
Rav Kook and Rav Sonnenfeld

Great Jewish Rivalries



Selections from Rav Kook

1) "Now, if at a certain time there should be found an arousal within the Jewish People whereby people will speak only of the spirit of the nation and will attempt to negate the spirit of God from all their assertions and from their revolved source which is their national spirit and disregard the Torah, what should the righteous of such a generation do? To rebel against the spirit of the nation, even verbally, to reject that which asserts? That is something impossible. The spirit of the Lord and the spirit of the Jewish People are one. Rather, therefore, the righteous must work hard to reveal the light and holiness which lies in the national spirit, the light of God, which lies thing the light of Israel"

Orot

2) As long as the nation has had no need to correct it's practical approach to life while in exile the impurities in understanding of Divinity – in all and faith and everything connected - will do no visible damage. However when the time arises in which the national renaissance is necessary and the horn of salvation must be revealed, then those impurities which existed within us impede any outbursts of holiness. It is impossible for the nation to bond together and achieve in its life it's strength in implantation of its order with other than clear thinking in deeds that precede from the purity of your knowledge of God with the utmost clarity. This is the reason that great negative power is aroused in the time of the footsteps of the Messiah, this is the reason that atheists exists with great impudence, even though it is terrible to see such awful things, so much truth, good qualities, laws and customs that were treasured by Jews swept away in a uprooted by flood of negativity. Despite this, eventually all will grow in purity and strength in supernatural holiness from the firm pure exulted kernel which no negativity can affect. Then when all is broken, the light will shine as the new light upon Zion and with a wondrous greatness that is above every conception that the poor powers of souls exhausted materially and spiritually by the long and debilitating exile could never conceive.

Orot

3) One cannot altogether dismiss the success of the Zionists. Though this is pervaded by many deficiencies, there must also be here a spirit of the Divine, to build souls for the Holy Land. Through all does the Holy One, praised be He, accomplish his mission. Who can discern the mysterious working of God, to fathom why there should be among those who serve this caused people who are so thoroughly tainted by heresy?

Igeret, letter #473

4) As long as Orthodoxy maintains stubbornly: No, we will only study Gemarah and the Codes, but not Aggadah, not morals, not Kabbalah, not research, not worldly knowledge, not Chassidut, it impoverishes itself, and all the strategies it adopts in self defense, without embracing the true life-giving therapy, the inner light of the Torah, will prove no efficacy. In the face of all this, i will continue my battle against all who have risen against me from all sides

Igrot, letter #602

SOULS OF CHAOS

The conventional pattern of living, based on propriety, on the requisites of good character and conformity to law—this corresponds to the way of the world of order. Every rebellion against this, whether inspired by levity or by the stirring of a higher spirit, reflects the world of chaos. But there is a vast difference in the particular expressions of the world of chaos, whether they incline to the right or the left [positive or negative in motivation]. The great idealists seek an order so noble, so firm and pure, beyond what may be found in the world of reality, and thus they destroy what has been fashioned in conformity to the norms of the world. The best among them also know how to rebuild the world that has thus been destroyed, but those of lesser stature, who have been touched only slightly by the inclination to idealism—they are only destroyers, and they are rooted in the realm of chaos, on its lowest level.

The souls inspired by the realm of chaos are greater than the souls whose affinity is with the established order. They are very great; they seek too much from existence, what is beyond their own faculties to assimilate. They seek a very great light. They cannot bear what is limited, whatever is confined within a prescribed measure. They descended from their divine abode in accordance with the nature of existence to generate new life; they soared on high like a flame and were thrust down. Their endless striving knows no bounds; they robe themselves in various forms, aspiring constantly to what is beyond the measure of the possible. They aspire and they fall, realizing that they are confined in rules, in limiting conditions that forbid expansion toward the unlimited horizons, and they fall in sorrow, in despair, in anger, and anger leads

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to—wickedness, defiance, destruction and every other evil. Their unrest does not cease—they are represented by the impudent in our generation, wicked men who are dedicated to high principles, those who transgress conventional norms defiantly rather than because of some lust. Their souls are of very high stature; they are illumined by the light that shines from the realm of chaos. They chose destruction and they are engaged in destroying, the world is undermined by them, and they with it. But the essence of their aspiration is a dimension of holiness, that which in souls content with measured progress would yield the vigor of life.

The souls inspired by a destructive zeal reveal themselves especially at the end of days, before the great cataclysm that precedes the emergence of a new and more wondrous level of existence, when the old boundaries expand, just prior to the birth of a norm above the existing norms. In times of redemption insolence is on the increase. A fierce storm rages, more breaches appear, acts of insolence mount continually because they can find no satisfaction in the beneficence offered by the limited light. It does not satisfy all their yearnings, nor does it unravel for them the mystery of existence. They rebel against everything, including also the dimension of the good that could lead them to a great peace and help them rise to great heights. They rebel and they are indignant, they break and they discard; they seek their nourishment in alien pastures, embracing alien ideals and desecrating everything hallowed, but without finding peace.

These passionate souls reveal their strength so that no fence can hold them back; and the weaklings of the established order, who are guided by balance and propriety, are too terrified to tolerate them. Their mood is expressed in Isaiah (33:14): "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with those who destroy the world?" But in truth there is no need to be terrified. Only sinners, those weak in spirit and hypocrites, are frightened and seized

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by terror. Truly heroic spirits know that this force is one of the phenomena needed for the perfection of the world, for strengthening the power of the nation, of man and of the world. Initially this force represents the realm of the chaotic, but in the end it will be taken from the wicked and turned over to the hands of the righteous who will show the truth about perfection and construction, in a great resoluteness, inspired by clear perception and a steady and undimmed sense of the practical.

These storms will bring fructifying rain, these dark clouds will pave the way for great light, as the prophet envisioned it: "And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness" (Isa. 29:18).

The Lamentation in Jerusalem

On the death of Dr. Theodor Herzl

On that day the lamentation will be great in Jerusalem,
like the lamentation of Hachadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.¹

The sages said that Jonathan ben Uzziel translated the Prophets into Aramaic and the Land of Israel trembled for an area of four hundred parasangs by four hundred parasangs.² The reason for the disturbance was that contained in the Prophets are things which are not explicit but veiled, namely this verse. As Rav Yosef said, "Were it not for its Aramaic translation, one would not know to what the verse refers." The sages report that Jonathan ben Uzziel stood up on his feet and declared: "It is I who revealed Your mysteries to men. He Who spoke and the world came into being knows full well that I did this neither for my honor nor for the honor of my father's house, but only that controversy not proliferate in Israel."³

We should inquire what was the veiled reference contained in this verse that was revealed by Jonathan's paraphrase. "Like the lamentation for Ahab son of Omri who was killed by Hachadrimmon son of Tahannimon in Ramot Gilead, and like the lamentation for Josiah son of Amon killed by Pharaoh Necho in the valley of Megiddo." Furthermore, how did revelation of this divine mystery prevent proliferation of controversy?

Now our sages said this lamentation will be for Messiah son of Joseph who is killed.⁴ The entire concept of two Messiahs, Messiah son of Joseph and Messiah son of David, requires explanation. Why the need for two Messiahs, when the goal is to have one man preside over the entire Jewish nation? As it says, "And David My servant shall be prince unto them forever."⁵

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The key to understanding this dichotomy lies in examining the individual human being. God created in man a body and a soul, and corresponding to them, forces that strengthen and develop the body, as well as forces that strengthen and cultivate the soul. Ultimate wholeness is achieved when the body is strong and well developed, and the soul vital and cultivated, leads all the faculties of the body in the service of the intellect, which is God's will in this world. So on the collective level of Israel, God ordained these two faculties: A faculty corresponding to the physical entity, that aspires to material improvement of the nation,⁶ and a second facet devoted to the cultivation of spirituality. By virtue of the first aspect, Israel is comparable to all the nations of the world. It is by dint of the second aspect that Israel is unique, as it says: "The Lord leads it (Israel) alone"; "Among the nations it (Israel) shall not be reckoned."⁷ It is the Torah and unique sanctity of Israel that distinguish it from the nations.

Originally, these two faculties were assigned to the two tribes destined

to rule Israel, Ephraim and Judah, which is another way of saying Joseph and Judah. "The deeds of the fathers are a sign to the sons."⁸ Just as in the beginning, Joseph was the provider sent by God to save many from starvation,⁹ who sustained Jacob and his sons materially when they came in Egypt looking for grain (so in future generations, the descendants of Joseph would develop the material side of Jewish national existence). Joseph is paradigmatic in other ways as well. Joseph was swallowed up by the nations.¹⁰ He was also fluent in seventy languages.¹¹ This last point symbolizes the contiguity between Israel and all the nations of the world. Despite this, Joseph knew the power of his holiness. It is for this reason that "Esau succumbs only to the children of Rachel (i.e. Joseph)."¹² As the adage goes, "The ax handle that falls the forest is made of wood."¹³ Judah on the other hand, symbolizes that which is distinctive about the Jewish People. "Judah became His sanctified one."¹⁴ Whereas of Joseph the Psalmist says, "Shiloh, a tent pitched among men."¹⁵

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The purpose of choosing the kingdom of David was that these two faculties be integrated, that they not cancel, but rather reinforce one another. We find an interesting comment of the Midrash regarding the person of David. David was "of ruddy complexion," just as Esau was "ruddy," the difference being that David had "handsome eyes," symbolizing that he would exercise only with the permission of the Sanhedrin (Supreme Court).¹⁷ Written large, David's kingdom should have been the collection of the material powers necessary for a great and mighty kingdom, coupled with spiritual excellence. Unfortunately, sins brought about that Israel rejected the Davidic dynasty, whereby the nation was divided in two: The ten tribes subserved under Ephraim (which is in reality Joseph), and the two tribes subserved under Judah. Were it not for this split, all would have been united under the "tree of Judah."¹⁸ The Psalmist gave expression to this vision of unity: "He will subdue peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He will choose for us our inheritance, the excellence of Jacob which He loves. Selah."¹⁹ By gathering together these two powers, both would benefit. The material would be purified and sanctified by its exposure to the unique sanctity of Israel, and the spiritual would be invigorated to enhance Israel. Eventually, the rays would light up the entire world. This will be the case in the future: "And it shall happen on that day, that the root of Jesse, who shall stand as an ensign of the peoples, to him shall nations inquire; and his resting place shall be glorious."²⁰ No longer shall there be war between two factions but rather complete peace. That is the greatest honor. But it was not to last. Our sins brought about the division of the kingdom, and these two powers that should have been united, developed each in its own way, oblivious of its companion. Due to our many sins, both of the faculties were greatly damaged.

The kingdom of Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) founded by Jeroboam, who was appointed by Solomon over the task force of Joseph in appreciation of his practical talent,²¹ turned its back on Israel's unique sanctity. "And Me you have thrown behind your back."²² This was the

source of the sin of idolatry, that developed in time into Israel's ongoing aping of the nations' negative traits. At its nadir it was said, "Ephraim is assimilated among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake readily devoured."²³

Judah, deprived of the material side that cultivates, was in need of a spiritual supplement to replace the missing material aspect. Unable to rise to the occasion, the spiritual power was also ruined. "Judah too shall stumble with them."²⁴

Even after the separation, the wound might have healed, had the two sides realized that through each has its own propensity, they might benefit one another. Judah could receive from Ephraim ways to round the nation in terms material and universal; Ephraim could imbibe from Judah the ways of holiness unique to Israel, be they Torah, character development, or prophetic ability.

The political reality made no such allowance. Were this mutual cooperation to come about, the dominant side would have been the spiritual, for it is the soul that vivifies the body. This is precisely what Jeroboam did not wish to occur. Our wise men summed it up in anecdote:

The Holy One grabbed Jeroboam by his garment and said to him, "Repent, and I and you and the son of Jesse will stroll together in the Garden of Eden."

Jeroboam asked, "Who will lead?"

The Holy One replied, "The son of Jesse will lead."

Sniffed Jeroboam, "If so, I am not interested."²⁵

God offered that together David and Jeroboam could bring the Jewish People to its goal of a nation consecrated to the Lord, God of Israel, while worthy of being a light to the nations. There would be room within the overall structure for the universalist dimension (represented by Jeroboam's kingdom). But to the question—"Who is at the helm?"—the answer must be, "The son of Jesse is at the helm." Without the recognition of the supremacy of the spiritual side—"For the portion of the Lord is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance"²⁶—heavenly forbear, Israel's destiny would be lost. Israel is the smallest among the nations, and God forbid, the most likely to disappear. Jeroboam's ego stood in the way. "If so, I am not interested." This set into motion a long chain of calamities, culminating in Israel's exile until the End of Days.

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So it came about that throughout the Exile there is a see-saw effect of these two opposing forces. At times, there is exhibited a drive toward material, worldly success that flows primarily from the foundation of Joseph and Ephraim; other times there is a stirring of the spiritual drive for observance of Torah and spiritual development, for awe and love of God.

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Since it is impossible for our nation to attain its lofty destiny other than by actualizing these two components—the universal symbolized by Joseph, and the distinctive symbolized by Judah²⁷—there arise in the nation proponents of each aspect. Those who would enhance spirituality prepare the way for Messiah son of David, whose focus is the final destiny. Truly the focus of life is spiritual attainment, except that the spiritual can only develop properly if it is accompanied by all the material acquisitions of which a full-footed nation is in need. These who redress the material, general aspects of life prepare the way for Messiah son of Joseph.²⁸

When these two forces work at cross purposes as a result of the calamity of exile, shortsightedness and disarray, these are the "birthpangs of Messiah," or to be more exact the "birthpangs of Messiahs" (plural). The Psalmist writes: "That Your enemies have defied, O Lord; that they have defiled the footsteps of Your Messiahs."²⁹ Two footsteps of two Messiahs.

Now since the major achievement of Messiah son of Joseph, which is the general advancement of mankind, is accomplished by de-emphasis of the unique Jewish form, Messiah son of Joseph cannot endure, so he is destined to be killed.³⁰

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When this happens, all will recognize the perversity of the situation. They will realize that it was wrong not to subjugate the universal dimension to the spiritual aspect which is Israel's destiny, to the kingdom of David.

"They will lament him as one laments an only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for the firstborn son."³¹ The lamentation for an only child is bereft of hope for future children. Elderly parents who have lost their only son, are totally forlorn. If the verse were to end on that note, it would spell utter doom, but the bitterness is mitigated by intellect. Intellect perceives that the nation has produced the soul of the Messiahs. The nation is not as elderly parents who have lost their only child, but rather as young parents who have lost their firstborn child. Being inexperienced at raising children, they did not attend properly to the child in its state of illness, so the child succumbed.

By the same token, the nation comes to the realization that it did not know how to make proper use of this universalist dimension, did not understand how it could contribute to Israel's unique destiny. In that way, it could have survived. The nation labored under the illusion brought on by the divisiveness of exile that these two forces are truly at odds. The result is that whoever holds up the universal side of the nation becomes unfortunately an enemy of Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments). Contrariwise, whoever focuses on the uniquely Jewish, becomes an adversary of material wellbeing. In the first scenario, the fence of Torah is broken down; in the second, the result is weakness and monotony.

After this latest experience of Messiah son of Joseph's impermanence, let us deduce that truly the two forces are not mutually antagonistic. It is time to bring it all together and to organize the nation's ways. Let every universal perfection serve as a basis for perfecting the uniquely Israeli. Let both parties—those disposed to the material and universal, and those disposed to the spiritual and particularistic—come to the same conclusion. Then the lamentation will be on both sides; both will recognize their mistake. These two forces were created to be united; once rent asunder, they were mutually injurious.

The Zionist vision manifest in our generation might best be symbolized as the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*'Yova de-Mashiah ben Yosef*). Zionism tends to universalism (as opposed to Jewish particularism). It is unequipped to realize that the development of Israel's general aspect is but the foundation for Israel's singularity. The leadership of the Zionist movement must be greatly influenced by the gifted few of the generation, the righteous and the sages of Israel. On the other hand, the ideal of Israel's national renaissance, including all the material accoutrement—which is a proper thing when joined to the spiritual goal—to date has not succeeded, and the lack of success has brought on infighting, until finally, the leader of the movement has fallen, a victim of frustration.³⁵

It behooves us to take to heart, to try to unify the "tree of Joseph" and the "tree of Judah" to rejoice in the national reawakening, and to know that this is not the end goal of Israel, but only a preparation. If this preparation will not submit to the spiritual aspect, if it will not aspire to it, then it is of no more value than the kingdom of Babilonia, "a cake readily devoured,"³⁶ because "they abandoned the source of living waters,"³⁷ and "Egypt did they call hither, to Assyria did they go."³⁸

This is the benefit to be gained by remorse over one whom we might consider the "footstep of Messiah son of Joseph" (*'Yova de-Mashiah ben Yosef*), in view of his influence in revitalizing the nation materially and generally. This power should not be abandoned despite the wantonness and hatred of Torah that results in the expulsion of God-fearing Jews from the movement. We must develop the courage to seek that any power that is of itself good be fortified, and if it is lacking spiritual perfection, let us strive to increase the light of knowledge and fear of the Lord such that it (i.e. the light) is capable of conquering a powerful life-force and of being built up through it. Then there will be fulfilled in us the prophecy, "I will grant unto Zion salvation, unto Israel My glory."³⁹

Return (*teshuvah*) must be from our side. Return will be enduring only if all the powers presently found (and possible to be found) in the nation will be vigorous, and directed to good. Then we will be a vessel for the divine will, "a crown of ornament in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God."⁴⁰



Rav Yosef, who said that he penetrated the meaning of the verse in Zechariah only through its Aramaic translation, willingly accepted upon himself to witness the "birthpangs of Messiah." When other sages said, "Let him (Messiah) come, and may I not see him," it was Rav Yosef who said, "Let him come, and may I merit to sit in the shadow of the dung of his donkey!"⁴¹

The other sages were damned by the intensity of the spiritual birthpangs that would perforce result from the pressing demands to fortify the material side that had been neglected in the course of the exile. Exile came primarily to preserve and enhance the spiritual, "to close up the transgression, and to make an end of sin."⁴²

"The shadow of the dung of his donkey." The word *hamorei* (his donkey) by a double entendre, refers to the material (*homer*). Customarily, devotion to the material affairs of the nation clouds spiritual ascent. Even so, if this movement would not be so audacious as to spread in a way unbecoming Israel, it would be easy to accept. Were it not for its extremism, the movement would not find oppressive the spirit of the Torah, and it would not attack the foundation of Torah, which is tantamount to "blinding the eye of the world."⁴³ But the "dung," the gross tendencies that are loathsome to all peoples, produce a shadow that dims the pure intellectual lights deriving from Torah.

Nonetheless, Rav Yosef was confident that eventually all these negative manifestations would surrender to the light of Torah and the knowledge of God. Rav Yosef will sit in the shadow of the dung of Messiah's donkey, in the very midst of the darkness, of the shadow, "rendering like night in the midst of the noonday."⁴⁴ Rav Yosef will light the candle of the commandment and the light of Torah, and a little light dispels much darkness. The evil will be transformed into good, the curse into blessing.

This is the import of the cryptic passage in the Zohar:

The head of the academy in the palace of Messiah said, "Whoever does not transform darkness to light and bitterness to sweetness, may not enter here."⁴⁵

The prerequisite for the generation of Messiah is the ability to utilize all forces, even the most coarse, for the sake of good and the singular sanctity with which Israel were crowned.

TRADITION

The prophet of consolation prophesied (Isaiah 60:4-5): "Lift up your eyes and look about; they have all gathered and come to you. Your sons shall be brought from afar, your daughters like babes on shoulders. As you behold, you will glow. Your heart will fear and rejoice—for the wealth of the sea shall pass on to you; the riches of the nations shall come to you."

Today's great event, the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on Mount Scopus, in such glorious ceremony and splendorous festivity, amidst a gathering of tens of thousands of our sons and daughters from all parts of the land of Israel and from all the lands in the Diaspora, is—on a reduced scale—the living fulfillment of the holy vision of this prophecy. True, not all have gathered together, and the beginning of the ingathering of the exiles is on a small scale, yet this very ingathering is a sure sign that the set time has come, and that the gates of redemption are opening before us. Our hopes are strengthened that the great day is near when all the exiles will gather together and join us, the redeemed ones joyously going up to Zion.

We note in this first step today the fulfillment of the prophet's words: "As you behold." With our own eyes we behold the wonders of the Redeemer of Israel, who has performed this great deed on our behalf. He has raised up the glory of His people among the nations of the world. He has given us a portion in Judah, and girded us with strength and spirit so that we can begin to rebuild the life of our nation, as before, in the Holy Land. We also note the fulfillment of the prophet's words: "You will glow." The glowing joy on the faces of the thousands gathered here is an expression of gratitude and esteem to such distinguished guests as Lord Balfour,⁶ the representative of the great nation that issued the Declaration; His Excellency the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel;⁷ His Excellency Lord Allenby;⁸ and the distinguished rabbis and sages whose presence graces this festive gathering. Their presence causes the souls of all those gathered here, as well as the souls of tens of thousands of our brethren from afar who will hear about the great glory of our nation on this day, to glow.

But why "fear"? Why did the prophet preface the phrase "Your heart will rejoice" with the notion of fear? When, however, we look back in retrospect at past generations, and at the spiritual and intellectual movements that have influenced us, we readily understand that the notion of fear, in conjunction with rejoicing, is appropriate.

Two tendencies characterize Jewish spirituality. One tendency is internal and entirely sacred; it serves to deepen the spirit and to

strengthen the light of Torah within. Such has been the purpose of all Torah institutions from earliest times, especially the fortresses of Israel's soul—the yeshivot. This includes all the yeshivot that ever existed, presently exist, and will exist in order to glorify Torah in its fullest sense. This spiritual tendency is fully confident and assured. “Those who love Your Torah enjoy well-being; they encounter no adversity” (Psalm 119:165). Despite such confidence, Rabbi Nehunyah ben Haqanah, upon entering the house of study, used to pray that nothing go awry with his presentation and that it not lead to error.⁹

The second tendency characterizing Jewish spirituality served not only to deepen the sacredness of Torah within, but also as a means for the propagation and absorption of ideas. It served to propagate Jewish ideas and values from the private domain of Judaism into the public arena of the universe at large. For this purpose we have been established as a light unto the nations. It also served to absorb the general knowledge derived by the collective effort of all of humanity, by adapting the good and useful aspects of general knowledge to our storehouse of a purified way of living. Ultimately, this absorption too serves as a means of a moderated propagation to the world at large. Toward the attainment of this end, the Hebrew University can serve as a great and worthy instrument.

Here, dear friends, there is room for fear. From earliest times, we have experienced the transfer of the most sublime and holy concepts from the Jewish domain to the general arena. An example of propagation was the translation of the Torah into Greek. Two very different Jewish responses to this event emerged. In the land of Israel, Jews were frightened—their world darkened.¹⁰ In contrast, Greek Jewry rejoiced.¹¹ There were also instances of absorption. Various cultural influences, such as Greek culture and other foreign cultures that Jews confronted throughout their history, penetrated into our inner being. Here too, many Jewish circles responded to absorption with fear, while other Jews rejoiced.

When we look back on the previous generations, and reckon with hindsight, we realize that neither the fear nor the rejoicing was in vain. We gained in some areas and lost in others in our confrontation with foreign cultures. This much is clear: Regarding those circles that welcomed absorption and propagation joyously, with unmitigated optimism and with no trepidation, very few of their descendants remain with us today, participating in our difficult and holy task of rebuilding our land and resuscitating our people. For the vast majority of them have assimilated among the nations; they

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found themselves caught up in the waves of the "wealth of the sea" and the "riches of the nations" that have come to us.

Only from those who resided securely in our innermost fortresses, in the tents of Torah, enmeshed in the sanctity of the law, did emerge the truly creative Jews—that great portion of our nation who are loyal to its flag—who work tirelessly to build our great edifice. Among these were many who propagated and absorbed. They exported and imported ideas and values on the spiritual highway that mediates between Israel and the nations. Their attitude, however, toward this undertaking was never one of rejoicing only. Fear accompanied their joy as they confronted the vision of the "wealth of the sea" belonging to the "riches of the nations."

Quite rightly did the prophet say: "As you behold, you will glow. Your heart will fear and rejoice—for the wealth of the sea shall pass on to you; the riches of the nations shall come to you."

But how does one overcome the fear? How do we assure the safety of the nation against the mighty stream engulfing it?

As a representative of the Jewish community, standing on this honored platform, I submit to you the reflections of many distinguished segments of the community of traditional Judaism. It must be understood that the Hebrew University by itself cannot fulfill all the educational requirements necessary for the success of our national life. We must realize that, first and foremost, it is the great Torah yeshivot, those that now exist and those to be constructed that are worthy of the name—including the Central Yeshivah which we are establishing in Jerusalem, which shall be a light unto Israel in all areas of Torah, whether halakhah, aggadah, Jewish action, or Jewish thought—that uphold the spirit of the nation and provide for its security. Moreover, the Hebrew University must maintain standards so that the name of Heaven, Israel, and the land of Israel are sanctified, and never desecrated, by it. This applies to administration, academic staff, and students alike. In particular, it is essential that academicians teaching Jewish studies, ranging from biblical study—the light of our life—to talmudic study, to Jewish history and thought, aside from their academic excellence, be personally loyal emotionally and intellectually to traditional Judaism. Only then will the fear we experience, together with the magnificent vision we behold this day, lead us to glow and rejoice in blessing.

These are our aspirations regarding the institution crowned today with the glory of Israel by the "wealth of the sea" and the "riches of the nations" that have come to us. May the prayer of Rabbi Nehunyah ben Haqanah be fulfilled in us: May my presenta-

tion not lead to error.

"Then my people shall dwell in peaceful homes, in secure dwellings, in untroubled places of rest" (Isaiah 32:18). May we witness the joy of our nation, the rebuilding of our Temple and our glory, to which the nations shall stream in order to receive Torah from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Amen.

NOTES

1. For details regarding the inauguration ceremony of the Hebrew University, see *The Hebrew University Jerusalem: Inauguration April 1, 1925*, Jerusalem, 1925. For photographs of Rav Kook at the inauguration ceremony, see *ibid.*, English section, p. 34, and cf. Eli Schiller, ed., *First Photographs of Jerusalem: The Old City*, (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1980, p. 225.
2. According to Rabbi Isaac Hutner, late Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta R. Chaim Berlin, Chaim Weizmann was able to prevail on Rav Kook to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Hebrew University by promising him that the critical study of the Hebrew Bible (à la Wellhausen) would not be included in its curriculum. The promise, much to Rav Kook's chagrin, was not honored. See Hayyim Lifshitz, *Shivhei ha-Ra'ayah*, Jerusalem, 1979, p. 198.
3. Despite his misgivings about the Hebrew University, Rav Kook advised Professor Abraham Adolf Fraenkel (d. 1965), a distinguished German mathematician and Orthodox Jew, to accept an appointment to the Hebrew University. Rav Kook explained that "whatever the drawbacks of the Hebrew University, we cannot ignore the obligation to do battle in order to assure a proper presence that will look after the interests of traditional Judaism and increase its influence. Such a goal can be realized only by the appointment of professors who are loyal to traditional Judaism." See Rabbi Moshe Y. Zuriel, ed., *Otzerot ha-Ra'ayah*, Tel Aviv, 1993, vol. 4, p. 190. On Fraenkel, see Yitzhak Raphael, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religious Zionism* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1971, vol. 4, columns 440-441.
4. After delivering the invocation, Rav Kook recited a poem which summarized the essence of his remarks. The poem is not translated here. For the original Hebrew text of Rav Kook's invocation and poem, see the volume cited above, note 1, Hebrew section, pp. 15-18; Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, ed., *Divrei ha-Rav*, Jerusalem, 1925; Rabbi Abraham Isaac Ha-Kohen Kook, *Hazon ha-Geulah*, Jerusalem, 1941, p. 266; *Ma'amarei ha-Ra'ayah*, Jerusalem, 1984, pp. 306-308; Rabbi Moshe Y. Zuriel, ed., *Otzerot ha-Ra'ayah*, Tel Aviv, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 1116-1118; and Rabbi Moshe M. Alharar, *Likevodah shel Torah*, Jerusalem, 1988, pp. 90-95. Not all of the printed editions present the full text of Rav Kook's remarks.
5. Despite the clarity of expression of Rav Kook's presentation at the Hebrew University, his denigrators insisted on misconstruing his words and claimed

Blessed is Hashem, G-d of Israel, Who has chosen us from among all the nations and given us the Torah of truth which will never depart from us. It is our very lives and our consolation from all our tribulations. Torah has been sweeter to my palate than honey! Without it, man's stay on this earth is vanity, for none of his accomplishments can be taken with him to the grave ... Man's soul is destined to leave his body behind and enter the World to Come about which our Sages teach, "In the World to Come there is neither eating nor drinking, only the righteous sitting crowned and reveling in the Divine light ..." (Talmud, *Berachos* 17a) But, due to our sins, the masses of people do not take this to heart. Instead, they trade their eternal future for ephemeral pleasures ... Though they perform *mitzvos* and good deeds, they make the most important things secondary ...

I express my boundless gratitude to G-d, Who has given me the opportunity to make my place among those who dwell in the *beit midrash* ... and has been so bountiful to me to this very day.

I was orphaned from the crown of Torah scholars, my father, of blessed memory, when I was not yet six years old and I was subjected to many hardships before the age of thirteen. It was then that I returned to my birthplace, Verbau, to study under Rabbi Mannheim and understood firsthand the dictum of our Sages, "All beginnings are difficult." Despite the difficulties, I remained there, with G-d's help, for three and a half years. Afterwards, by the grace of G-d, I came here to Pressburg, a city overflowing with G-d's Torah, home to one of the world's greatest yeshivos, whose students revel only in Torah study and fear of G-d. How unable I was to grasp all this holiness at once! How happy I am now to see my thirst for Torah quenched.

I do not know how I can demonstrate my humble appreciation to G-d. In addition to everything else, He allowed me to find favor in the eyes of kind people who have sustained me and given me a decent lodging filled with holy books. How bountiful have You been to me, O L-rd! But I have vowed not to lose sight of my goal. I will strive with all my might to make Torah alone my guiding light and not secular disciplines. May G-d never remove His kindness and goodness from me. May He grant me favor in the eyes of men and may I never be idled from my holy endeavors until the Redeemer comes to Zion. Amen.

Chaim Sonnenfeld

Source #8
A Young Genius

THE PROBLEMS of education always remained among R' Chaim's chief concerns, even after he became Rav of Jerusalem and stood at the helm of all its struggles. In Nissan 5683 (1923), R' Chaim and his *beit din* issued the following warning regarding the preservation of Jewish education:

A Chief Concern

... This warning is from the honored members of the *beit din*, *shilta*, and from the honored members of the committee who have taken upon themselves the great *mitzvah* of doing everything in their power to stand in the breach against those who have violated the ban. This ban was imposed by our earlier authorities in response to what they correctly foresaw would be the terrible consequences of tampering with the educational system. Everyone who is touched by the fear of G-d should pay heed to the aforementioned warning ... and do everything possible to save the remnant of Israel from destruction. Who knows if all the suffering that now afflicts the Holy People, may G-d have mercy on us, is not in punishment for our lack of concern for the proper education of our children. [In previous times,] the merits of our children have shielded us from the worst catastrophes, as evidenced by the teaching of the Sages that when Harnan issued his terrible decrees, Mordechai gathered the young children who studied Torah and their voices were heard in Heaven (*Esther Rabbah*).

This transgression, even through indifference and neglect, is akin to the defilement of the Temple and its holy objects wrought by offering one's children to an alien god, as it is written in the Torah regarding the idolatry of Molech: "And if the people will ignore ..." (*Leviticus* 20:34). Strengthen your resolve to return the hearts of children to their Father in Heaven, and in this merit may we be privileged to see the elevation of the honor of Torah and the salvation of Israel, both individually and collectively.

In accordance with the heartfelt prayer of one who awaits an imminent redemption,

Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld

Source #9
Jewish Education



R. MENACHEM FRIEDMAN in his article, "The Chief Rabbinate — an Insoluble Dilemma"¹ gave a concise analysis of the basic differences separating Rav Kook and R' Chaim:

The Essential Difference

... The *rabbanim* found themselves faced with a serious dilemma. The 'third wave' of immigration that began at that time consisted largely of young socialists whose attitude towards religion and its values was negative. Their lifestyle, like that of their predecessors in the 'second wave,' was blatantly secular and aroused great opposition among the *rabbanim* and in the faithful community. The *rabbanim* were faced with the nightmarish prospect that the lifestyle of the pioneers would, in the course of time, become the lifestyle which characterized the Jewish national home. The growing power and influence of the leftist parties increased their fears that Jewish society in Eretz Yisrael would be dominated in the end by a Socialist-Marxist ideology which was militantly anti-religious.

The well-established attitude of the Zionist hierarchy in Eretz Yisrael towards old *yishuv* institutions ... required the *rabbanim* — as religious leaders — to seriously question whether they could work together with them at all in building the Jewish national home. Some of the *rabbanim*, led by R' Yitzchak Yerucham Diskin and R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, decided that they had no right to confer legitimacy on a secular development of Eretz Yisrael. They called, therefore, for a separation and the establishment of

Independent religious communities.

An opposing position was adopted by Rav Kook, who developed an ideology that attempted to invest the secular lifestyle in Eretz Yisrael with religious legitimacy. Rav Kook maintained that the secularists in Eretz Yisrael occupied a religious position different from those abroad. Through their labors and sacrifices on behalf of the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael, they achieved a religious standing which in many ways surpassed that of many observant Jews.

This outlook was a complete reversal of the traditional Orthodox view, which held that the establishment of an irreligious *yishuv* in Eretz Yisrael — with practices and attitudes in many cases diametrically opposed to accepted religious norms and values — was akin to establishing an idol in the Temple or planting of an *Asherah*² in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Kook's view, however, considered this settlement to be still within the framework of the *mitzvah* of building Eretz Yisrael. In his view, those engaged in this activity — and certainly those who risked their lives for it — were destined to return completely to the true path despite their present irreligious lifestyles. This position of Rav Kook gave his followers the religious and *halachic* justification to participate in what was called 'the building of the national home,' even though the secular nature of this 'building' was assured.

Source #10
New Yishuv

Source #11
Zionism

movement and its ideals. In a letter to his brother, Shmuel, in Czechoslovakia, dated Elul, 1903, R' Chaim wrote:

I have received your letter and wish you, first of all, a *mazel tov* on the birth of your granddaughter ... May her parents be privileged to raise her to a Torah life, marriage and good deeds. In these times, this is the most important blessing.

It appears that all [of you] are excited by Zionism, but I am afraid you miss the fundamental point. Zionism without the observance of the Torah's *mitzvos* has no value. If I would be able to argue the point with you in person, you would certainly come to agree with me.

Indeed, if we would be enthusiastic about observing the *mitzvos* of the holy Torah, if we would faithfully observe Shabbos and Yomim Tovim, abide by the Torah's marriage laws, and carefully refrain from eating unkosher food -- and then yearn to fulfill the *mitzvah* of settling in our Holy Land in order to more properly fulfill the *mitzvos* -- then the bond forged [between the people and the land] would be truly powerful. It would then be

founded upon religion and it would strike roots deep enough that it would not be easily swayed or uprooted.

However, a Zionism based on nationalism, while disdaining religion and *mitzvos*, deprives itself of its very source of existence. We already lived once in this land as a separate nation with nationalistic roots, yet our departure from Torah then caused its destruction and our exile from our land.

In truth, in the thirty-one years since I have arrived here, greater changes have taken place than in the previous thousand years combined! Beyond doubt, more than one thousand Jewish buildings have been built. The expansion of the Holy City, the recent construction of magnificent buildings beyond our wildest hopes, the continuing construction of railroads, the new settlements, areas desolate for generations now verdant and alive -- is it possible not to see the hand of Divine Providence in all this? We must work at settling the land with an attitude of trust in G-d Who gave us His holy Torah. Certainly if we are faithful to it, we will merit to dwell here securely and will always find favor and mercy 'for He will command His angels, etc ...' (Psalms 91:11).