



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

1. 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

2. 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*"?

3. 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

4. Individual freedom - Page 11-12

Man must be free in his thoughts and in his belief; he must be free in giving expression to his thoughts, whether orally or in writing... The group of spiritual freedoms is inextricably tied with the group of political freedoms. The individual person must be free to assemble with other people, to express the belief that is common to them, in order to realize, or try to realize, their opinions. Man must be free to dispatch his representative emissaries to the various branches of government; he must be free to demand their resignations and replacement with other representative emissaries....

In our day, "economic freedoms" represent an inseparable part of the concept "human freedom" if not to completely remove from this concept [of human freedom] its real content. A person must be free not only in his way of life and occupations, but also in his place of residence and his place of work... But "freedom of movement", "freedom of initiative" and "freedom of creativity" still do not exhaust the concept of human freedom in the economic sphere. A person – any person – must also be free from an absence of vital commodities, that without which he cannot make a living as a cultured person.

5. Societal reform – Page 20

[T]he positive content of the idea of societal reform is the *ceaseless coming together of the social extremes*, coming together not in the "up to down" direction, that necessarily brings general descent and withdrawal, but in the "down to up" direction that brings ascent and progress. Just as it is possible "to bring groups together" by providing education to those that lack it, rather than taking away from everyone the possibility of acquiring wisdom and understanding, so one needs to bring together the extremities of the economic sphere and to ensure for those of meager means a constant benefit of conditions for their existence...

[T]he ensured provision of basic needs must be fixed as "the starting point" for every person. Ze'ev Jabotinsky defined these needs as housing, food, clothing, health care, and schooling (in Hebrew, his terms all began with the letter "Mem": *maon, mazon, malbush, mirpa, melamed*) and he notated them as the five "Mems".

6. The vision of the Prophets – Page 17

Israel's prophets and seers, from whom we have inherited the aspiration for justice that guide our repose, elevated visions that are very difficult to realize. There were those that introduced the vision of social justice, to "repair the world in the Kingdom of G-d" and those that highlighted the vision of world government: "and everyone will make one association". That gave mankind the vision of world peace: "and nation will not raise sword against nation". However, they did not delude their generation or the coming generations; they admitted that the realization will be difficult and saw it only "*at the end of days*". They made their vision a sort of "guiding star" by whose light man wandering in darkness will proceed and find his path and even reach his objective. Their vision is a vision of truth, because even beyond the historical horizon, beyond "the end of days", they did not promise to abolish any difference. Indeed, "at the end of days" nation will not raise sword against nation, but even then there will be many "nations"; and while "at the end of days" devouring hatred will disappear for "the wolf will lie down with the lamb", but even then the differences between one species and another will not be eliminated. In other words - if one expands the symbolic meaning of the metaphor – the differences between a person and his fellow will not disappear with the desired disappearance of the hatred between them.

7. Supremacy of law – Pages 26-27

I propose not being satisfied with "independence of the judiciary" but rather to engrave on our flag the *supremacy of the law*... The supremacy of the law will thereby be expressed in that a panel of independent judges will be granted not only the power to determine, in the case of a complaint, whether a rule or administrative statute of the institutions of the executive regime is legal or just, but also the power to decide, in the case of a complaint, whether the *laws* that are made by the house of representatives... abide by the *fundamental* law or contradict the rights of the citizen that are stated in the law.

8. In order to create this reality – Page 31

Israel's historical desires, from the day of its exile from its land, have found expression in the prayer "renew our days as of old", indeed the prayer enfolds within it the two national aspirations: liberation of the homeland and concentration of the nation once again on its land. Of course, being interdependent, the two historic aspirations of our people who have fashioned its character from generation to generation, are in fact one aspiration. Concentration of the nation is not possible without liberation of the homeland; and, every stage of liberation of the homeland would be impossible without some stage of concentration of the nation on its land. The movement that carries both these aspirations, which are "the common elements" in national consciousness, over its classes, diasporas and generations, is the national movement in Israel. In addition, only a movement that carries both these aspirations in their entirety is a national movement. Any Jewish movement that has become estranged or is estranged from one of them – the estrangement from one of the aspirations is inexorably an estrangement from both – it is not a national movement, whatever its "Zionist" phraseology be as it may.

9. This reality must be created in Israel – Page 35

From that day hidden beyond the historical horizon, and until this day, a process of thousands of years of existence, formation, persecution and resistance, we have stood against tremendous empires. We have fought, we have fallen, we have risen, we have been struck blows, we have been enslaved, we have rebelled, we have been oppressed, we have been redeemed, we have established, we have been exiled, we have been scattered to the four corners of the world, we have been persecuted from behind, we have been burned on the pyre, we have been nearly trampled out; but never did we concede one grain of our land. There is no example and no model in all of human history for this faith and for this preservation of faith that all the known winds of oppression and slavery in history have dashed into pieces. But who would deny that only by merit of this irregular faith, unnatural, imaginary, "almost inhuman" have we remained on the stage, despite the disappearance, without trace, of other great and mighty empires? Who would further deny that "unrealistic" faith can be quite *realistic in its facts*? Who would deny that only by merit of this "faith in fact" have we returned, after global wanderings, to the starting point, and we are again a nation?

But indeed, while we became a nation, there are rulers, heretics in Israel, that are prepared to sign *in the name of the nation of Israel*, that Jerusalem and Hebron and Bethlehem, Jericho and Nablus and all "the good broad land" that spreads forward, east beyond the Jordan, are not ours, but are the foreigner's, the invader, the occupier – in perpetuity. Is there a political-historical crime that compares with this crime? What is the crime of "appeasement" of Chamberlain in Munich compared to the crime, that the heads of the government were about to commit at the expense of the tradition of the patriarchs and the future of the children?

The Return of Ethiopian Jewry

10. The Book of Eldad haDani

[The tribe of Dan] dedicated themselves to battle Yeravam. Gd saw their intent was good, and He saved them from bloodshed. The entire tribe of Dan announced, "Flee, sons of Dan, and leave Israel and go to Egypt!" But their leaders took counsel and said, "But the Torah of Moses says, 'You shall not return this way again,' how shall we descend to Egypt?" ... Gd gave them a good spirit, and the Danites ascended to Nachal Kishon and traveled by camel and camped until they reached Ethiopia. They found a good and rich land, a spacious land, a land of gardens and orchards and fields and vineyards. And the Ethiopians would not let them live with them, until they made a covenant with them, for they feared them. The Ethiopians paid tribute to the Danites...

11. Ibn Ezra, extended commentary to Shemot 2:22

This Tziporah was the *ishah kushit* mentioned later in the Torah. Do not trust that which is recorded in the Book of Chronicles of Moses. I'll provide a principle: Any book not recorded by the prophets, or by the sages via received tradition, is not reliable, and may contain items which contradict accurate information. This is true for Sefer Zerubavel, Sefer Eldad haDani and the like.

12. Kings II 17:5-6

And the Assyrian king ascended throughout the land, and he ascended to Shomron and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hosheia, the Assyrian king conquered Shomron and exiled Yisrael to Assyria, and he settled them in Chalach, Chavor, Nehar Gozan and the cities of Medea.

13. Deuteronomy 30:2-3

And you shall return to HaShem your Gd...and Gd will bring back your captives and have mercy upon you, and gather you from among all of the nations to which Gd had scattered you.

14. Isaiah 11:11-12

And on that day Gd will again send forth His hand to acquire the remnant of His nation from Assyria, from Egypt, from Patros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Chamat and from the islands of the sea. And He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the scattered Israelites, and the dispersed of Judea He shall collect from the four corners of the land.

15. Talmud, Erchin 33a

Rabbi Yochanan said: Jeremiah returned them, and Josiah son of Amon reigned over them.

How do we know that they returned? Ezekiel said, "For the seller will not return to the sold item." Could Yovel have been nullified already, when the prophet testified that it would eventually be nullified? Rather, this teaches that Jeremiah brought them back...

16. Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:3

The ten tribes will not return, as Deuteronomy 29 says, "And He cast them to another land, like this day" – just as this day goes and does not return, so they go and do not return, per Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Eliezer said: Just as the day grows dark and then is illuminated, so the ten tribes, for whom it has become dark, will eventually have illumination.

17. D. Seeman, *Ethnographers, Rabbis and Jewish Epistemology: The Case of the Ethiopian Jews*, Tradition 25:4 1991
Eldad describes an independent Jewish kingdom in the mountains of Ethiopia whose customs resemble both Rabbanite and Karaite usage, and who lack the Talmud. The report of unfamiliar halakhot aroused the sages of Kayrawan (North

Africa) to question Eldad's authenticity, but Rav Tzemach Gaon of Sura defended the book, pointing out that before the close of the Talmudic period, individual rabbis' rulings often differed from those which would become normative at a later date... Subsequent Jewish travellers such as Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century continued referring to independent Jews in the land of Kush, as did the acclaimed "Letters of Prester John," written by a Christian.

18. Rabbi J. David Bleich, *Black Jews: A Halakhic Perspective*, Tradition 15 (1972)

In 1864 Rabbi Ezriel Hildesheimer, a prominent rabbinic spokesman, issued a call for action in order to counteract missionary activity among the Falashas. This was followed by a fact-finding mission undertaken in 1867 by the noted orientalist and Semitic scholar, Joseph Halévy.

19. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Letter, Igrot Ra"ayah II #432 (1912)

Regarding a schoolteacher for the Falashas, I think it would be possible to find a teacher of the type necessary in Israel, but before any practical proposal one must, of course, know specifically what sort of knowledge the teacher must have expertise in...