

Professor Salmon, a Research Associate of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Committee, offers significant insight into religious Zionist thought.

## TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN EARLY RELIGIOUS-ZIONIST THOUGHT

### I

Religious Zionism is related to the general Zionist movement in two ways. In a certain sense, it can be considered its progenitor and in another sense its daughter. This double relationship stems from the fact that religious Zionism was the central element in the proto-Zionist period of the 1860s and '70s and was at least of equal importance with general Zionism in the era of *Hibbat Zion*. On the other hand, in the period of political Zionism it changed into a party, the minority party called Mizrahi, which in a certain sense was dragged along after the majority. Religious Zionism is a modern phenomenon in the same sense that Zionism in general is a modern phenomenon. This modernity, however, does not cut religious Zionism off from historical continuity with Jewish tradition. Its values, concepts and way of life had an influence on the position of religious Zionism on all questions concerning Zionism in general.

Zionism is commonly defined as a modern movement. For many years it struggled to achieve this recognition.<sup>1</sup> It is modern in all those characteristics which are called objective in the scholarly literature: ethnic base, national language, national territory and a national state, as well as in the subjective characteristics: the will to a national unity, a sense of mission to preserve the national uniqueness, etc. Some of these characteristics were not visible in the early period of Zionism. They were, however, accepted as norms by many who wished to develop these characteristics and did so with great success. Religious Zionism from

the first was never indifferent to any one of these characteristics and it took an active part in their actualization. Moreover, if we investigate the eleven basic motivations which composed Zionist ideology and action which Dov Weinryb has enumerated<sup>2</sup> we find that religious Zionism did not reject any of them. This fact calls into question Weinryb's statement that the motive power of Zionism was the process of secularization which passed over Jewish society, beginning with the Haskalah movement. Moreover, even if we cannot deny that religious Zionism in its origins joined in the essential goals of practical and political Zionism, we must still maintain that it was not shut off from the aspirations of cultural Zionism.<sup>3</sup> The dividing line between it and cultural Zionism was not in the recognition of the necessity to develop Jewish creativity, culture and research in all its branches. The dispute was concerned, rather, with the relationship between tradition and nationalism. Cultural-nationalist thinkers, such as Smolenshin, Ahad ha-Am, Dubnow and others, saw the national culture as a value which replaced the tradition both in terms of Jewish identity and life style.

The position of religious Zionism in the midst of the Zionist movement occasioned an intellectual, emotional and religious struggle without parallel in the Zionism movement because of the spiritual problems which it had to overcome both before and after its joining the movement. It was forced to legitimize opposing factors within the Jewish community. On the one hand, the section of the Orthodox community that in the end opposed Zionism did not do so immediately but rather after a process of struggle to control the movement from within.<sup>4</sup> This struggle failed after the defeat of the Orthodox motion at the second Zionist Congress to create a rabbinical council by the side of the Executive Committee as well as after Herzl's speech at that Congress on the need for the Zionists to control the *kehillot* (Jewish communal organizations) which meant in effect replacing the traditionalist circles which previously controlled them. These developments created the conditions under which the ultra-Orthodox sections of the traditionalist wing had no place within the Zionist movement. Therefore, the majority of the Orthodox either seceded or refused to take part in the movement and be-

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came antagonistic to Zionism. The small section of Orthodoxy which did not leave the movement and organized itself as the Mizrahi movement needed to justify itself before the Orthodox public, even though the members of Mizrahi remained.

On the other hand, the religious Zionists had to legitimize themselves before the general Zionists who did not appreciate the Orthodox life style nor the special point of view of the Orthodox element within the movement with regard to the conduct of the Zionist polity in general and Palestine in particular. Consequently, there was tension between the traditional norms which religious Zionism never abandoned and the norms of modernity which it accepted. It needed to bridge the gap between value systems opposed to each other.

## II

This pair of concepts—tradition and modernity—needs clarification, analysis and explanation. For this clarification we need to compare the traditional concepts of Exile and Redemption, as they were accepted by the vast majority of traditional Jews at least up to the mid-nineteenth century, and the newer concepts which found expression in the teachings of religious Zionists. Ben-Zion Dinur's Palestinocentric approach to Jewish history confuses the historical image. According to Dinur, the Jewish people went into Exile, losing the dominant position in Palestine with the Arab conquest in the early seventh century. From the eighteenth century on the Jewish people began to re-establish themselves on Palestinian soil. This is the turning point of the Zionist movement, as Dinur developed it in his *Sefer ha-Zionut*,<sup>5</sup> in his collection of articles entitled *Be-Mifneh ha-Dorot*<sup>6</sup> and in the introduction of his book *Yisrael ba-Gola*.<sup>7</sup> Dinur's approach distorts or omits many of the motivations which were connected with nationalist Zionism and which of necessity were not found in the bond between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel. This approach, however, emphasized proto-Zionist activities which it wished to see as forerunners of the later Zionist movement. The traditional longings for Zion and actual immigration to Palestine are certain components in the Zionist phenomenon

or in the ideology and actions of nationalist Zionism; nonetheless they are merely components and do not represent the entire phenomenon. After Dinur propounded his theories, he discovered that the process of immigration to Palestine took on a new character starting in the 1740s. In order to support his thesis that this new immigration was a turning point, he excerpted eighteenth century rabbinical sermons, showing that they had in common a new sense of realism in their attitude towards the Land of Israel—a new sense which shattered the attitude previously held by traditional Jewish society up to the eighteenth century. In order to strengthen his hypothesis, he forced meanings into the texts he cited which were present only in his thoughts.

As an example of this, consider the sermons of two prominent European rabbis of the eighteenth century, in whom Dinur found a new understanding of the position of the Land of Israel in Jewish life:<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Eybeschütz in the book of his sermons, *Yearot Devash*,<sup>9</sup> and Jacob Emden in the sermons contained in his edition of the prayerbooks.<sup>10</sup> Eybeshütz preached his sermon in 1749 in Metz, on the seventh of Ab as a eulogy for a scholar. One who eulogizes a scholar, especially on that date—the eve of the destruction of the Temple—was likely also to discuss the questions of Exile and Redemption. In this sermon, the preacher asked why the date of the Redemption is hidden. Why do we not know when the end of Exile and suffering will come? In his answer, he concluded that, although the date of the End is hidden, those sages who attempted throughout the generations to determine when Redemption will come have acted correctly—even though they knew that their calculations had no basis in reality. He cited the Midrash on Lamentations: “This is the actual meaning of ‘I called to my lovers, but they betrayed me’—for they established oblations and tithes outside the Land of Israel. For them I would think that salvation will come tomorrow whereas, because of our many sins, generations have passed and there is no salvation.”<sup>11</sup> According to the preacher, just as the sages established oblations and tithes in Babylonia in order to create the impression among the people that the return to the Land of Israel was near at hand, so after the destruction of the Second Temple the sages dealt with calculations of the End in

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order to preserve Jewish morale and to direct Jewish concentration on the Redemption. For if the exiles were to know that the end of the Exile was far off, they would out of frustration abandon their religion. The preacher then made the following exhortation to his contemporaries: "Therefore, in this last generation, it is incumbent upon us to arouse ourselves to the utmost [to repentance]. How long will we delay when the matter depends upon repentance alone? Let us throw away the sins of hatred and haughtiness, vulgarity of language and deceit. Because of our many sins, all our endeavors are conducted with haughtiness and the love of impiety."<sup>12</sup> For the Jews of that generation, there was only one means to seek the Redemption—repentance. Repentance ensured that their prayers for Redemption would be heard; their sins resulted in their prayers not being answered. The preacher exhorted his audience to use the passive means of repentance and prayer on high, making no realistic suggestions for bringing Redemption nearer. This was an entirely passive, traditional response to this question.

In other passages, Dinur quotes Emden's prayerbook, *Amudei Shamayim*. From the quotations, one receives the impression that here is a new approach to the question of immigration to the Land. The preacher calls to his readers: "Every Israelite must resolve in his heart to go and live in the Land of Israel."<sup>13</sup> This seems to be a clear and direct plea for immigration. But Emden was quick to restrict this appeal. First there are realistic restrictions: "at any rate when he finds himself able to pay the fare and is able to support himself." The context of the sermon—which was completely deleted by Dinur—reveals, however, Emden's intention. It is not immigration to the Land of Israel—actual immigration—that Emden is dealing with, but rather the beginnings of the Jewish identification with the German surroundings. We have in this sermon one of our first evidences for the process of assimilation in early eighteenth century Germany. This is what he says:

The condition of being in Exile has left their minds and they mingle among the Gentiles and learn from their deeds. They blaspheme and mingle the Holy Seed with the people of the land.

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Emden lived in Hamburg-Altona, where he had clear proofs of a new process of assimilation and of identification with non-Jews. His main intention was to develop within his congregation a consciousness of Exile as a way of mitigating the tendency of the Jewish community to identify with its surroundings. "Do not expect to remain permanently outside the Land . . . as we think we are in peace and prosperity outside the Land that we have found another Palestine and Jerusalem."<sup>14</sup> These themes of Emden's are expressed well in the second part of his prayerbook, *Shaarei Shamayim*, which was first published in 1747. He states:

Especially on the bitter day of the Ninth of Ab, who is it who mourns and sighs over the destruction of the Temple and the desolation of our Land from the depths of the heart as is proper? How many tears are spent over it? . . . It is not necessary to say that during the rest of the year no one remembers, speaks of it or even thinks of it. It is as if it were an incident which happened to us long ago. We have returned to the sin of our fathers by imitating the ways of the Gentiles from which stem all the evil that has befallen us.<sup>15</sup>

This subject is sufficiently explained. The historical reality explains the intentions of the preacher.

What are the advantages that the preacher found in Palestine and in settling there? In his answer, Emden remains completely within the traditional concepts:

1. "To be worthy to pray there before the palace of the king, for even though it is in ruins the *Shekhinah* has never moved from there." He who prays in the Land of Israel prays before the gate of heaven. This prayer is more complete, with a good chance of being accepted.

2. "Jews outside the Land are like those who worship foreign gods in ritual purity" (*Avoda Zara* 8a). This is explained by the following Talmudic statement: R. Ishmael says, "Jews outside the Land worship foreign gods in purity. How can this be? An idolator made a banquet in honor of his son and invited all the Jews of his city. Even though they eat their own food and drink their own wine and are served by their own servants, Scripture speaks of them as if they ate of idolatrous sacrifices." That is to say, Jews who live outside the Land, even though they do not serve idols are forced by their ties with their surroundings to take part in gentile feasts. Thus they are considered as if they participated in eating of the gentile sacrifices.

3. "We have forgotten the Land of Israel. We have not remem-

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bered to return to our homeland. We do not seek the city which contains our ancestors' graves." Palestine has the advantage that it is the land of the Patriarchs; one must preserve the memory that we were exiled from it.

4. "For the honor of your Creator and the good of your soul to be worthy of eternal life." In the Land of Israel it is possible to become worthy of eternal life while outside the Land, life remains temporal until the Redemption, since those who die in Palestine will be resurrected ahead of all others.

5. "To come and take shelter in the shadow of the Lord and to be covered by his wings."<sup>16</sup> In the Land of Israel there is a Divine Providence which is far more direct and powerful than that operative in other lands. Hence the advantage of living in the Land.

In all these, Emden employs traditional usages taken from the Bible, the Midrash and medieval Jewish thinkers. All the advantages he cites for Palestine are common to all periods of Jewish thought. They exhibit no trace of modern concepts. It is not astonishing that the statements of Eybeschütz and Emden did not constitute a programmatic statement on behalf of immigration to Palestine either for their contemporaries or for any later period. When they are quoted, it's by religious Zionists who search for support for their position in rabbinic literature.

### III

Religious Zionist thinkers from the very beginning were bothered by questions of modernity, and not just practically but also in their ideology. They had to define the states of Exile and Redemption under the new conditions of the nationalist revival. Their attempts are to be sharply distinguished from contemporary treatments of traditional Palestinian themes in the works of Akiva Eger, the Hatam Sofer and others. Zvi Zahavi<sup>17</sup> erroneously saw in Eger and the Hatam Sofer an approach to the modern attitude towards questions of Palestine, and a reference point in determining the origins of Zionism. To be brief, the Hatam Sofer and his disciples emphasize Palestine against the Reform movement which wished to abolish Palestinian elements in the ritual and in Jewish consciousness in general. The religious Zionists in Eastern Europe already lived in a world far removed from this

conflict. Their problem was to interweave modern concepts into a traditional world. This effort to legitimize modern values in such a climate of opinion needed textual support from previous Jewish thinkers. Although the thoughts and projects spoken of are beyond the traditional world and its problems, traditional quotations are evinced in their behalf.

Weinryb correctly observes that behind the texts cited by the rabbis Alkali and Kalischer there is hidden a world of new concepts. His conclusion, however, that Kalischer and Alkalai are budding secularists who hide this new secular world by quoting traditional texts is hard to accept. There is no effort in their works to hide things but rather an intellectual struggle of religious men to absorb new concepts in a traditional intellectual world. Those men who accepted this world as normative, not merely regarding Jewish life style but also in matters of belief, did not want to reject this world in favor of modernity, but rather desired to blend the two worlds together.

The difficulty of religious Zionists with the traditional messianic conception was not the only problem which troubled them. It was only one of the ideas and values they had to re-define. There were other concepts, no less hard to define. The settlement on the land and building up of the desolate areas caused men to neglect the study of the Torah. This led naturally to struggles between the religious Zionists and the old *yishuv* and its values. They had to give their attention to the problems of adapting the Jewish agricultural laws to the principles of modern farming. Problems also arose in theoretical matters, such as the use of Palestinian *Etrogim* and the most difficult of them all, the observance of the Sabbatical year.<sup>18</sup> Another group of problems occurred in relation to the non-religious who took part in the national revival. This was not merely a question of "association with the wicked," but also included a deeper, emotional and ideological aspect: shall the revival of the Land and the People be brought about by sinners? Does this not come under the classification of a commandment which is fulfilled through transgression, or even by association with the transgressors?

As an example of these problems, it is sufficient to read Kalischer's introduction to his *Derishat Zion*, published by the So-



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ciety for the Settlement of the Land of Israel of Frankfort-on-Oder,<sup>19</sup> and his foreword to the second edition in 1865. All the problems which later faced the religious Zionists are at least mentioned by Kalischer, although they received differing emphases in different eras. Kalischer does not desire to abolish philanthropic efforts on behalf of the Jews in Palestine, such as building dwellings for the Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem, in order to relieve the housing shortage there. Kalischer himself was ready to serve as a trustee of a committee for this purpose founded in 1858. This readiness, however, did not draw him away from his major point: "The best thing of all would be to rebuild the ruins and plant vineyards, to sow seed so that the Land will not be desolate." He does not desire to abolish the traditional reasons for settling in the Land: "to pray for its rebuilding . . . let those who pray to God with all their heart not be silent: let them seek Him." He does not abandon the ideology of the *Halukka* (the prior system of distributing charity in Palestine),

for the people who dwell there bear [our] sins—they atone for the sins of all Israel. They are the representatives of the people of Israel who "occupy themselves in the study of God's Torah day and night."

The inhabitants of Jerusalem fulfill the "commandment to dwell in the Land," and they receive Divine inspiration because the Land in general is holy and Jerusalem especially. Even the destruction of Jerusalem did not destroy this quality of the place "because of its intrinsic holiness. It is the gate of heaven forever and ever . . . even in its destruction the *shekhinah* never left there." Even those who dwelled in the Land of Israel without the intention of settling it fulfill the commandment of settling in the Land. He does not even abolish the major principle of the mutual relationship between those who personally live in the Land and support the Jewish people spiritually and those living in the Diaspora who support them materially. But on this point he does break with the traditional viewpoint in the following statement: He who supports people

for the sake of increasing the settlement of the Land of Israel which

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will give forth its harvest to the Children of Israel is considered as if he lived there.

He receives a reward in this world and also "merits the good which is stored up in the world to come." The reward of the person who supports the settlement of the Land is greater than the reward given to the person who merely supports those who dwell there. This form of argumentation moves from the traditional point of view to modern ideas and programs and vice versa. This type of argumentation is also used in the discussion of the *Halukka*. Those who dwell in the Land and benefit from the *Halukka*

are Torah scholars who are not used to hard, physical labor. Most of them came from afar to the Holy Land to bring merit to their generation. In a land which is foreign to them, how could they find an occupation or trade in a place they have never been before . . . It is enough for them to subsist on bread and water in order to be attached to the Lord's inheritance.

However, beside the defense and support of the old *yishuv* which existed on the *Halukka* and the explanation of the objective factors which prevented them from turning to productive occupations, there is a protest against the existence of this community. Kalischer does not deny the old *yishuv* its right to exist with the *Halukka* system; however, he sketches the picture of the new settlers in Palestine who "will blossom there and establish fields and vineyards." He also does not hide the fact that the new *yishuv* will have an advantage over the old even on the basis of the same principles which justify the *Halukka*. The new *yishuv* will provide a material base to support the old *yishuv*: "Salvation will appear for those who dwell in the Land of Israel." The philanthropic ties between Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora will weaken as the Palestinian Jews, working under new conditions, will no longer need the charity of their co-religionists abroad. "They will no longer hope for sustenance from Egypt (i.e. abroad), rather [God] will place for us a blessing in the midst of the Land." To the list of advantages which the new *yishuv* will have he adds one which is essentially traditional, "If you have a chance to perform a commandment, do not neglect it." The observance of the commandments in its fullest sense requires

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an effort to observe those commandments connected with the Land. This could only be realized by a Jewish settlement in Palestine which lives on the land.

Beside the value of observing the commandments fully, the new style of settling the Land is itself an important step in bringing about the final and complete Redemption. On this point, Kalischer establishes the connection between the retention of the values of the old *yishuv* and the advantages of the new *yishuv*. He does this both on the plane of theory and of values. Theoretically, he expands the meaning of Redemption to include redemption of the nation and redemption of the Land. Complete redemption must include both "Redemption of the Holy Land" as a stage prior to the final, complete redemption with its attendant miracles. "When He will give redemption to the Land in its earthiness, then will the horn of salvation sprout from the heavens above." Directing the immigration of persecuted Jews to Palestine is the same as "Redemption of Captives"—a traditional halakhic value—but these definitions spread out beyond "redeeming the desolate Land." Here he is applying traditional concepts to new conditions and with a new set of definitions.

Just as Kalischer assumed a connection in concept and value between the Messianic Redemption and the Redemption of the Land, he likewise assumed a valuational connection between the study of Torah which is unlimited in time to that study of Torah which is so limited, for the sake of values with a modern significance. These values are at times expressed in traditional terms, "where there is no food, there can be no Torah," except that in his teaching, these terms take on a practical significance. As the situation stands: "Those who have no Torah should occupy themselves with productive labor, for they do not actively occupy themselves with Torah as many Jews in Palestine today do, who have until now depended on the title of scholars in order to neglect worldly pursuits." It should be better, however, for the Torah scholars if they acted like "the men of the Talmudic period who worked on the land. Although the Torah remained primary for them and their occupation secondary, both pursuits were crowned with success." Moreover, agriculture in the Land of Israel cannot be compared with agriculture abroad. "In the Land

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of Israel, the work essentially takes on the character of a commandment. This work will enable them to devote themselves to the Torah completely, without living off other people." From here he proceeds to social criticism of the way of life of the traditional community: "It is better to support oneself. For then a man is a more truly religious person than someone else who is not self-supporting." Beside this modern interpretation of the traditional concepts and values of the messiah and the study of Torah, Kalischer adopts values not found in the traditional literature. He absorbs modern concepts and values and presents them to his readers during his homiletical discussions. The concepts of national normalization are accepted by non-Jewish society and, according to him, should be accepted by the Jews as well:

in that this will also redound to our credit in the eyes of the nations. They will say that the Children of Israel are also men who have the spirit to seek and renew the inheritance of their ancestors, the desolate and despised Holy Land. They will populate the wastelands and make the desert fruitful. This is their glory. Why do the people of Italy and other countries give up their lives for their fatherland? How much more should we sacrifice for this land, which is called Holy by all the world? How can we stand from afar like men without a soul?

It is worthwhile to note that Kalischer's ideas found a niche in religious Zionism from the 1860s onward. We find, for example, in the bylaws of the group called "Working the Soil and Redeeming the Land,"<sup>20</sup> founded in 1876, which was the original force behind the founding of Petah Tikvah, Kalischer's thoughts expressed throughout.

Why shall the portion of Jacob be less than that of all the other peoples on earth? It is shameful for us to despair of attaining the inheritance of Israel especially at this auspicious time in which all the nations and their rulers are willing to support us.

The Emancipation of Western-European Jews, the change in Jewish status in Palestine from the 1840s and more especially from the 1870s, symbolized by the abolition of the poll-tax, the increasing protection of Jews by foreign consuls and the per-

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mission given to foreigners to buy land—all give proof of the reality of the Zionist hopes: "To befriend the soil and to satisfy the Land, that is to say to pursue agriculture in the Holy Land." The actual, operative meaning of the laws of the Jubilee year, "in all the Land you possess you will give redemption to the land," becomes "to redeem my Land from those who hold it." They arrived at the evaluation that their era was "the right time to redeem the Land." It was also the "right time" to realize the full observance of the Halakhah, "To fulfill the commandments dealing with the Land. Thus the Torah will be magnified and glorious because many more commandments will be practiced." The signs of the redemption which is coming nigh were seen already in the matter of "building many houses and purchasing many fields," the founding of new neighborhoods outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem and the purchase of land in Palestine by Jews. These ideas recur with added emphasis in the "Proclamation to the Diaspora" which Y. D. Frumkin, editor of the *Havazelet*, wrote to the Jews of Russia after the pogroms and which was adopted by the "Society of the Founders of the Settlement,"<sup>21</sup> the second group which joined to found Petah Tikvah.

#### IV

In the pre-Zionist period, the problem of the relationship with the non-observant Jews who were to join in the new settlement of the Land was not acute. It was still irrelevant to take sides on the issue of non-religious people planning to settle in Palestine. Nonetheless, the problem crept into the hypothetical arguments Kalischer had with the leaders of German Orthodoxy, Hirsch and Hildesheimer, and also in the founding charter of the Petah Tikvah which aimed at calming the fears of those Jerusalemites who were worried about the possibility. There was one response to these doubts:

This entire society will conduct its affairs in accordance with the Torah and the Halakhah as our teachers and sages will instruct us. Anyone who resists this may be expelled from the society.

Thus the proclamation of the members of "Working the Soil and

Redeeming the Land.”

When Hibbat-Zion was established, the issue became central because of the new *aliyah* and the settlement of the Land by non-observant Jews. The controversies surrounding the settlers in Gadera in the years 1886-1888 and the Sabbatical year of 1888-1889 intensified the problem.<sup>22</sup>

With the founding of the Odessa Committee in 1890, it was clear that even the leadership of the movement was passing into the hands of the non-religious. As a result of these developments, the leaders of religious Zionism had to formulate a position on the legitimacy of those “freethinkers” who settled in the Land and those who ran the movement in the Diaspora. Mohilever and Berlin, the leaders of the religious Zionists in the proto-Zionist period, who in the 1880s decided that the solution to the problem of “freethinkers” in the movement would be achieved by throwing the settlers of Gadera off their land and replacing them with observant Jews, understood by the beginning of the 1890s that they needed to formulate a position which would allow for the presence of the non-religious in the leadership of the Zionist movement both in the Diaspora and in Palestine. The previous position endangered the unity of the movement and the hopes for its survival. Mohilever, after his mission to Palestine as the head of the delegation from the Odessa Committee in 1890, formulated such a position, one which was to have far-reaching consequences for traditional Judaism.

Tosefta (*Avoda-Zara* 85) cited in Tractate *Ketubot* (110b) states:

Let a person always live in the Land of Israel, even in a city whose majority are idolators, and let him not live outside the Land even in a city whose majority is Jewish. Everyone who lives in the Land of Israel is considered as one who has a god and those who dwell outside the Land are considered as if they have no god.

Mohilever interpreted this Tosefta as meaning “that a person should always live in the Land of Israel” in a city whose majority are idolators, i.e. where he has thrown off from himself the yoke of Torah and commandments, and let him not live outside the Land, even though in so doing he observes the Torah and the

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commandments completely.<sup>23</sup> With these words, Mohilever expressed the moral superiority of a Jew who lives in Palestine and does not observe the commandments over a Jew who lives in the Diaspora and fulfills all the commandments. In so doing he did not merely introduce a modern idea into the Tosefta; he stood the traditional concept on its head. A Jew who lives in the Land of Israel and is not religious does *not* desecrate the holiness of the Land, does *not* render those who cooperate with him in the building of the Land like those who consort with the wicked, but he is considered preferable to a Jew who lives in the Diaspora and fulfills the entire Torah!

To strengthen his position by the use of traditional sources, he quotes the statement of the Tosefta *Avoda Zara*: "Settling in the Land of Israel is considered equal to all the commandments of the Torah" and accepts its literal meaning that settling in the Land of Israel equals all the other commandments. He repeated this idea when he stated:

The Holy One, blessed be He, would rather have his children live in His Land, even though they do not observe the Torah properly than have them live outside the Land and observe the Torah as is proper.

This radical position did not force Mohilever into the conclusions which logically followed, and it certainly did not find supporters among his traditionalist constituency. Furthermore, this position transformed him into an uncompromising Zionist, despite the news which reached him concerning the secularization which was bound together with the Zionist movement, and which endangered the entire Orthodox community. This also came at a time when his colleagues in the leadership of the Orthodox camp drew their own conclusions from the new ideals of the Zionist movement in the 1890s and withdrew from it.

Mohilever even put aside the basic principle in the relationship of Torah-observant Jews with those who left off the religious observances when the latter joined themselves to the work of national revival. This relationship involved understanding the background of those Jews who were not religious in order to support a moderate position: "Even the greatest enemy of the new *yishuv* cannot say that in the Holy Land these people are

any worse than they were outside the Land." To this he added the hope that the settlement of the Land of Israel will cause those Jews who take part in it to return to the observance of the Torah.

Mohilever was not alone in his position. In a collection of rabbinical opinions favoring Zionism which A. Y. Slutzky, one of the editors of *ha-Melits*, collected in 1891 under the title *Shivat Zion*,<sup>24</sup> among the first signs of the Orthodox secession from the movement are found many statements which prophesied in Mohilever's spirit. The most prominent personalities represented here were Rabbi Y. Y. Reines of Lida and Rabbi Mordecai Eliasberg of Boisk. Later on, Rabbi Reines was to lead religious Zionism from the beginnings of political Zionism until the First World War.

Eliasberg himself brought about this tolerant position on the part of the religious members of the movement towards the non-religious. It was an outlook which saw the Orthodox society, as embodied in the Diaspora, as defective in the qualities and values which make up a "complete Jew" — "religious holiness" together with the "wisdom of the secular world."<sup>25</sup> In the current situation which, unlike that prevailing before the Destruction of the Temple, the Jew is divided between those two loyalties, "completeness" means uniting the two elements so that one will represent "holiness" and the other "wisdom." This "wisdom" does not include merely the scholarly disciplines or the natural sciences, but also the life style called *Derekh Erets*. Combined together in one movement, these things will embody the "complete Jew." This combining of the values of different sorts of Jews in order to achieve a higher synthesis, even though one of the elements in the mix has freed itself from the obligations which all Israel took upon themselves at Sinai, would in the future be developed by Rabbi A. I. Kook, one of the leaders of religious Zionism in the period after World War I.<sup>26</sup>

Accepting the legitimacy as Jews of those Zionists who were not religious caused Eliasberg to suggest a Zionist leadership based upon parity between the religious and non-religious elements. On this basis, he also came out with the proposal not to force the traditional way of life on the settlers. On the other hand, he demanded of the inhabitants of Gadera that they ob-



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serve the commandments out of respect for the feelings of the Orthodox and out of fear lest they damage the movement's image in Orthodox circles. This ambivalence toward the freethinkers in the Zionist movement characterizes Zionist thought to this day. They were prepared to allow for extenuating circumstances in their working relationship with non-religious Zionists. They were prepared to deal with them for the present with tolerance and forgiveness. But *a priori* they never recognized the legitimacy of "irreligion" in the Zionist movement. Even if they recognized the value for the Jewish national revival of non-observant Jews, they never wanted to recognize the non-religious life style as a permanent phenomenon and they were prepared to use all the means at their disposal to change the situation, even when there was little hope that they would actually achieve their goals.

Rabbi Y. Y. Reines, who was occupied with questions of tradition and modernity even before the beginnings of the Zionist movement, gave systematic expression to these concepts. It is noteworthy that the alliance of religious Jews in Eastern Europe with the Zionists was cautious at first but with a generally positive attitude to the modern world, even though this attitude was inadequate to deal with the events starting from the mid-1890s. To many religious Jews who became Zionists up to the mid-1890s, it was clear that connected with their call to their community to join the movement was a certain call for modernization in their way of life, economy, and their relationship with their surroundings. It meant the end of the Exile and of the traditional explanation of Exile.

Reines based his system on the positions which were already discussed by R. Yehuda Halevi in Spain in the first half of the 12th century on the mystical connection between the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, and the Torah of Israel. Exile is not only a disadvantage to the Jewish people in the political and social spheres; it also signifies a deficiency in the wholeness of the religion. There is a natural harmony between the three factors — Land, People, and Torah. Only when all these factors combine together can Judaism function completely and normally. Here we have a criticism of the *Galut* as embodied in the tradition and its exponents: "For all the good and healthy qualities

can only exist and endure among farmers and not among merchants and peddlers.”<sup>27</sup> Reines concluded that the estrangement between many Jews and the Jewish religious tradition in its Diasporic manifestation is a function of the separation between it and the Land of Israel. The Zionist movement, therefore, did not come merely to defend and insure the physical and material existence of the Jewish nation, it could also be considered as leading to a return to a natural form of traditional Judaism. Zionism did not come merely to solve the “Jewish Problem” but also the problem of Judaism: “It is our hope that the movement will bring with it a healing, both for the body and for the soul.” It is clear that Reines accepted the criticism of the Maskelim concerning Jewish means of livelihood and the distorted Jewish social structure. The practical result of Jewish settlement in Palestine was to be the social normalization of Jewish society. This could only happen in a territory with which the Jewish soul has intimate contact. Jewish agricultural settlement in Russia failed because the Jew was estranged from the soil of Russia. This would not happen in the Land of Israel, since the Jew has a natural and spontaneous inclination for it. Reines was deeply afraid that the turning of the stream of Jewish emigration to America would in the end lead to the loss of the emigrant’s Jewish identity, given the objective factors and conditions facilitating such a flight from Jewish identification. For him, living in Russia—despite the suffering and persecution—was better than living un-Jewishly in America. He supported the Uganda proposal, which Herzl presented to the Sixth Zionist Congress after the Kishinev Pogroms, since Uganda was defined as a “refuge for the night” for the suffering Jews of Russia. He was not willing to consider America as such a refuge. Reines blamed the anti-Zionists, and the religious among them in particular, for their opposition which led to the weakening of the movement and to the continued flow of Eastern European Jewish immigration westward and not to Palestine.

With regard to the position of the non-religious in the movement, Reines’ arguments were similar to those of Mohilever, Eliasberg and Berlin before him. Their position, as we have stated, emerged in the late 1880s and early 1890s, and it is dif-

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difficult to trace who influenced whom on this question. Moreover, Reines lived to a much later date than these others, so that the opportunity was given him to prove in actual practice that the growing and overwhelming non-religious element in the movement did not move him from his original position. Even when he saw that his hopes that the non-religious Jewish youth, in returning to the Land, would return to the Torah as well were not fulfilled, Reines did not let this fact interfere with his conception of the idea and the tasks of Zionism. Even after the adoption of the "Cultural" program which Nahum Sokolov proposed to the 10th Zionist Congress in 1911 against the wishes of Mizrahi, a decision which led to a split in Mizrahi leadership and the founding of *Agudat Yisrael* (1912), Reines remained loyal to the movement.

Religious Zionist thought saw in the recognition by Jews of their nationality a step in the return to the Judaism of the Torah and its commandments. It never predicted any time limit for this process, and it still hopes for and expects the fulfillment of its visions.

### NOTES

1. See, for example, L. Snyder, *The Dynamics of Nationalism*, London, 1964, pp. 299-304. For denial of such recognition see F. Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics*, Oxford, 1944, pp. 147-148. For objective discussion of the matter see: *Nationalism—A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, New York, 1966, pp. 163-169 (First edition: Oxford, 1939).

2. Dov Weinryb, "The Foundations of Zionism and its History," *Tarbits*, Vol. 8, pp. 71-73. He lists them as follows: productivization, immigration, territorial concentration, normalization, nationalism, redemption, social justice, religion, Erets Yisrael, culture and language.

3. Zaev Jawitz, *Ha-Mizrah*, Krakow, 1903, pp. 16-17. See also *Kol-Korei*, Ha Mizrahi, Lida, 1902.

4. Yosef Salmon, "The Attitude of the Haredic Leadership towards Zionism, 1898-1900," *Eshel Baer Sheva*, 1976.

5. Ben-Zion Dinaburg, *Sefer Ha-Zionut*, Vol. I, Book 1, Tel-Aviv, 1938.

6. Ben-Zion Dinur, *BeMifneh Ha-Dorot*, Jerusalem 1955, p. 62.

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7. Ben-Zion Dinur, *Yisrael Ba-Gola*, Vol. I, second edition, Jerusalem, 1958, p. 46. In this version Dinur revised his point of view drastically.
8. Dinaburg, *Sefer Ha-Zionut*, pp. 18, 19, 20, 28-29.
9. Jonathan Eybeschütz, *Yearot Devash*, Vol. I, Karlsruhe, 1779; Vol. II, Karlsruhe, 1782.
10. Jacob Emden, *Amudei Shamayim*, Altuna, 1744 and *Shaarei Shamayim*, Altuna, 1747.
11. Jonathan Eybeschütz, *Yearot Devash*, Vol. II, Sulzbach, 1799 (second edition), p. 62.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Jacob Emden, *Amudei Shamayim*, Koretz, 1808, pp. 52-53.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Jacob Emden, *Shaarei Shamayim*, Koretz, 1788, pp. 139, 140-144. In this context he also discussed the necessity of studying Hebrew.
16. Emden, *Amudei Shamayim* (1808 edition), pp. 51-60.
17. Zvi Y. Zahavi, *Me'ha-Hatam Sofer v'ad Herzl*, Jerusalem 1967.
18. Yosef Salmon, "The Relations between Haredim and Maskilim in the Hibat-Zion Movement during the 1880s," *HaZionut*, Vol. V, to be published shortly.
19. Zvi Hirsh Kalischer, *Derishat Zion*, Luck, 1862.
20. *Ketavim leToledot Hibat-Zion*, editor A. Droyanoff, Vol. III, Tel-Aviv, 1931, no. 1109.
21. *Ibid.*, no. 1113.
22. Salmon, "The Relations between the Haredim and Maskilim in the Hibat-Zion Movement during the 1880s."
23. Shmuel Mohiliver, "Matrat Nesiati LeArtzenu HaKedosah," in *Shivat Zion*, A. J. Slutsky, Vol. I, Warsaw, 1891, p. 7.
24. *Ibid.*, Vol. I and II.
25. Letter from Eliasberg to Lilienblum (1888) in *Ketavim LeToledot Hibat-Zion*, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1925, no. 835, and Letter from Eliasberg to Pinsker (1887), Vol. III, no. 1319. See also: Eliasberg, Mordecai, *Shevil haZahav*, Warsaw, 1897, pp. xxvii-xxciii, 16, 61, 31-32, 76-77.
26. Zvi Yaron, *Mishnato shel HaRav Kuk*, Jerusalem, 1974.
27. Moshe Reines, *Netzah Yisrael*, Krakow, 1890, pp. 25-49.