

Ayin L'Tzion עין לציון
Perspectives on Religious and National Zionism

Three Perspectives on Religious Zionism

- 1. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Kol Dodi Dofek, 1956** *(died 1993) was a major American Orthodox rabbi, Talmudist, and modern Jewish philosopher.*

Political: The Beloved's knock manifests itself in the political domain. No one can deny the fact that the establishment of the State of Israel was politically almost supernatural. Russia and the Western countries jointly supported the establishment and was perhaps the only time they agreed with one another.

Military: The Beloved's knock manifests itself in the military field. The small Israeli forces defeated the mighty Arab armies. It was an example of "rabim biyad miatim."

Theological: This is perhaps the strongest knock by the Beloved. All of the claims of the Christian theologians that God deprived the Jewish people of their homeland, and all the Christian statements that the Biblical promises about Israel refer allegorically to Christianity, have been publically proven to be false by the establishment of Israel!

Assimilation: Many young people are perplexed and assimilated. People who were afraid and despaired now have pride in the outstanding achievements of Israel. The very fact that people always talk about Israel serves as a reminder that a Jew can never run away from the Jewish community.

Self-defense: For the first time in the history of our exile, divine providence has shown our enemies that Jewish blood is not free! It is not hefker!

Refuge: Every single Jew who runs away from hostile countries now knows he can take refuge in the Land of Israel.

- 2. Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, Independence Day, 1967** *(died 1982). Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook was an Orthodox rabbi, a prominent leader of Religious Zionism, and Rosh Yeshiva of the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva. Son of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of British Mandatory Palestine.*

When the entire people went off to celebrate in public, I couldn't go out and share in the joy. I sat alone. I couldn't come to terms with what happened, with this awful news. I succumbed to this feeling of shock; my body torn to shreds, I had nothing to celebrate. Where is our Hebron – have we forgotten her? Where is our Shechem, our Jericho – where?...They divided my land! They divided the land of God! I couldn't go outside to dance

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and rejoice. The true Israel is Israel redeemed, the kingdom of Israel and the armies of Israel, a people in its wholeness and not in a diaspora in exile.

- 3. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Israel: An Echo of Eternity 1969** (died 1972). *A.J. Heschel was a Polish-born American rabbi and was one of the leading Jewish theologians and philosophers of the 20th century. He was also a leader in the civil rights movement.*

The State of Israel is not only a place of refuge for the survivors of the Holocaust, but a tabernacle for the rebirth of faith and justice, for the renewal of souls, for the cultivation of knowledge of the words of the divine. By the power and promise of the prophetic visions we inhabit the land, by faithfulness to God and Torah we continue to survive...A land that was dead for nearly two thousand years is now a land that sings...

We have been beset by a case of spiritual amnesia...The ultimate meaning of the State of Israel must be seen in terms of the vision of the prophets: the redemption of humanity. The religious duty of the Jew is to participate in the process of continuous redemption, in seeing that justice prevails over power, that awareness of God penetrates human understanding.

Three Perspectives on National Zionism

- 1. Golda Meir 1973** (died 1978). *Golda Meir was an Israeli stateswoman, politician, teacher, and kibbutznik who served as the fourth Prime Minister of Israel.*

The pioneer settlers saved the Jewish people and the opportunity for the reestablishment of Jewish independence, because a simple, but basic principle became their bible: It was called avodah atzmit - self-labor..Jews had to teach themselves to work with their hands. ..Labor was their creed. That was the faith each had to accept if he really wanted to build the country.... We had to build it. The wheat had to be raised by us. The roads had to be drained by us...We are driven by the memory of the past, the responsibility for the future, and by the desire to live up to a sense of "chosenness" - not because we are better than others, but because we dream of doing better in building a society in Israel which will be a good society founded on concepts of justice and equality.

- 2. Ruth Calderon, 2013, speech to Knesset. Ruth Calderon** - *an Israeli academic and politician. She served as a member of Knesset for Yesh Atid between 2013 and 2015. She established the first Israeli secular, pluralistic and egalitarian Beth Midrash for women and men.*

Motivated by my own needs, and together with others, I founded Alma - Home for Hebrew Culture in Tel Aviv, and Elul, Israel's first joint Beit Midrash for men, women, religious and secular. Since then, over the course of several decades, there a Jewish renaissance movement has begun to flourish, in which tens and hundreds of thousands of Israelis study

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within frameworks that do not dictate to them the proper way to be a Jew or the manner in which their Torah is to become a living Torah...

I am convinced that studying the great works of Hebrew and Jewish culture are crucial to construct a new Hebrew culture for Israel. It is impossible to stride toward the future without knowing where we came from and who we are.

- 3. A.B. Yehoshua, 2017.** *A.B. Yehoshua is an Israeli novelist, essayist, short story writer, playwright. Also Israeli Peace Movement activist. Yehoshua is both a long-standing critic of the Israeli occupation and also of Palestinian political culture.*

In a lecture Hayyim Nachman Bialik gave at Nahalal in 1932, he said, "it's very simple: The concept of culture for every people includes all elements of life, from the lowest to the sublime...Here in the land of Israel the concept of culture assumes its full significance. Everything that is created in the Land of Israel becomes culture."

The process of turning Israeli identity into a skin instead of a garment is a new and revolutionary process for the historic Jew, who for most of his history slipped in and out of the national clothes of others...And once again, the fear returns...If Israeliness is just a garment, and not a daily test of moral responsibility, for better or worse, of Jewish values, then it's no wonder that poverty is spreading...

that the social gaps are widening and that cruelty toward an occupied people is perpetrated easily wand without the pangs of conscience...It will always be possible to escape from the reality to the old texts, and to interpret them in such a way that will imbue us with greatness, hope, and consolation.