Baruch Goldsteins. One of our great embarrassments regarding our religious leaders is their impotence in fighting this vicious libel, if not their contribution to its tenacious grip on the secular mind.

Rav Kook had noted that there was no inherent contradiction in the fact that Zionism was motivated to a large extent by secularists. Only the Kohen Gadol, he said, could enter the Holy of Holies. But that was after the Temple was completed; while it was being built, all the workers had to be allowed to walk about the Temple Mount, otherwise the Temple could not be constructed. This lesson has been lost on many Religious Zionists who, working from a position of political strength this past decade, thought that they could build the greater Jewish State by themselves, without reaching out to others. Now, when their political muscle has diminished, they find themselves without allies outside of their camp. Having denigrated anyone—including roshei yeshiva within and without the Religious Zionist community—who did not share their ideological vision, those who oppose “land for peace” have trouble convincing others that they now speak out of very real and serious security concern.

The Second Temple was destroyed because of sinat hinam, gratuitous hatred. Certainly the Likud-led government was brought down because it was headed by a group of sorry leaders who put their personal rivalries ahead of the national interest. A minority government exists because it faced a fractured majority. Religious Zionists, for the most part, acted no better than their secular counterparts in the government. The leaders of the latter, however, made no claim to be speaking in the name of Torah.

If we want to actualize the Religious Zionist goal of a Jewish State, we will have to deal from a position grounded in reality, not simply vision. We will have to communicate—not simply argue—with those who do not share our perspectives. And we will have to remove the cloak of arrogance and pay attention to legitimate criticisms that come from without.

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WALTER S. WURZBURGER

“He who sees that suffering comes upon him should investigate his conduct.” In keeping with this dictum, in the wake of the Hebron
massacre, it behooves us to engage in intensive introspection to ascertain whether the prevailing ethos of the Orthodox community bears some responsibility for the development of a climate of fanaticism, which brought about the transformation of a dedicated physician into a mass murderer. It is especially shocking that segments of the Orthodox community not only failed to denounce this heinous crime but wished that he had killed more.

In his Iggerot Haraya, R. Kook found it necessary to castigate the editor of the Hatzofe for permitting degrading references to the Arab population to appear in his newspaper. For all his passionate love of Israel, Rav Kook was appalled when Jewish nationalism degenerated into chauvinism. He emphasized that the mussar hakodesh was not a replacement of but a supplement to mussar hativin.

Unfortunately, even among R. Kook’s most ardent devotees, there was little appreciation of the universalistic dimension of his philosophy. Significantly, the curriculum of his own Yeshiva did not reflect the openness to the world that he advocated. It is perhaps ironic that after the 1967 War his followers formed the core of the Gush Emunim, who focused exclusively on the particularistic aspects of Rav Kook’s thought and totally ignored his concern for universal values.

Historic factors readily explain why the Orthodox community felt uncomfortable with the espousal of universalism. To begin with, it was the Reform movement which harped upon the universalistic components of Judaism to the exclusion of all particularistic strands, reducing Judaism to mere “ethical monotheism.” One could hardly expect much sympathy for universalism from those who struggled against the tendency to strip Judaism of all unique, particularistic features.

In the wake of the Holocaust, it was not only for the Orthodox community that universalism lost its lure. The entire Jewish community has turned inwards. Arab terrorism, the isolation of the state of Israel and the hostility of the U.N. (e.g., Zionism is racism resolution) further reinforced a state of siege mentality, of “us vs. them.”

Unfortunately, the bulk of Orthodox Jewry assumes that the Talmudic legislation mandating acts of tzedaka and gemilut chasadim towards Gentiles mipenei darkhei shalom, is motivated exclusively by considerations of Jewish self-interest rather than by genuine ethical concerns (as indicated by the Maimonidean formulation of these laws in the Code). Even more disturbing is the fact that scant attention is paid to the halakhic opinions which contend that Muslims and Christians automatically are entitled to the status of ger toshav. It should, however, be pointed out that years ago courageous
rabbis argued that excluding Arabs from the labor market (in keeping with the nationalistic prohibition against *avoda zara* (interpreted as non-Jewish labor) constitutes an infringement of the commandment to provide a *ger toshav* with the opportunity to make a living.

Finding themselves for most of their history in a hostile environment it is readily understandable why Jews gravitated towards doctrines of *behirat Yisrael*, which did not merely accentuate the positive but involved disdain for the non-Jewish world. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of traditional Jews is not familiar with the approaches of Samson Raphael Hirsch, Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik, which extoll Jewish uniqueness without denigrating universal values.

There are good reasons why so many of our educational institutions focus only on the particularistic features of Judaism. In the effort to counteract assimilation, it is tempting to paint the outside world in the darkest colors imaginable. Much of the effort to instill a sense of Jewish identity revolves around the Holocaust. The enormous popularity of Professor Fackenheim’s six hundred and fourteenth commandment, “not to hand to Hitler a posthumous victory,” is evidence that negative factors can be extremely effective in bolstering a sense of loyalty and commitment to the Jewish people. As Henri Bergson pointed out in his *Two Sources of Morality*, the easiest way to promote a value system is to show its indispensability for the protection of the community from external perils. When the survival of the traditional community is menaced by the threat of the “Open Society,”—witness the staggering rate of total assimilation and intermarriage—one may be tempted to barricade oneself behind the ramparts of isolation from non-Jewish culture.

While these considerations weigh heavily with all segments of the Orthodox community, the passionate nationalism of Religious Zionists is especially liable to breed chauvinistic attitudes. When the particularistic elements of Judaism are not balanced with universalism, nothing matters but the interest of the Jewish people. This kind of extremism manifests itself in the one-sidedness of the Gush Emunim, to whom the retention of Yehuda and Shomron represents the overriding concern. As a distinguished leader of the Mifdal told me in private conversation, it is tragic when *sheleimut haAretz* takes precedence over *sheleimut haAm* or *sheleimut haTorah*. With such an attitude, one is prone to justify even outrageous violations of human rights. The crimes perpetrated by the *Mahteret* serve as a poignant reminder that Kahane holds no monopoly on violence against Arabs.

The danger is compounded when this one-sided, radical
nationalism is combined with messianism. Some people are so carried away with the notion of reshit tzemihat geulatenu that they are convinced that it is only the lack of resolution to hold on to every inch of territory in Judea and Samaria which delays the arrival of the Redemption. With this kind of dogmatism, one rides roughshod over all halakhic and ethical considerations, because, allegedly, the end justifies the means. Others, while disclaiming any intention to ignore halakhic norms, stretch the definition of rodef to justify what otherwise would be a clear-cut halakhic transgression.

It has been said that even the devil can quote Scripture. Without a healthy moral sense, one can easily twist the meaning of halakhic rules beyond recognition. It was the Netziv who pointed out that, over and above specific commandments, we were charged at Mt. Sinai to form a "holy people." Perhaps what the Orthodox community needs most in its educational philosophy is a restructuring of priorities. We must not be exclusively preoccupied with those aspects of the Torah which deal with particularistic norms. Instead, we should equally emphasize those commandments which have relevance to all of humanity. In keeping with the teachings of the Prophets, we must keep in mind that the fact that moral norms apply to all human beings does not detract from their intrinsic significance. While ethical conduct cannot so easily be invoked as a religious status symbol, it is no less important than the observance of ritualistic requirements.

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