

Zionism Then and Now: The Jewish People and the Promised Land Throughout History

יום א' לפרשת בא

Young Israel of Jamaica Estates – January 9th, 2016



Part 4:

Zionism in the Modern Era: From Herzl to Netanyahu

I) MODERN ZIONISM BEFORE HERZL

(1798-1878) R. Yehudah Alkelai. Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia (then a part of the Ottoman Empire). Studied in Jerusalem where he was greatly influenced by Kabbalists. After the Damascus Affair of 1840, Alkelai began intensively promoting a movement for Jews to resettle what was then Ottoman Palestine. One of the people greatly influenced by Alkelai was Shimon Leib Herzl (1805-1879) who lived and died in Semlin eventually came to have a great influence on his grandson Theodore.



It is written in the bible: "Return, Lord, unto the tens and thousands of the families of Israel." On this verse the rabbis commented in the Talmud as follows: it proves that the Divine Presence can be felt only if there are at least two thousands and two tens of thousands of Israelites together. Yet we pray every day: "Let our eyes behold your return in mercy unto Zion." Upon whom should the Divine Presence rest? On sticks and stones? Therefore, as the first step in the redemption of our souls, we must cause at least 22,000 to return to the Holy Land. This is the necessary preparation for the descent of the Divine Presence among us; afterward, He will grant us and all Israel further signs of His favor...

I wish to attest to the pain I have always felt at the error of our ancestors, that they allowed our Holy Tongue to be so forgotten. Because of this our people was divided into seventy peoples; our one language was replaced by the seventy languages of the lands of exile. And a child requires extensive time just to translate the Torah.

The Jews should have thus gathered at the beginning of the sixth millennium, because the exile was decreed for a thousand years: "He has left me forlorn, in constant misery" (Lament. 1:13). Since the Jews did not awaken to thus come together, hard times of trouble, expulsion and extermination set in. As Rabbi Joshua wrote in Perek Helek, "But the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a king over them, whose decrees shall be as cruel as Haman's whereby Israel shall engage in repentance, and he will

(1) מנחת יהודה (פרשבורג, 1843, עמ' יג, טז):

איתא בגמרא יבמות פ' ששי תנו רבנן ובנחה יאמר שובה ה' רבבות אלפי ישראל. מלמד שאין השכינה שורה על פחות משני אלפים ושני רבבות מישראל. ואנו מתפללים בכל יום ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים. על מי ישרה שכינתו על העצים ועל האבנים. א"כ תחלה וראש לפדיון נפשנו חייבים אנו להשיב לארצנו שנים ועשרים אלף. כדי שהקב"ה ישרה שכינתו עליהם. ואח"כ יראה סימן טוב לנו ולכל ישראל...

מעיד אני עלי שכל ימי נצטערתי על דבר זה ולא טוב עשו אבותינו שכל כך השכיחו את לשוננו הקדושה. ונעשה אומתנו לשבעים אומות ולשוננו לשבעים לשונות אל כל המקומות אשר נפוצו בו. וצריך כמה ימים ושנים עד שהילד יודע לתרגם את התורה... ועי"פ הטבע כמעט שהיא דבר נמנע ובטל שלשוננו הקדושה תשוב למכונה. אבל כיון שיעד הנביא יואל ג'. והיה אחרי כן אשפוך רוחי על כל בשר ונבאו בניכם ובנותיכם. ונביא הוא לשון דבור כמו נבי ספתים. ויעד הנביא כי הבנים והבנות ינבאו ויבינו לדבר לשון זה ובשפה ברורה ובנעימה. ולכן אין להתיאש כי אם להשתדל ברוב עוז ותעצומות להקים את לשוננו ולהעמידה. ולעשות אותה עיקר. והקב"ה ישפוך רוחו על המלמדים ועל התלמידים על הבנים ועל הבנות וילמדו לדבר צחות.

(2) מנחת יהודה (פרשבורג, 1843, עמ' יג, טז):

והאסיפה הזאת היו חייבים ישראל לעשות בתחילת האלף הששי כי גזרת הגלות היתה אלף שנים נתנני שוממה כל היום דוה. וכיון שלא התעוררו ישראל אל הקיבוץ הזה התתילו הצרות והמאורעות הרעות והגירושין והשמדות. זה שכי' ר' יהודה בפרק חלק: הקב"ה מעמיד להם מלך שגזרותיו קשות כהמן ומחזירן למוטב. ר"ל אם לא יעשו תשובה לארץ

thus bring them back to the right path" (Sanh. 97b); meaning, that if they do not return to the land of Israel, the Holy One, blessed be He, will set up a king over them whose decrees shall be cruel and harsh, and thus cause them to return against their will and not to their advantage, "for by a strong hand he shall let them go and by a strong hand he shall drive them from his land," naked and lacking all, as happened to our ancestors who were expelled from Spain and the like...

ישראל הקב"ה מעמיד להם מלך שגזרותיו קשות ורעות ומחזירן בעל כרחם שלא בטובתם כי ביד חזקה ישלחם וביד חזקה יגרשם מארצו בעירום ובחוסר כל כמו שאירע לאבותינו מגורשי ספרד ודומיהן...

(1795-1874) R. Zvi Hirsch Kalischer. Born in Lissa (then in the Prussian province of Posen). He was a student of R. Yaakov of Lissa and R. Akiva Eiger of Posen. He married and moved to Thorn (in what is now northern Poland) and served as "acting rabbi" for 40 years without remuneration while he was supported by his wife who ran a business. He advocated for the widespread purchase of land from the Ottoman Empire in Eretz Yisrael, the opening of an agricultural school and the formation of a Jewish military to protect Jewish settlement in EY. Although a prolific author, the work he is most well known for is his *De'rishat Tziyon* (Thorn, 1862) in which he argues that redemption must be achieved naturally necessitating a movement of immigration. Argued at length for the re-institution of sacrifices in Jerusalem.



(3) דרישת ציון (טאהרן, 1862)

The redemption of Israel, for which we long, is not to be imagined as a sudden miracle. The Almighty, blessed be His Name, will not suddenly descend from on high and command His people to go forth. He will not send the Messiah from heaven in a twinkling of an eye, to sound the great trumpet for the scattered of Israel and gather them into Jerusalem. He will not surround the Holy City with a wall of fire or cause the Holy Temple to descend from the heavens. The bliss and the miracles that were promised by His servant, the prophets, will certainly come to pass – everything will be fulfilled – but we will not run in terror and flight, for the Redemption of Israel will come by slow degrees and the ray of deliverance will shine forth gradually...

גאולת ישראל אשר אנחנו הוכים לה: אל יחשוב יחשוב כי פתאום ירד השם יתברך משמים ארץ, לאמר לעמו צאו. או ישלח משיחו כרגע מן שמים לתקוע בשופר גדול על נדחי ישראל ויקבצם ירושלימה ויעשה לה חומת אש ומקדש אל ממרומים תרד, כאשר הבטיח על ידי עבדיו הנביאים לא כן קורא המשכיל, ודאי כל יעודי הנביאים יתקיימו באחרית הימים, ולא במנוסה נלך ולא בחפזון יום א' כי אם מעט מעט תבא גאולת ישראל, לאט לאט תצמיח קרן ישועה...

I would suggest that an organization be established to encourage settlement in the Holy Land, for the purpose of purchasing and cultivating farms and vineyards. Such a program would appear as a ray of deliverance to those now living in the Land in poverty and famine. The pittance that is gathered from the entire Jewish world for their support is not enough to satisfy their hunger; indeed, in Jerusalem, the city which should be a source of blessing and well-being, many pious and saintly people are fainting of hunger in the streets.

זאת העצה היעוצה... חברה יישוב ארץ ישראל תצמיח להקים שמה נחלת שדה וכרם. ומזה תופיע קרן ישועה להדריס בארץ ישראל אשר המה בחוסר כל וברעבון עצום, ואין הקומץ המתקבץ מכל הארצות משביע את האריות המחכים לטרף, והמה עטופים ברע, וכמה צדיקי עולם יתעלפו בחוצות ירושלים, ועולליהם נדדו ללחם אינו.

(1812-1875) Moses Hess. Born in Bonn (in what is now western Germany), he was a contemporary and friend of Karl Marx and was an early theorist of communism and socialism. Although completely assimilated into non-Jewish society (he was married to a catholic woman), Hess witnessed rising anti-semitism in Germany in the early 1860s which prompted him to re-assert his Jewish identity. In doing so, he published *Rome and Jerusalem* (Leipzig, 1862) in which he blended his theories of socialism with the need for Jewish nationalism.



4) Rome and Jerusalem (Leipzig, 1862)

A sentiment which I believed I had suppressed beyond recall is alive once again. It is the thought of my nationality, which is inseparably connected with my ancestral heritage, with the Holy Land and the Eternal City, the birthplace of the belief in the divine unity of life and of the hope for the ultimate brotherhood of all men...

Twenty years ago, when news came to Europe from Damascus of an absurd accusation against the Jews, a feeling of agony, as bitter as it was justified, was evoked in the hearts of all Jews. Once again we were face to face with the ignorance and credulity of the mobs of Asia and Europe, which are as ready today as they have been for the past two-thousand years to believe any calumny directed against the Jews. I was painfully reminded, for the first time in many years, that I belong to an unfortunate, maligned, despised, and dispersed people – but one that the world has not succeeded in destroying. At that time, though I was still greatly estranged from Judaism, I wanted to cry out in anguish in expression of my Jewish patriotism, but this emotion was immediately superseded by the greater pain which was evoked in me by the suffering of the proletariat of Europe...

In those countries which form a dividing line between the Occident and the Orient, namely, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Austria, and Turkey, there live millions of our brethren who earnestly believe in the restoration of the Jewish kingdom and pray for it fervently in their daily services. These Jews have preserved, by their belief in Jewish nationality, the very kernel

of Judaism in a more faithful manner than have our Occidental Jews. The latter have endeavored to revive much of our religion, but not the great hope which created our faith and preserved it through all storms of time, namely, the hope of the restoration of Jewish nationality. To those millions of my brethren I turn and exclaim, "Carry thy standard high, oh my people!" The Jewish nation still preserves the fruitful seed of life, which, like the grains of corn found in the graves of Egyptian mummies, though buried for thousands of years, have never lost their power of productivity. The moment the rigid form in which it is enclosed is shattered, the seed, placed in the fertile soil of the present environment and given air and light, will strike root and prosper.

The rigid forms of orthodoxy, the existence of which was justified before the century of rebirth, will naturally, through the productive power of the national idea and the historical cult, relax and become fertile. It is only with the national rebirth that the religious genius of the Jews, like the giant of legend touching mother earth, will be endowed with new strength and again be re-inspired with the prophetic spirit. No aspirant for enlightenment, not even a Mendelssohn, has so far succeeded in crushing the hard shell with which Rabbinism has encrusted Judaism without, at the same time, destroying the national ideal in its innermost essence...

What we have to do at present for the regeneration of the Jewish nation is, first, to keep alive the hope of the political rebirth of our people, and next, to reawaken that hope where it slumbers. When political conditions in the Orient shape themselves so as to permit the organization of a beginning of the restoration of a Jewish State, this beginning will express itself in the founding of Jewish colonies in the land of their ancestors, to which enterprise France will undoubtedly lend a hand...

A great calling is reserved for you: to be a living channel of communication between three continents. **You should be the bearers of civilization to the primitive people of Asia, and the teachers of the European sciences to which your race has contributed so much.** You should be the mediators between Europe and far Asia, open the roads that lead to India and China—those unknown regions which must ultimately be thrown open to civilization. You will come to the land of your fathers crowned with the crown of age-long martyrdom, and there, finally, you will be completely healed from all your ills! Your capital will again bring the wide stretches of barren land under cultivation; your labor and industry will once more turn the ancient soil into fruitful valleys, reclaim the flat lands from the encroaching sands of the desert, and the world will again pay its homage to the oldest of peoples.

(1858-1922) Eliezer Ben-Yehudah. Born Eliezer Perlman in Luzhki (in what is now northern Belarus), he was given a traditional Jewish education until age 15 when he broke from his family's tradition and entered a Russian scientific high school. Movements of Russian nationalism in the 1870s inspired Ben-Yehudah to develop thoughts of a secular Jewish political nationalism. He resolved to move to then Ottoman Palestine which he successfully did in 1881. Although not a great political or ideological thinker, Ben-Yehudah is most famous for being the first Jewish home in the Land of Israel for millennia in which the only spoken language was Hebrew. A hater of Yiddish, Ladino or any other languages that substituted for Hebrew as the language of the Jews, Ben-Yehudah published a multi-volume dictionary of the Hebrew language which served as a basis for its re-awakening as a national language in the decades that followed.



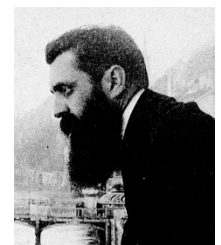
5) Letter to Peretz Smolenskin, the Editor of HaShachar (Dec. 2, 1880)

For if we may indeed still hope for redemption, if we have not yet despaired of becoming a 'living nation,' **our thinking must be guided by the vision of what this people will become, once its renaissance is achieved.** Today we may be moribund, but tomorrow we will surely awaken to life; today we may be in a strange land, but tomorrow we will dwell in the land of our fathers; **today we may be speaking alien tongues, but tomorrow we shall speak Hebrew. This is the meaning of the hope of the redemption and I know no other; our hope is for redemption, in its clear and literal sense, not for some veiled and oversubtle substitute.** If the hope for such a redemption inspires you, as well – if you, too, envisage such a future for our people – why did you come to the conclusion that the Hebrew language is dead, unusable for all the arts and sciences, and suitable only for "matters pertaining to Israel's heritage?"



II) HERZL AND THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS

(1860-1904) Theodore Herzl. Born in Budapest, Hungary, Herzl was the son of German-speaking assimilated Jews. In 1878, when Herzl was a teenager, his family moved to Vienna (then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) where he studied law and eventually moved on to a career as a journalist and a playwright. He eventually moved to Paris as the foreign correspondent for a prominent Austrian newspaper. In 1894, Herzl was covering the trial of Alfred Dreyfus, a young artillery officer in the French army who was tried and convicted for passing French military secrets to the German government. Dreyfus was innocent (and eventually exonerated and reinstated into the French army with a promotion), but that did not stop his conviction, and the trial ignited what Herzl saw as a latent antisemitism in the French populace.



He witnessed one rally where French citizens enthusiastically chanted “Mort aux Juifs” (“Death to the Jews”). Additional influences on Herzl was the rise to political power in Vienna in 1895 of Karl Lueger, a vocal anti-semitic (and acknowledged inspiration for Adolf Hitler’s antisemitism decades later). In late 1895, Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* (*The State of the Jews*) where he argued for Jewish land purchase alongside political diplomacy aimed at international recognition of an independent state for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland of Palestine. Herzl differed from past efforts in that his main goal was to seek recognition and approval from the Ottoman Empire so as to avoid any conflict or resentment over mass Jewish immigration. Herzl spent the next 8 years obsessively devoted to the ideas he put forth. In doing so, he organized the World Zionist Organization and convened the first six meetings of the World Zionist Congress (1897-1904). He travelled all over Europe in the hope of obtaining a Zionist charter – i.e. foreign recognition of the right to Jewish statehood in Palestine, but failed to do so. He is remembered as the “*chozeh ha’medina*” the visionary of the State of Israel who first conceived of it as a political entity rather than merely a safe haven and desitation for Jewish migrants. Herzl died at the age of 44.



6) Entry in Herzl’s Diary (May 29, 1895) [Shavuot]

I have been occupied for some time past with a work which is of immeasurable greatness. I cannot tell today whether I shall bring it to a close. It has the appearance of a gigantic dream. But for days and weeks it has filled me, saturated even my subconsciousness; it accompanies me wherever I go, broods above my ordinary daily converse. Looks over my shoulder and at my petty, comical journalistic work, disturbs me, and intoxicates me.

What it will lead to it is impossible to surmise as yet. But my experience tells me that it is something marvelous, even as a dream, and that I should write it down – if not as a memorial for mankind, then for my own delight or meditation in later years. And perhaps for something between both these possibilities: for the enrichment of literature. If the romance does not become a fact, at least the fact can become a romance. Title: The Promised Land!

7) *Der Judenstaat* (Leipzig, 1896)

The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one: It is **the restoration of the Jewish State**.

The world resounds with clamor against the Jews, and this has revived the dormant idea.

I claim no new discoveries; let this be noted at once and throughout my discussion. I have discovered neither the Jewish situation as it has crystallized in history, nor the means to remedy it. **The materials for the structure I here sketch exist in reality, they are quite tangible; this anyone can establish to his own satisfaction.** Hence, if this attempt to resolve the Jewish question is to be described by a single word, let it be labeled not a “fantasy,” but at most a “construction.” [...]

Now everyone knows how steam is generated by boiling water in a kettle, but such steam only rattles the lid. The current Zionist projects and other associations to check anti-Semitism are teakettle phenomena of this kind. But I say that this force, if properly harnessed, is powerful enough to propel a large engine and to move passengers and goods, let the engine have whatever form it may.

I am profoundly convinced that I am right, though I doubt whether I shall live to see myself proved so. **Those who today inaugurate this movement are unlikely to live to see its glorious culmination. But the very inauguration is enough to inspire in them a high pride and the joy of an inner liberation of their existence [...]**

Anti-Semitism is a highly complex movement, which I think I understand. I approach this movement as a Jew, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see in it the elements of cruel sport, of common commercial rivalry, of inherited prejudice, or religious intolerance--but also of a supposed need for self-defense. I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.

We are a people--one people.

We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us. In vain are we loyal patriots, sometimes superloyal; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to enhance the fame of our native lands in the arts and sciences, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries we are still decried as aliens, often by men whose ancestors had not yet come at a time when Jewish sighs had long been heard in the country. **The majority decide who the “alien” is; this, and all else in the relations between peoples, is a matter of power.** I do not surrender any part of our prescriptive right when I make this statement merely in my own name,, as an individual. In the world as it now is and will probably remain, for an indefinite period, might takes precedence over right. It is without avail, therefore, for us to be loyal patriots, as were the Huguenots, who were forced to emigrate. If we were left in peace...

But I think we shall not be left in peace. [...]

No one can deny the gravity of the Jewish situation. **Wherever they live in appreciable number, Jews are persecuted in greater or lesser measure. Their equality before the law, granted by statute, has become**

practically a dead letter. They are debarred from filling even moderate high offices in the army, or in any public or private institutions. And attempts are being made to thrust them out of business also: "Don't buy from Jews!"

Attacks in parliaments, in assemblies, in the press, in the pulpit, in the street, on journey--for example, their exclusion from certain hotels--even in places of recreation are increasing from day to day. The forms of persecution vary according to country and social circle. In Russia, special taxes are levied on Jewish villages; in Romania, a few persons are put to death; in Germany, they get a good beating occasionally; in Austria, anti-Semites exercise their terrorism over all public life; in Algeria, there are traveling agitators; in Paris, the Jews are shut out of the so-called best social circles and excluded from clubs. The varieties of anti-Jewish expression are innumerable. But this is not the occasion to attempt the sorry catalogue of Jewish hardships. We shall not dwell on particular cases, however painful. [...]

The whole plan is essentially quite simple, as it must necessarily be if it is to be comprehensible at all. Let sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe adequate to meet our rightful national requirements; we will attend to the rest.

To create a new State is neither ridiculous nor impossible... The governments of all countries scourged by anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in obtaining sovereignty for us. The plan... will be executed by two agencies: the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company. The scientific plan and political policies which the Society of Jews will establish will be carried out by the Jewish Company. The Jewish Company will be the liquidating agent for the business interests of departing Jews, and will organize trade and commerce in the new country. **We must not visualize the exodus of the Jews as a sudden one. It will be gradual, proceeding over a period of decades... It is silly to revert to older levels of civilization, as other Zionists propose... We shall build in a bolder and more stately style than has ever been done before;** for we now possess means which heretofore did not exist. [...]

Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. The very name would be a marvelously effective rallying cry. **If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake the complete management of the finances of Turkey. We should there form a part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all of Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.**

(1856-1927) Achad Ha'Am – Asher Zvi Ginsberg. Born in Skvyra (now in central Ukraine) to Hasidic parents, he moved with his family in 1868 at the age of 12 to Kiev where he was tutored privately and began his departure from traditional Judaism. In the mid 1880s, Ginsberg moved to Odessa where he was profoundly influenced by the *Hovevei Zion* movement. He ended up developing a Zionism which argued deeply with HT and what would become Herzl's political Zionism. Ginsberg theorized of a spiritual center of the Jewish people. For him, the revival of the Hebrew language in the Zionist movement was sacred. After the first Zionist Congress in 1897, he split with the Herzl and the WZO thinking the plans laid out for the Jewish State were impractical. While working contemporaneously with Herzl and the WZO, his opposition did not prevent him from becoming an eminent intellectual and theorist of modern Zionism. He visited Palestine several times and reported (often critically) on the state of Jewish settlement in the land.



8) The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem (1897)

Some months have passed since the Zionist Congress, but its echoes are still heard in daily life and in the press. In daily life the echoes take the form of meetings small and big, local and central. Since the delegates returned home, they have been gathering the public together and recounting over and over again the wonders that they saw enacted before their eyes. The wretched, hungry public listens and waxes enthusiastic and hopes for salvation: for can "they" -- the Jews of the West -- fail to carry out anything that they plan? Heads grow hot and hearts beat fast; and many "communal workers" whose one care in life had been for years -- until last August -- the Palestinian settlement, and who would have given the whole world for a penny donation in aid of Palestine workmen or the Jaffa School, have now quite lost their bearings, and ask one another: "What's the good of this sort of work? The Messiah is near at hand, and we busy ourselves with trifles! The time has come for great deeds: great men, men of the West, march before us in the van." -- There has been a revolution in their world, and to emphasise it they give a new name to the cause: it is no longer "Love of Zion" (*Chibbath Zion*), but "Zionism" (*Zioniyuth*). Nay, the more careful among them, determined to leave no loop-hole for error, even keep the European form of the name ("*Zionismus*") -- thus announcing to all and sundry that they are not talking about anything so antiquated as *Chibbath Zion*, but about a new, up-to-date movement, which comes, like its name, from the West, where people do not use Hebrew. [...]

The secret of our people's persistence is -- as I have tried to show elsewhere--that at a very early period the Prophets taught it to respect only spiritual power, and not to worship material power. For this reason the clash with enemies stronger than itself never brought the Jewish nation, as it did the other nations of antiquity, to the point of self-effacement. So long as we are faithful to this principle, our existence has a secure basis: for in spiritual power we are not inferior to other nations, and we have no reason to efface ourselves. But a political ideal *which does not rest on the national culture* is apt to seduce us from our loyalty to spiritual greatness, and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past, and undermining our historical basis. Needless to say, if the political ideal is not attained, it will have disastrous consequences, because we shall have lost the old basis without finding a new

one. But even if it is attained under present conditions, when we are a scattered people not only in the physical but also in the spiritual sense -- even then Judaism will be in great danger. **Almost all our great men, those, that is, whose education and social position fit them to be at the head of a Jewish State, are spiritually far removed from Judaism, and have no true conception of its nature and its value.** Such men, however loyal to their State and devoted to its interests, will necessarily regard those interests as bound up with the foreign culture which they themselves have imbibed and they will endeavour, by moral persuasion or even by force, to implant that culture in the Jewish State, so that in the end the Jewish State will be a State of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race. We have even now a small example of this process in Palestine. And history teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house Palestine was indeed a Jewish State, but the national culture was despised and persecuted, and the ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country, and frittered away the national resources in the building of heathen temples and amphitheatres and so forth. Such a Jewish State would spell death and utter degradation for our people. We should never achieve sufficient political power to deserve respect, while we should miss the living moral force within. The puny State, being "tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbours, and maintaining its existence only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favoured of fortune," would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; and the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory, would not have been implanted in our State and would not be the principle of its life. So we should really be then -- much more than we are now -- "a small and insignificant nation," enslaved in spirit to "the favoured of fortune," turning an envious and covetous eye on the armed force of our "powerful neighbours" and our existence as a sovereign State would not add a glorious chapter to our national history. Were it not better for "an ancient people which was once a beacon to the world" to disappear than to end by reaching such a goal as this? Mr. Lilienblum reminds me that there are in our time small States, like Switzerland, which are safeguarded against interference by the other nations, and have no need of "continual truckling." But a comparison between Palestine and small countries like Switzerland overlooks the geographical position of Palestine and its religious importance for all nations. These two facts will make it quite impossible for its "powerful neighbours" (by which expression, of course, I did not mean, as Mr. Lilienblum interprets, "the Druses and the Persians") to leave it alone altogether; and when it has become a Jewish State they will all still keep an eye on it, and each Power will try to influence its policy in a direction favourable to itself, just as we see happening in the case of other weak states (like Turkey) in which the great European nations have "interests."

III) ZIONISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY

(1865-1935) R. Abraham Isaac Kook. Born in Griva (Now part of of southern Latvia), R. Kook was a child prodigy and joined the Eitz Chayim Yeshiva of Volozhin at the age of 18 in 1883. While he stayed in Volozhin for only one year, R. Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the yeshiva's head hailed him as one of the greatest students in the yeshiva's history. He became the rabbinic leader of Zaumel, Lithuania (1887-1895) and Bausk, Latvia (1895-1904) before moving to Ottoman Palestine in 1904 to become the chief rabbi of Jaffa. A prolific writer, R. Kook promoted his own philosophy of Judaism of which Zionism was an integral part. He believed in the interdependence of the religious and secular communities of Israel and was intimately involved in both. He established a yeshiva in Jerusalem meant to perpetuate this philosophy. He interacted with the greatest Jewish thinkers and leaders of the day spanning the entire ideological spectrum. His legacy is one that has been celebrated by Zionists – religious and secular alike – for nearly a century. Most of R. Kook's writings were published posthumously, but they represent canonized texts in the library of Zionism.



9) *Orot (Lights)* (Jerusalem, 1942)

Eretz Israel is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people; it is no mere national possession, serving as a means of unifying our people and buttressing its material, or even spiritual, survival. Eretz Israel is part of the very essence of our nationhood it is bound organically to its very life and inner being. Human reason, even at its most sublime, cannot begin to understand the unique holiness of Eretz Israel; it cannot stir the depths of love for the land that are dormant within our people. What Eretz Yisrael means to the Jew can be felt only through the spirit of God which is in our people as a whole, through the spiritual cast of the Jewish soul, which radiates its characteristic influence to every healthy emotion. [...]

In the hearts of our saints, this fire is constantly blazing up with tongues of holy flame. Like the fire on the altar of the Temple, it is burning unceasingly, with a steady flame, in the collective heart of our people. Hidden away in the deepest recesses of their souls, it exists even among the backsliders and sinners of Israel. Within the Jewish people as a whole, this is the living source of its desire for freedom, of its longing for a life worthy of the name for man and community, of its hope for redemption—of the striving toward a full, uncontradictory, and unbounded Jewish life.

This is the meaning of the Jew's undying love for Eretz Israel—the Land of Holiness, the Land of God—in which all of the Divine commandments are realized in their perfect form. This urge to unfold to the world the nature of God, to raise one's head in His Name in order to proclaim His greatness in its real dimension, affects all souls, for all desire to become as one with Him and to partake of the bliss of His life. This yearning for a true life, for one that is fashioned by all the commandments of the Torah and illumined by all its up- lifting splendor, is the source of the courage which moves the Jew

to affirm, before all the world, his loyalty to the heritage of his people, to the preservation of its identity and values, and to the upholding of its faith and vision.

(1886-1973) David Ben-Gurion. Born David Grun in Plonsk, Poland, he was raised in a traditional Jewish family. He became attracted to Zionism at a young age and eventually moved to Ottoman Palestine in the year 1906. Ben Gurion went on to become the head of the Jewish Agency and Israel's first prime minister.



10) Speech to Youth Leadership (Haifa, 1944)

No parallel exists in the history of any nation to the unique fate of the Jews, to our career which has been sui generis not merely since the beginning of the exile but even before, when we lived in our own land. Ours was a tiny nation inhabiting a small country, and there have been many tiny nations and many small countries, but ours was a tiny nation possessed of a great spirit, an inspired people that believed in its pioneering mission to all men, in the mission that had been preached by the prophets of Israel. This people gave the world great and eternal moral truths and commandments. This people rose to prophetic visions of the unity of the Creator with His creation, of the dignity and infinite worth of the individual (because every man is created in the divine image), of social justice, universal peace, and love- "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This people was the first to prophesy about "The end of days," the first to see the vision of a new human society.

This small land, too, is unique. Its geology, topography, and geographical position have given it a special significance in human history. From the very beginning of its career, our tiny nation, in its small land, has been surrounded by two great empires, by Egypt and Assyria or Babylon. These countries were not only immensely powerful; they were also the bearers of great cultures which made fundamental contributions to the founding of civilization, for they were the inventors of mathematics, geometry, and astronomy, as well as intensive agriculture. Both empires centered in fertile valleys irrigated by great rivers, Egypt, by the Nile, and Babylon, by the Euphrates and the Tigris. These territories were the homelands of mighty states -- and also of a significant and valuable literature in history, poetry, and science, whose fragmentary remains we still admire. You have no doubt read some of these writings in Tchernichovsky's brilliant translation of the "Gilgamesh Epic," but this is only a small sample of the rich literary legacy left by Assyria and Babylon, as well as by Egypt.

(1903-1993) R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

11) Kol Dodi Dofek (1956)

I was not born into a Zionist household. My parents' ancestors, my father's house, my teachers and colleagues were far from the Mizrachi religious Zionists ... My links with the Mizrachi grew gradually; I had my doubts about the validity of the Mizrachi approach... I built an altar upon which I sacrificed sleepless nights, doubts and reservations. Regardless, the years of the Hitlerian Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the accomplishments of the Mizrachi in the land of Israel, convinced me of the correctness of our movement's path. The altar still stands today, with smoke rising from the sacrifice upon it ... Jews like me ... are required to sacrifice on this altar their peace of mind as well as their social relationships and friendships



12) Community, Covenant and Comittment (pp. 163-164)

I agree with you that there is a third halakhic approach which is neither parallel to the position of those "whose eyes are shut" and reject [the significance of the State] nor the belief of those dreamers who adopt a completely positive stance to the point where they identify the State with the [fulfillment] of the highest goal of our historical and meta-historical destiny. This third approach (which is the normative one in all areas), I would allow myself to guess, would be positively inclined toward the State, and would express gratitude for its establishment out of a sense of love and devotion, but would not attach [to it] excessive value to the point of its glorification and deification.

