



Biography (Wikipedia)



Shlomo Goren (Hebrew: שלמה גורן (February 3, 1917 – October 29, 1994), was an Orthodox Religious Zionist rabbi in Israel, a Talmudic scholar and foremost authority on Jewish law. He founded and served as the first head of the Military Rabbinate of the Israel Defense Forces and subsequently as the third Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1973 to 1983, after which he established a yeshiva in Jerusalem, which he headed until his death.

He served in the Israel Defense Forces during three wars, wrote several award-winning books on Jewish law, and was appointed Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv in 1968



Symbolism

1. Toronto Torah, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

In 1956, a Jew visited Rabbi Goren and told him that he had had a dream. He was instructed to travel to Turkey to buy the horn of a specific type of ram to make a shofar. He was then to use this to make a large shofar for Rabbi Goren to blow on the top of Har Sinai. Rabbi Goren insisted, against the man's wishes to pay him handsomely for the shofar, considering the expense of traveling to Turkey to acquire the horn. At the time, this was a fantastic dream, as Israel had no control over the Sinai desert. However, soon after this, Israel conquered the Sinai desert during the Kadesh campaign. When Rabbi Goren heard, despite the fact that he had no authorization, he traveled with his jeep to Jebel Musa and climbed the mountain. He records that he had to climb about 3,300 steps to reach the top of the mountain, a height of 2285 meters in elevation. It was difficult, and he was crawling by time he reached the top. However, he reached the top to blow the shofar and fulfill the dream.

Rabbi Goren also decided that he wanted to write a Sefer Torah on Mount Sinai. In 1967, he again ascended without authorization and wrote the first letters of a sefer Torah. He returned there again to complete the scroll. Pictures of Rabbi Goren writing the Torah can be seen here: <http://idfarchives.blogger.co.il/211919/>.

Both of these incidents are part of a pattern in Rabbi Goren's life, on taking symbolism seriously, and performing acts that captured the biblical proportions of the events occurring in the life in the young State of Israel. Writing a Torah where the Torah may have been given, and blowing a shofar, the sound of which was also heard during the giving of the Torah on that same mountain, were representative of this approach.

Names

2. Vayikra Rabbah 32

Rabbi Huna stated in the name of Bar Kappara: Israel were redeemed from Egypt on account of four things; because they did not change their names, they did not change their language, they did not go tale-bearing, and none of them was found to have been immoral. 'They did not change their name', having gone down as Reuben and Simeon, and having come up as Reuben and Simeon. They did not call Reuben 'Rufus' nor Judah 'Leon', nor Joseph 'Lestes', nor Benjamin 'Alexander'.

3. Wikipedia: Hebraization of Surnames

The Hebraization of surnames (also Hebraicization (Hebrew: עבריות, Ivrut, "Hebraization") is the act of adopting a Hebrew surname in exchange for their diaspora names. For many diaspora Jews who migrated to the Land of Israel, taking a Hebrew surname was a way to erase remnants of their diaspora experience and to assimilate into a new shared identity as Palestinian Jews (Jewish residents of Ottoman Palestine and Mandatory Palestine) and later as Israeli Jews (Jewish citizens of the independent State of Israel.) This

phenomenon was especially common among Ashkenazi Jews, because many such families only acquired permanent surnames (rather than patronyms) when surnames were made compulsory by the November 12, 1787 decree by the Habsburg emperor Joseph II...

4. History

David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, was committed to the use of the Hebrew language (he changed his surname from Grün to Ben-Gurion). He tried to convince as many people to change their surnames into "real" Hebrew ones...**Ben-Gurion, in an order to the Israel Defense Forces soldiers, wrote, "It is desirable that every commanding officer (from Squadron Commander to Chief of Staff) should change his surname, whether German, English, Slavic, French or foreign in general, to a Hebrew surname, in order to be a role model for his soldiers. The Israel Defense Forces must be Hebrew in spirit, vision, and in all internal and external expressions."**

A binding order of the same issue was issued to the officials of the state in 1950, and particularly to those who represented the State abroad. A "Committee for Hebrew Names" was established to supervise the implementation of the order, whose task was to assist and advise the choice of a Hebrew name...

5. Supporters and opponents

All rabbinic authorities encourage hebraizing first names (VaYikra Rabba 32, and Kor'ei Sh'mo, pp. 173–181), and some actively encourage last names, as well (Rabbi Shlomo Aviner (Resp. She'elat Shlomo VIII, 67-68), and even did so themselves: among them: Rabbis Menashe HaKatan (Klein), Maharam Schick, Shlomo Goren (Goronchick), Shaul Yisraeli (Israelite), Moshe Zvi Neria (Menkin), Shlomo Aviner (Langenauer).

6. Opponents : Moses Calvary in Between Sowing and Harvest, p. 339

... Our names are part—a significant part—of our history. Bearers of historical names are still alive and among us; the names of figures who mark our history—names like Sasportas or Benbenisti, Abrabanel or Don Yehia, Rappaport or Eibeschitz—there is no reason to delete the chronicle of our national life. Let us preserve the faith of our fathers also in our revival. Do not betray our memories by radical action; and the text does not only relate to the famous: the variety in our names is a sign of our colorful history, a two-thousand year-old history, whose traces cannot be wiped out light-handedly.

7. Religious Life During the Holocaust and After, An Interview with Rabbi Yehuda Amital

<http://etzion.org.il/en/religious-life-during-holocaust-and-after-o>

After the Holocaust you changed your name from “Klein” to “Amital.” What was behind that decision?

My name was Klein. In Hungary, it was a very common Jewish name. It doesn't mean anything; now my name has more meaning.

There's a verse that says, "The remnant of Yaakov shall be in the midst of many peoples like dew (tal) from the Lord, like showers upon the grass, that hopes not in man and waits not for the sons of men" (Mikha 5:6). I felt that this verse described our situation during the War of Independence. We were alone; we fought almost alone against the whole world. I looked for a name – "I shall be like dew for Israel" (Hoshea 14:6).

8. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner <http://bit.ly/2FbQZ4t>

Question: Regarding Hebraicizing a family name – is this something that is merely permitted, or is it a proper, needed, and important as part of the return to Israel and the separation from the Exile and the like? Should this be done even if the other brothers will not change their family name, and is it permitted to do this if the parents oppose?

Answer: There is a benefit to Hebraicizing a name so that we will have Jewish names...[T]here is certainly a value to a Jewish name, and not a non-Jewish name, but not a commandment or obligation. Rather, it is righteous trait which is pushed aside for something important. However, that which the other brothers are not changing the name, that makes no difference.

Unity

9. The Incident of the Two Cooks [see Dr. Tzvi Tzameret appendix to *With Might and Strength*, the autobiography of Rabbi Shlomo Goren]

- 2 Religious cooks (33rd Battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade) refused to cook on Shabbat, July 31, 1948

- Convicted for insubordination, and heads shaved. Sent to military prison for a week, and when they appealed it was extended to 3 months.
- Rabbi Maimon resigned as Religious Affairs Minister – such an army is unfit to be a Jewish army.
- Protests in Bnei Brak, Ramat Gan, and Tel Aviv.
- Led to statement by Staff Maj. Gen. Yaakov Dori that the Military Rabbinate would address these kinds of issues.

10. **Separate Units or Integrated Units?** (as recorded by R. Goren, trans. in Tzameret article)

- Secular Aharon Sising of Mapam: “ He was ready to put all the religious soldiers in separate companies, platoons, battalions, and divisions, and to give them everything they wanted, to let them pray all day, every day, all week long, to let them eat cholent all week long, and do whatever they wanted – on the condition that they let the non-religious soldiers do whatever they wanted.”
- Religious parties: “All the religious cabinet ministers had voiced their uncompromising demand that the military order be issued, obligating the army to assign religious soldiers to religious units – so they could maintain the lifestyle in which they were raised, and could observe Shabbat, the Holidays, *kashrut*, and everything else.”
- Rabbi Goren: “**What would the ramifications be of the religious soldiers being segregated in religious units? The result would be that the entire army wouldn’t observe religious precepts, wouldn’t eat kosher food, wouldn’t observe Shabbat and Holidays, wouldn’t have any synagogues. Only the few, special units that would be defined as religious have strictly kosher food, observe all the Shabbat laws, and have synagogues. Now that we had won the right to establish our own state, now that we had built the IDF, we had the right to demand that the entire army behave like a Jewish army.**”

11. **R. Goren remembers this moment:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yokBb4ENFs>

- a. He adds that there could not be two armies, a religious and secular one.
- b. Soldiers should be divided by skill in fighting, not religious outlook.

12. **Ben Gurion**

We have one nation, one army, one state, and we cannot split the army based on outlook!

13. **Why Rav Goren Matters: The Legacy of the Langers, Elli Fischer** <http://bit.ly/2zJCDVw> **Status Quo VS. Halakhic State**

In 1947, David Ben-Gurion reached an agreement, generally known “Status Quo” arrangement, with leaders of the Haredi Agudat Yisrael faction that would become the basis for religion-state relations in Israel. In exchange for Haredi willingness to present a unified front for the UN, Ben-Gurion made four concessions. Two of the concessions – educational autonomy and availability of kosher food in all government kitchens – accommodate halakhic observance without compelling it. A third concession, the Jewish Sabbath as the national day of rest, constrains citizens’ activity on Saturdays but does not compel it in any fundamental way. The fourth—that marriage and divorce would be controlled by religious (in context, this meant Orthodox) Jews—indeed limits citizens’ freedom to choose who and how to marry (as any marriage regime must, by definition) by subjecting it to the dictates of rabbinic law. In other words, the Jewish state would be particularly accommodating and respectful of Jewish observance, but with the exception of marriage and divorce, it would not be governed by *Halakha*.

14. **ibid**

Next, *Halakha* would have to be substantially revised in order to seamlessly integrate with the governing of the Jewish state. To that end, Rabbi Goren would offer unprecedented halakhic rulings, arguing that the Jewish state is a *sui generis* situation in which prior accepted rulings do not apply. For instance, though *Halakha* long forbade autopsies on Jewish corpses, Rabbi Goren permitted them on the grounds that:

It is inconceivable that the Jewish state would base its health system, which is vital for the nation and the state, on gentile corpses... It is inconceivable that we cannot find a halakhic way to maintain a high level of modern medicine by conducting autopsies on corpses of our own, as is done throughout the world.

15. **Rabbi Goren, Torat HaRefuah page 235**

Regarding the great rule of the laws of piku'ach nefesh, established by the two "golden pipes", i.e., the Noda Biyehuda and the Chatam Sofer, that it is only considered piku'ach nefesh, when there is a sick person before us, and not when it is possible that a problem of piku'ach nefesh will arise in the future. This is the hinge upon which our difficult question revolves. It seems that this rule is only valid in the cases and questions presented to the Noda Biyehuda and the Chatam Sofer, where the problem of the health of the nation in general was not a factor... But in our case, when the state and the nation are responsible for the continuity of medical service in Israel, and for the health of the people living in the country, and we know from the outset that in another few years we will need a certain number of doctors of high caliber, in order to ensure the health of the people, and if we do not maintain medical schools, the country will be left without doctors, and it is clear to us that without autopsies performed in medical schools we will not be able to produce doctors worthy of that name - this is called that the sick person is before us, since the Jewish state is responsible for the health of the population and must plan its services for the long term.

16. In the Video above, Ben Gurion praised R. Goren for recognizing that halachah could not always function (the same way?) in the modern state.

17. R. Goren in Speech in 5/9/1966 with Ben Gurion and Dr. Nachum Goldman

It is clear that we need Torah leaders who will have an nationalistic approach to political questions and a positive approach to the historical turn of the Jewish people that happened with the establishment of the State... The eternity of the Torah lies in the space for maneuvering and the possibilities open to its guardians, scholars, and those who fulfill it. There is an expression in the Talmud Yerushalmi: "If the Torah had been given clear cut, it would have had no leg to stand on, so that the Torah could be expounded in 49 ways to render something impure and 49 ways to render it pure." In other words, if the Torah were given as fixed as a code, "do this and don't do that", it would not have been possible to stand on our feet and live according to it. Rather it was given in a flexible way, with 49 ways to render something impure and 49 ways to render it pure, 49 ways to obligate and 49 ways to exonerate. Each generation has its own innovations in Torah, but all this is only within the framework of the Torah, within the framework of the halachah.

Tanach

18. 1 Shmuel 31:3-4

The battle raged around Saul, and some of the archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers. Saul said to his arms-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, so that the uncircumcised may not run me through and make sport of me." But his arms-bearer, in his great awe, refused; whereupon Saul grasped the sword and fell upon it.

19. Based on this and Masada, R. Goren issued his controversial position, encouraging soldiers to commit suicide rather than be captured. <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/mahanaim/gvurat-2.htm>, under limited circumstances (they will face torture, humiliation, etc.)

20. Ben Gurion, while not religious, wanted to return to the Tanach: "**Our generation is not acquainted with the Bible, the greatest masterpiece of the Hebrew people up to this very day.**" Hence, Tanach study is part of the general education in Israel.