



The Problem

1. Genesis 9:25

And he said: Cursed is Canaan! A slave of slaves, he shall be to his brethren.

2. Professor Salo Wittmeyer Baron, *Economic History of the Jews*, pg. 270-274

Jews engaged in the slave trade – although they never played a prominent role in it – from the early Middle Ages to the early modern period....

Until 1730 the Dutch West India Company maintained a monopoly on the importation of slaves into all the Dutch colonies in the Americas, but Jews appear to have been among the major retailers of slaves in Dutch Brazil (1630-1654), because Jews possessed ready money and were willing to trade slaves for sugar. The bylaws of the Recife and Mauricia congregations (1648) included an *imposta* (Jewish tax) of 5 soldos for each slave which a Brazilian Jew purchased from the West Indies Company....

Although Jews in Philadelphia and New York City were active in the early abolition movement, Jewish merchants, auctioneers and commission agents in the Southern states continued to buy and sell slaves until the end of the Civil War.

3. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Book of Commandments, Prohibition 51

The 51st mitzvah is that He warned us not to settle idolaters in our land, lest we learn from their heresy, Exodus 23:33 says, "They shall not dwell in your land, lest they cause you to sin against Me." If a non-Jew wishes to live in our land, we may not permit this until he agrees not to worship idols; then he may live there...

4. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 20a, commenting on Deuteronomy 7:2

"Do not show them favour [*chen*]" – Do not give them a camp [*chanayah*] in the land.

Approaches

5. Deuteronomy 9:5

Not due to your righteousness and the straightness of your heart do you come to take their land, but due to the wickedness of these nations does your G-d take them from before you...

6. Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog (20th century Israel), *זכויות המיעוטים לפי ההלכה*, Techumin 2 (1981) pp. 169-179

What should we do? To tell the nations: We cannot accept this condition, because our sacred Torah prohibits a Jewish government from allowing Christians, and certainly pagans, to dwell in our land, and further, it prohibits us from allowing their worship in our land, and it prohibits us from allowing them to acquire land? I cannot imagine finding a Rabbi in Israel with a brain and straight intellect who would think we should respond with this, meaning that this is the Torah's duty for us. Even if we would allow that accepting a State with such a condition would violate a prohibition in upholding that condition, even still I would say that the transgression would be overridden by concern for saving the nation of Israel, noting our nation's position in the world...

7. Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog (20th century Israel), *זכויות המיעוטים לפי ההלכה*, Techumin 2 (1981) pp. 169-179

The reason for these commands is explicit in the Torah, "lest they cause you to sin," so that we will not be influenced by them and their worship. Who would not admit that there is a greater threat of influence from the nations upon the Jews when Jews live under their hand, whether in exile or in Israel, than when Jews do not live under their hand?

8. *Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's Response to the Letter Banning Sale of Homes to Gentiles in Israel* (Fischer tr.)

<http://kolharav.blogspot.ca/2010/12/rabbi-aharon-lichtensteins-response-to.html>

[A]ny position or opinion that could have been relied upon to moderate the stance taken in the letter simply does not exist. There is no mention of Ra'avad's position that limits the prohibition to the seven aboriginal nations of Canaan. For some reason, the opinion of the Tosafists—that if the gentile is willing to pay a higher price than a Jew for the property, there is no prohibition against selling it him—has been ignored. At the same time, the letter never addresses the position

among the Rishonim [early authorities – MT], based on Bava Batra 21a, that the prohibition against leasing is limited to craftsmen who wish to set up shop in the neighborhood—indicating that they were concerned about the neighbors fleeing, not about the sanctity of the land and all it entails. The opinion of Ramban and his disciples, that the prohibition of *lo techanem* does not apply to transactions rooted in the grantor's interests—which admittedly relates to the granting of a gift or a favor, but may also be applicable to the granting of a tract of land—directly contradicts the position expressed in the letter.

9. Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog (20th century Israel), *זכויות המיעוטים לפי ההלכה*, Techumin 2 (1981) pp. 169-179
These commands are communal commands, binding not each individual but the governing body, the Jewish government in whatever form it takes, which is empowered to fulfill them. It was set, from the start, only for a Jewish nation which would conquer the land and receive sovereignty on its own...

10. Tosafot (12th-13th century Western Europe), Bechorot 2b **שמה**
Even though they mention the name of Heaven and they mean 'something else', this is not intent for idolatry. They refer to the Creator of Heaven and Earth. They do join the Name of Heaven with something else, but ... Noachides are not instructed regarding this...

11. Rabbi Menachem Meiri (13th century France) to Avodah Zarah 20a
Anyone who is of the nations who are governed by the ways of religion and acknowledge Divinity, without a doubt one may do this, and so is appropriate, even if he is not an acquaintance.

12. Letter by Rabbi Chaim Druckman, Rabbi Tzefaniah Drori, Rabbi Yaakov Ariel, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner – and Rabbi Shemuel Eliyahu, Jan. 2011
We recant from the implication of the letter which was published recently, which sounded as though one should discriminate negatively against non-Jewish citizens. It is not so. The State of Israel must relate to all of her citizens with equal rights. This approach is anchored in the Torah of Israel and in the laws of the land.

13. Joshua 9:5
And they wore worn out and patched shoes on their feet, and their clothing was worn out, and all of their food was dry and moldy.

14. Samuel II 21:1
And there was a famine in David's day for three consecutive years, David sought a Divine audience. And G-d said, "[This is] because of Saul and the house of bloodshed, for he killed the Givonim."

Topic 4: The Election of Prime Minister Menachem Begin (1977)

15. William Claiborne, *Begin Finds New Political Base Among Israel's Sephardic Jews*, Washington Post 6/29/81
Long before the candidate arrives, the young Oriental Jews who gather almost nightly for festive campaign rallies start the haunting, singsong chant that has come to symbolize the remarkable political renaissance of Menachem Begin while serving as the anthem of a quiet revolution within Israel's largest ethnic bloc.

Although private political polls and newspaper samplings show Labor Party candidate Shimon Peres pulling from behind in the last few days of the campaign to within reach of Begin for Tuesday's election, the prime minister is clearly the favorite of the noisy summer crowd.

"Be-gin, Be-gin, Be-gin," chant the swarthy immigrants or children of immigrants from Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Iran and across North Africa, the Middle East and West Asia, where Jews have abandoned their ancestral homes to emigrate to Israel.

Some strip off their perspiration-soaked shirts in the sultry air as the crowd surges forward against police barriers in anticipation of the arrival of the object of their admiration. Then, as a pale man in a dark suit and thick glasses from Brest Litovsk, Poland, mounts the speaker's platform, 30,000 people chant: "Be-gin, Be-gin, Melech Yisrael!" (Begin, Begin, King of Israel!).

16. Yehuda Avner, *The Prime Ministers*, pp. 348-349

Scores gathered eagerly around a television commentator who had thrust his microphone into their faces...

"So tell us, Marcel, what did you do in Casablanca?"

"I was a bookkeeper. That's an occupation of *kavod*. Now I'm a waiter. In Morocco, only Arabs are waiters. In Casablanca we lived in a big house with a courtyard. Now, I, my wife, my three children, my mother, my father – all of us live in four ramshackle rooms. Our *kavod* has been trampled upon. The Ashkenazi Labor bosses did that. And now Menachem Begin is giving us our *kavod* back."

17. Letter to the Editor of the New York Times, *New Palestine Party*, Dec. 4 1948

Among the most disturbing political phenomena of our time is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the "Freedom Party" (Tnuat HaHerut), a political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties. It was formed out of the membership and following of the former Irgun Zvai Leumi, a terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organization in Palestine. The current visit of Menachen [sic] Begin, leader of this party, to the United States is obviously calculated to give the impression of American support for his party in the coming Israeli elections, and to cement political ties with conservative Zionist elements in the United States...

Signatories include: Hannah Arendt and Albert Einstein

18. Menachem Begin, during a Knesset debate on German reparations, Jan. 7 1952

<https://israeled.org/menachem-begin-on-whether-to-accept-reparations-from-germany/>

In the discussion that followed the delivery of that memorandum I tried to share with all the members of the Knesset the emotional experience that I experienced when I read the following:

"There will be no progress in restoring Germany's dignity among the family of nations as long as the issue of reparations to the Jewish People is not settled."

These words cannot be subjected to any interpretation. They are entirely clear. They state that if the reparations matters from Germany to the Jews are arranged, then, according to the opinion of the Government of the State of Israel, it will be possible, very possible, to restore the dignity of Germany as a nation among the nations of the world...

Mr. Ben-Gurion you have scolded in the past a member of the Knesset that went to Berlin and you said [to him]: "You travelled to Nazi Berlin". Is Berlin a Nazi city and Bonn not? The fact that Western Germany is a democracy nowadays does not exonerate it from its Nazi past. You may say that [Chancellor] Adenauer's Government is a new German Government, not a Nazi one; you should know who Adenauer is. I ask: In what concentration camp was he imprisoned when Hitler ruled Germany, what prison was he thrown into as a result of the bloody regime of the Nazis? I ask: Who are Mr. Adenauer's assistants? The answer: Half of the employees at Adenauer's Foreign Office are members of the Nazi Party. And with these people you are going to negotiate...

The gentiles not only hated us, not only burned us, and were not just jealous of us – but they have mainly despised us. And in this generation of ours that we call the last of bondage and first of redemption – in this generation that we have been privileged to gain back our dignity, in which we emerged from slavery to freedom – you are ready, for few millions of contaminated dollars and for impure goods, to deprive us of dignity that we have earned.

19. *Tales Of Begin (And Other Prime Ministers): A Conversation with Ambassador Yehuda Avner*, The Jewish Press, Nov. 10 2010 <http://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/interviews-and-profiles/tales-of-begin-and-other-prime-ministers-a-conversation-with-ambassador-yehuda-avner/2010/11/10/>

Interviewer: [M]any people blame Begin for being the first to accept the notion of "land for peace," by signing the Camp David accords in 1978.

Yehuda Avner: I think that is a gross misreading of the truth. The peace treaty with Egypt in Begin's view was of momentous strategic importance because Egypt is the largest and most powerful and influential of all the Arab countries. There never was a war against us – and I'm quoting Begin now – which Egypt did not launch and there never was a war that ended without Egypt being the first to pull out. In other words, the key to war and peace of all the Arab states against Israel was always Egypt. And he was determined to break that cycle, and the fact is that he did make peace with Egypt and that cycle has been broken. But "land for peace" is now applied to the West Bank as well.

20. Yehuda Avner, *The Prime Ministers*, pp. 470-471

A week later, on 28 November, in an address to the Knesset, the prime minister summarized the historic visit... and explained why eight o'clock had been deliberately chosen as the hour for the Egyptian president's arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport. He said: "President Sadat indicated he wished to come to us on Saturday evening. I decided that an appropriate hour would be eight o'clock, well after the termination of the Shabbat. I decided on this hour in order that there would be no Shabbat desecration. Also, I wanted the whole world to know that ours is a Jewish state which honors the Sabbath day. I read again those eternal biblical verses: 'Honor the Sabbath day to keep it holy,' and was again deeply moved by their meaning. These words echo one of the most sanctified ideas in the history of mankind, and they remind us that once upon a time we were all slaves in Egypt. Mr. Speaker: We respect the Muslim day of rest - Friday. We respect the Christian day of rest - Sunday. We ask all nations to respect our day of rest - Shabbat. They will do so only if we respect it ourselves."

PM Begin's Platform

21. Menachem Begin, *Basic Outlines of our Life-Worldview and National Outlook* (1951)

It is possible to prove that this outlook on life, clarified here in its basic outlines in previous sections, is an original Jewish outlook. In my saying this, I am not claiming that the good of our outlook on life is solely and exclusively its Jewish source for, without doubt, we must also learn from other nations, to learn – not duplicate. But it is a fact that our outlook is nursed on the sources of Jewish thought, from the strengthening wellsprings of our national tradition, from the roots of the nation's soul, as it was molded in an amazing war for existence as the messenger for those near and far. Are the ideas of a person's freedom and social reform not embodied in the basic fundamentals of Israel's Torah, in a verse which embodies a complete philosophy: "*because man was created in the image of G-d*"?

22. Two links

- A longer discussion www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/784674/
- The text of the 1951 Herut platform www.begincenter.org.il/uploads/Our%20World%20View.pdf