

K1: Rav Kook: This is Your Life

Objectives for Chanichim

1. Understand the theme of Haroeh Machane (Israel: Vision and Reality)
2. Learn about who Rav Kook was
3. See how his life experiences may have impacted his worldview

What is Haroeh?

The word 'Haroeh', after which both this Machane and this shevet are named, has multiple

Firstly, הרואה literally means 'the visionary.' This comes from the root ר-א-ה meaning 'to see', for a true visionary literally sees their goal as if it were superimposed on reality. Not in an unrealistic dreamland, but *with* the challenges and obstacles.



meanings.

Additionally, the word 'Haroeh' can also mean 'the shepherd' when spelt as הרועה. This alludes to leadership qualities, which are critical in a visionary (and indeed a Madrich!). Moreover, many of our greatest leaders in Tanach were shepherds.

Discussion Point: What about the lifestyle of shepherds and visionaries encourages leadership and spiritual growth?

1) ואף משה לא בחנו הקדוש ברוך הוא אלא בצאן, אמרו רבותינו, כשקנה משה רבינו עליו השלום רועה צאנו של יתרו במדבר, ברח ממנו גדי, ורץ אחריו עד שהגיע לחסית, כיון שהגיע לחסית, בודקנה לו ברכה של מים, ועמד הגדי לשותות, כיון שהגיע משה אצלו, אמר אני לא הייתי יודע שכך היית מפני צמא, עיף אתה, הרפיו על כתפו והיה מהלך. אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא, יש לב רחמים לנהג צאנו של בשר ודם כך חייב אתה תרעה צאני ושכאל

Moshe was also only tested through the flock. Our Rabbis said: When Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, was shepherding Yitro's flock in the desert, a kid ran away from him and he ran after it, until it reached shade. Once it reached the shade, it chanced upon a pool of water and the kid stopped to drink. Once Moshe reached it, he said 'I did not realise that you were running because of thirst - you are tired!' He carried it on his shoulders and walked [back]. Hashem said, 'You have mercy such to lead this flock of a human being, so too by your life you will shepherd My flock, Israel.

Ultimately, when you combine these two meanings of Haroeh you arrive at the third meaning: an acronym for Rav Kook's name:

HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook – הרב אברהם יצחק הכהן קוק
 Or 'HaReiyyah' – the vision, the seer.

Rav Kook was a visionary as well as a shepherd. He dreamt big, whilst at the same time guiding the Jewish community, particularly in Israel, and providing nourishment for their souls.

Who was Rav Kook?



Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook was the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of what was then called Palestine. He was a profound thinker, teacher and writer, and had an immeasurable influence on the religious Zionist world. Although religious Zionism claims him as their own, Rav Kook towered above ideological differences and political bickering and concerned himself with all groups of the Jewish community, and was well-respected by rabbis from across the religious spectrum.

Rav Kook was aware of the need to inject the ancient doctrines and concepts of Judaism with fresh life and relevance to the problems of the day. To achieve this goal, however, he never compromised a single principle of Orthodoxy. What was needed was not the trimming down of Jewish theory or practice, he believed, but rather an emotional revitalisation and intellectual reinterpretation. Rav Kook's works are often considered the conceptual foundation stone for religious Zionism because his teachings place Jewish nationalism and *binyan ha'aretz* (the building up of Eretz Yisrael) at the centre of the Divine plan for the Jewish people.

Discussion Point: Do you think today Religious Zionist leaders are well-respected by other denominations of Judaism? What about Chareidi leaders being respected in more modern circles?

Putting the Rav into Rav Kook:

Rav Kook was born in 1865 in the little shtetl of Grieve in north-west Russia. His family was uniquely a mix of the two major schools of

Orthodox thought at the time: his mother, Zlata Perl, came from a devout Chassidic family; whereas his father, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman, was a student of Volozhin Yeshiva, the archetypical 'Litvak' yeshiva whose founders were staunchly opposed to Chassidut.

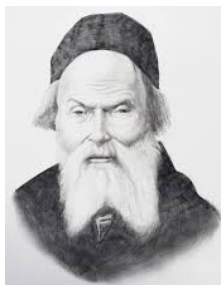
He was plunged into the sea of Talmud at a very early age and by the age of 9 he had already earned himself the title of *illui* (child prodigy). He followed in his father's footsteps joining the yeshiva in Volozhin at the age of 18 (#theoriginalTorani) and became close to the Rosh Yeshiva, the Netziv, despite staying at the yeshiva for only a year and a half.

*If the Volozhin Yeshiva had been founded just to educate Rav Kook, it would have been worthwhile.
 (Netziv, Rosh Yeshiva of*

However, Rav Kook wasn't the typical Volozhin-er. He spoke to his friends in Hebrew rather than Yiddish and he became more interested in Zionism, and after he got married, he began to venture outside the sphere of solely Gemara and read the literature of the

Haskalah (enlightenment) movement, Immanuel Kant and other philosophers in German. This was at odds with the standard Orthodox position of the time, which vehemently opposed any interaction whatsoever, with the radical Haskalah movement, and secular literature as a whole.

He is unique among the other hashkafic (ideological) minds of the time, in that he drew elements of western philosophy and culture to enrich and deepen his religious beliefs. Rav Kook also became highly prolific in his studies of kabbalah, and the Leshem (his teacher) testified that he grasped all kabbalistic doctrines and approaches.



The Chafetz Chaim (pictured) urged Rav Kook to enter the rabbinate and take up the position of rabbi in Zaumel. This was to be his entry into the rabbinate and at the age of 30, Rav Kook became the rabbi of the city of Boisk where his brilliant sermons and essays on current problems brought him national recognition and fame.

During this time, Rav Kook published a number of articles about Zionism and the necessity of returning to Eretz Yisrael. At the same time, he worked tirelessly to obtain the cooperation of the Orthodox masses towards the **practical** tasks involved in building up Eretz Yisrael. Based on these ideals, he made aliyah in 1904 and became the Rabbi of Yafo.

'In for a penny, in for a pound':

As well as being the Rabbi of Yafo, Rav Kook also took an interest in the moshavot in the surrounding area, and in 1913 (and again in 1923 and 1927), Rav Kook went on 'tour' (Israel



Machane?) of the kibbutzim and moshavot in the Galil with Rav Chaim Sonnenfeld and other rabbis to meet and inspire their residents. He took a particular interest in ensuring the youth in these areas received a solid Jewish education, and sought to assist the chalutzim (pioneers) in observing the mitzvot taluyot b'aretz (mitzvot that are specific to the land of Israel) such as pe'ah and leket.

In addition to helping in these practical matters, he deliberately sought to build positive relationships with the secular settlers, countering the common view that all Orthodox rabbis lived in an insulated bubble without concern for the problems of the day.

Point to Ponder

What is the spiritual value for religious Jews interacting with non-religious Jews regarding things that have nothing to do with religion?

You can take the boy out of Israel...

In 1914, there was a conference of many prominent European Rabbis held in Germany. Rav Kook was invited, however he was reluctant to attend, since that would mean leaving Eretz Yisrael. However, he ultimately attended when he was required to leave Israel anyway for a medical procedure in Switzerland. World War I broke out during his visit, so he was unable to return to Eretz Yisrael for the duration of the war. During this time, he lived in St Gallen, Switzerland and London. Whilst in London, he served as Rabbi of the Machzikei Hadat Synagogue in the East End (Abi will provide a prize to whoever can guess what this shul is now). During his time Chutz l'Aretz he campaigned for a Jewish State, particularly in the run-up to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. He focused on addressing the sentiment among religious Jews that Jewish nationalism contradicted Torah values and beliefs.

“Guess who’s back, back again”

Following his return to Eretz Yisrael, in 1919 Rav Kook accepted an invitation from the Jewish community of Jerusalem to become its Chief Rabbi and in 1921 he became the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Mandate Palestine.

As Chief Rabbi, Rav Kook’s first achievement was the organisation of the rabbinate of Eretz Yisrael, which allowed the religious character of the rapidly growing Jewish community to be maintained. Despite his attempts

to harmonise the factions within the Jews in Palestine, the splintering of the community continued. Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, leader of the Edah Chareidis movement, did not recognise Rav Kook's authority and often challenged his seemingly more lenient halachic rulings towards issues such as Shemittah, as well as Rav Kook's warm attitude towards the secular Zionists. It's important to note, however, that there was never a personal disagreement between the two Rabbis, only machloket l'shem Shamayim, although some of Rav Sonnenfeld's followers made personal attacks against Rav Kook.

Point to Ponder

Is the claim of leniency still the main cause of the disagreements between Religious Zionists and Chareidim/Chassidim?

One of Rav Kook's greatest educational achievements was the founding of Yeshivat Merkaz, commonly known as Mercaz haRav. He hoped that this yeshiva would serve as the

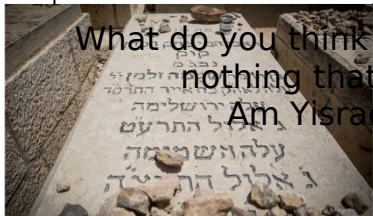


'centre' of Torah learning, in line with the passuk: *"Ki m'Tzion teitzei Torah, u'dvar Hashem m'Yerushalayim - For from Zion the Torah shall come forth, and the word of Hashem from Yerushalayim."* **(Yishaya 2:3; Michah 4:2)**

His dream was that great minds, in approaching Torah with fresh genius, would enrich Judaism. One of his much-quoted expressions, fervently uttered on the occasion of a visit from a non-religious scientist, was, *"May the day come when the great of the Jews will also be Jewishly great."*

To the last day of his life, Rav Kook tirelessly worked to strengthen and unify the Jewish community b'Aretz, remarking with the last ounce of his strength, "there is nothing that justifies and permits division in Israel".

Point to Ponder



What do you think Rav Kook intended with his statement "there is nothing that justifies and permits division in **Israel**"? Am Yisrael? Eretz Yisrael? Both? Neither? RON?

On the last Friday evening before his death, he urged participation in the nineteenth World Zionist Congress, observing "How can one not be a Zionist seeing that the Lord G-d has chosen Zion?"

Rav Kook zt'l passed away in Jerusalem in 1935.

Extra Chomer - Story Time

When Rav Kook first came to Jerusalem, word spread quickly that he was always willing to help a fellow Jew in need. Consequently, numerous people came to him at all hours of the day, burdening him with all kinds of requests. When his friends and relatives realised what was happening, they decided to take action. Without delay, they prepared a sign listing reception hours and hung it on Rav Kook's front door. The next day, however, the sign was gone. Rav Kook's well-wishers immediately drew up another sign and hung it in place of the first; but that, too, disappeared after a day. Finally, they decided to investigate the matter and find out who was responsible for taking down the signs. Unexpectedly, they discovered that the Rav himself was the culprit! When asked why he opposed an arrangement that was designed to help lighten his load, he explained: *"A rabbi is not his own master. He is a servant of the people, and a servant must be available to serve his master at all times."*

K1 Summary

- In his early years and adolescence, Rav Kook was unique in his thought and considered a prodigy.
- He was a strong Zionist and had a vast impact on Israel after his aliyah.
- This was both in terms of his engagement with secular Zionist farmers, and with religious Jews.

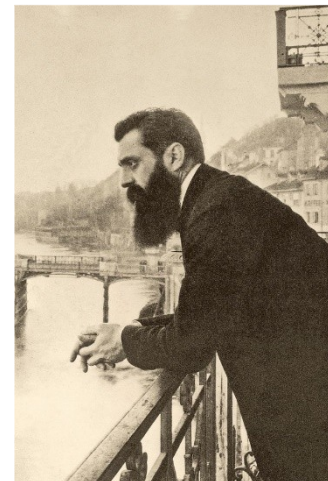
K2: Secular Visions for a Jewish State

Objectives for Chanichim

1. Learn about the Political, Cultural and Labour Zionist visions of a Jewish state in Israel
2. Explore through discussion the differences between the three
3. Which of the three do you most strongly identify with?

Secular Zionist Vision #1 - Political Zionism

Political Zionism aimed at establishing a legally assured homeland for Jews. This branch of Zionism was the original form of Secular Zionism, dating back to the First Zionist Congress in 1897. Spearheaded by Herzl, the Congress adopted the following mission statement:



Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in EretzYisrael secured under public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

- 1. The promotion by appropriate means of the settlement in Eretz-Israel of Jewish farmers, artisans, and manufacturers.*
- 2. The organisation and uniting of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, both local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.*
- 3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness.*
- 4. Preparatory steps toward obtaining the consent of governments, where*

One of the strongest events that motivated the establishment of Political Zionism was the Dreyfus Affair. A young **Theodore Herzl** was a journalist covering the news story and was shocked at the scenes he found in Paris.

Key Event: The Dreyfus Affair

- In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus of the French Army was charged with selling secrets to Germany
- Major Esterhazy, most likely the real spy, forged the documents implicating Dreyfus
- The trial took place in a closed military courtroom where he was found guilty
- When experts said that the handwriting in the documents did not look like that of Dreyfus, the prosecution used this as evidence that he was guilty!
- He was called a traitor to France, publicly humiliated and stripped of rank, and paraded through the streets with crowds shouting, 'Death to the Jews!' You can see this adaptation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q76EK9B04Ak> (skip to two minutes and make sure to put the subtitles on!)
- Dreyfus was sentenced to life imprisonment on a prison island off the coast of French Guiana, far away from anyone he knew or who could take up his case
- In 1896, Colonel Picquart brought evidence that Esterhazy had forged the documents, but high-ranking military officials suppressed this evidence, eventually imprisoning Picquart and further accusing Dreyfus of more treason.
- A few other things then happened which you'll learn about in the BC Chomer (K4), but eventually after 8 years of imprisonment and forced labour, Dreyfus

Herzl, who witnessed the degradation of Dreyfus, appeared profoundly moved by the event and in late 1895 began writing *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State). This book argued that the Jewish people should leave Europe for Palestine, their historic homeland. The Jews possessed a nationality; all they were missing was a state of their own. Only through a Jewish state could they avoid antisemitism, express their culture freely

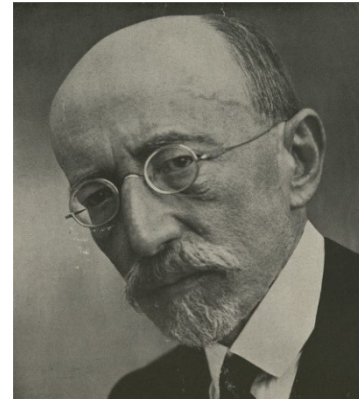
[If] France - bastion of emancipation, progress and universal socialism - [can] get caught up in a maelstrom of antisemitism and let the Parisian crowd chant 'Kill the Jews!' Where can they be safe once again - if not in their own country? Assimilation does not solve the problem because the Gentile world will not allow it as the Dreyfus affair has so clearly demonstrated.
(Theodore Herzl)

and practice their religion without hindrance.

Discussion Point: Is it a good thing for the basis of Zionism to be push factors rather than pull factors? What consequences could this engender?

Secular Zionist Vision #2 - Cultural Zionism:

A complete national life involves two things. First, full play for the creative faculties of the nation in a specific national culture of its own, and second a system of education whereby the individual members of the nation will be thoroughly imbued with the culture and so moulded by it that its imprint will be recognisable in all their way of life and thought. Achad Ha'am



Cultural Zionism is the belief in creating a Jewish state with its own secular Jewish culture and history, including language and historical roots. The figurehead of this movement was **Achad Ha'am** (born Asher Ginsberg) who proposed that the emphasis of the Zionist movement shift to efforts to revive the Hebrew language and create a new culture, free from negative diaspora influences, that would unite Jews and serve as a common denominator between diverse Jewish communities. The main goal of Achad Ha'am's cultural Zionism was the establishment of a new spiritual centre for the Jewish nation, which did not necessarily require the establishment of a Jewish state, but did nonetheless require the establishment of a Jewish majority in our national home.



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (#motzeiinJ'lem), Achad Ha'am's primary follower, believed that the future of the Jews required both their own land and their own language. Hebrew would be the language to unite Jews across the world. Eliezer and his wife moved to the land of Israel in 1881 and established the first Hebrew household in almost 2,000 years. Their son, Ben-Zion, became the world's first native Hebrew speaker in almost 2,000 years. There are some pretty crazy stories/legends about his upbringing to ensure that he learned only 'pure' Hebrew as his mother tongue, including that Ben-Yehuda didn't let his son interact with anyone outside of the household, and even shut all of the windows so he wouldn't hear the birds singing!

This focus on the revival of spoken Hebrew was ultimately successful. In 1899, the first all-Hebrew elementary school was founded and within 10 years, there were 20 Hebrew schools with 2,500 students. As Hebrew began to gain traction and popularity, Herzl reversed his opposition and

embraced Hebrew, even though he was embarrassed that he could not speak it.

In summary, Cultural Zionism, unlike Political Zionism, strived for Israel to be "a Jewish state and not merely a state of Jews."

Discussion Point: Classic one right here: Is it better/more important to have a Jewish state or a state for Jews?

Secular Zionist Vision #3 - Labour Zionism:



Labour Zionism did not just want to solve the 'Jewish Problem' or fashion a strong and self-sufficient 'new Jew', they wanted to save the world by creating a new model for humanity. They believed that founding an old-new Jewish state in the ancient Jewish

homeland enabled the Jewish people to bring alive a realistic socialism. One that respected and acknowledged differences, while still seeking equality and social justice.

This strain of Zionism has been credited as the most impactful on the

Labour or Socialist Zionism saw itself as the Zionist sector of the historic Jewish labour movements of Eastern and Central Europe. Unlike the Political Zionist ideal, Labour Zionists did not believe that a Jewish state would be created simply by appealing to the international community or to powerful nations such as Britain, Germany, or the Ottoman Empire. Rather, they believed that a Jewish state could only be created through the efforts of the Jewish working class settling in the Land of Israel and constructing a state through the creation of a progressive Jewish society with rural kibbutzim and moshavim and an urban Jewish proletariat (working class).

initial stages of *Medinat Yisrael* - for the first 30 years the Knesset was dominated by the *Mapai* Party which was made up of Labour Zionists, such as Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir. It also led to the establishment of the Kibbutz movement, described as the manifestation of a Labour Zionist utopia.

Discussion Point: To what extent is there room for a Jewish State within Labour Zionism? Can all three Zionist ideals co-exist?

Discussion Point: Which of these forms of Secular Zionism speaks to you the most? How does it match up with your Religious Zionist ideology?

What is a pioneer? Is he a worker only? No! The definition includes much more. The pioneers should be workers but that is not all. We shall need people who will be "everything" - everything that the land of Israel needs. A worker has his labor interests, a soldier his esprit de corps, a doctor and an engineer, their special inclinations. A generation of iron-men; iron from which you can forge everything the national machinery needs. You need a wheel? Here I am. A nail, a screw, a block? - here take me. You need a man to till the soil? - I'm ready. A soldier? I am here. Policeman, doctor, lawyer, artist, teacher, water carrier? Here I am. I have no form. I have no psychology. I have no personal feeling, no name. I am a servant of Zion. Ready to do everything, not bound to do anything. I have only one aim - creation.
(Joseph Trumpledor)



K2 Summary

- ❑ Political Zionism aimed at establishing a legally assured homeland for Jews, mainly in response to push factors.
- ❑ Cultural Zionism believed in creating a Jewish state with its own secular Jewish culture and history for Israel to be "a Jewish state and not merely a state of Jews."
- ❑ Labour Zionism believed that a Jewish state would be the means by which to bring alive a realistic socialism, and create a new model society for humanity.

K3 - Rav Kook's Vision of Am Yisrael B'Eretz Yisrael



Aims:

- ❏ **Learn** about Rav Kook's approach towards Secular Zionists.
- ❏ **Discover** Rav Kook's vision for Medinat Yisrael.
- ❏ **Explore** the centrality of Torah to Rav Kook's ideal state/society.

Rav Kook and (the State of) Israel:

As a child, Rav Kook was famous for his special love and passion for Eretz Israel. It is told that he would play a game with his mates about Aliyah to Israel (sounds like Sviva/Machane...!).

His magnum opus, Orot begins with the following statement:

"Eretz Yisrael is not a peripheral matter, an external acquisition of the nation; it is not merely a means toward the goal of the general coalescing of the nation, nor of strengthening its material existence, nor even its spiritual existence. Eretz Yisrael is an independent unit, bound with a living attachment with the nation, bound with inner segulot (uniqueness) with the nation's existence."

ארץ ישראל איננה דבר חיצוני,
 קנין חיצוני לאומה רק בתור
 אמצעי למטרה של ההתאגדות
 הכללית והחזקת קיומה החמרי
 או אפילו הרוחני. ארץ ישראל היא
 חטיבה עצמותית קשורה בקשר
 חיים עם האומה, חבוקה בסגולות
 פנימיות עם מציאותה.

For Rav Kook, Eretz Yisrael was a fundamental foundation for the Jewish people, and it was the vehicle by which Am Yisrael's "inner Segulot" could manifest and illuminate the world, and serve as an "or l'goyim."

Point to Ponder

- Is 'or l'goyim' best achieved when we are spread in the diaspora and able to influence them directly, or best achieved by being a 'model' nation in Israel?

For Rav Kook, the answer was blindingly obvious. It was impossible for him to fathom a fully-functioning, utopian experience of Judaism outside the Land of Israel, and it was only when the Jewish experience was complete that it could begin to illuminate other nations of the world.

The Centrality of Torah in Rav Kook's vision:

He writes in Orot, *"It is impossible for a Jew to be faithful to his thoughts and visions outside of the Land in the same way that he is faithful in the Land of Israel. Manifestations of holiness, of whatever level, tend to be pure in the Land, and outside the Land, mixed with dross. However, in relation to the longing and the attachment of a person to the Land of Israel, his thoughts become purified by virtue of the 'air of Eretz Yisrael'."*

It is only with this perfect faith, belief and practice that true Judaism can be realised.



Indeed, Rav Kook takes it even further, suggesting that the fundamental basis for the complete Torah to be existing in this world is through a fully functioning Jewish state, Only, when Torah exists in this world, the light of its glory and splendour can illuminate the world.

“It is needed for Eretz Yisrael to be built and for all of [Am] Yisrael living in it, with every organization in order and running smoothly: Mikdash and Kingship, Priesthood and Prophecy, [Halachic] Judges and Police. Then the Oral [experiential] Torah lives in all its splendor and glory.” (Orot haTorah 1:3)

וְצָרִיכָה אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לִהְיוֹת בְּנוּיָה
 וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשְׁבִים עָלֶיהָ מְסֻדָּרִים
 בְּכָל סֻדְרֵיהֶם, מְקֻדָּשׁ וּמְלֻכּוֹת,
 כְּהֵנָּה וּנְבוּאָה, שׁוֹפְטִים וְשׁוֹטְרִים
 וְכָל תְּכֻסִּיסֵיהֶם, אֲזַז תְּיָהּ הִיא תּוֹרָה
 שְׂבַעַל פֶּה בְּכָל זֵיו תְּפָאֲרֶתָהּ
 (אורות התורה א:ג)

**AM YISRAEL,
 B'ERETZ YISRAEL,
 AL PI TORAT YISRAEL**

K3 Summary

- Rav Kook believed that there is no black and white in the world, in terms of *kodesh v'chol* (holy and mundane), but rather a myriad of colours.
- Rav Kook felt that secular Zionists thinkers and pioneers were, in fact, doing the work of Hashem.
- He envisioned Am Yisrael B'Eretz Yisrael forming a Jewish state which would serve as a model state that illuminated the world.
- In Rav Kook's ideology Torah has a two-fold purpose: it is the basis upon which everything must be built; also by building up the Land **properly** we can bring Torah into the world in its entirety.

Extra Chomer - Rav Kook: The Individual and the Collective

The BEST: "Shir Meruba" – Rav Kook's "The Fourfold Song"
by Benjamin J. Samuels

"There is one who sings the **Song of Self**. And within one's self, finds everything; the full of one's spiritual satisfaction within one's own fullness.

And there is one who sings the **Song of Nation**. He steps out from the circle of his private concern, which he doesn't find sufficiently broad, nor idealistically grounding. He strives for fierce heights yet attaches himself with gentle love to the ensemble of Knesset Yisrael – the Jewish people, and with her sings her songs, shares in her distresses, delights in her hopes. Engrossed is he with thoughts elevated and pure regarding her past and future; with love and wise-heart, he studies her inner spiritual essence.

And there is one who broadens further her sense of self, until it extends and expands beyond the boundary of Israel, to sing the **Song of Humanity**. Her spirit advances and encompasses the majesty of humanity, the splendid dignity of its divine image. She is drawn to common destiny and yearns for humanity's sublime self-actualisation. From this life source she draws the principles of her ruminations and investigations, her ambitions and dreams.

And there is one who still more expansively rises higher until one unifies one's self with all existence, with all creatures, and with all worlds. With all of them, one sings. This one engages one's self with Perek Shira – the daily **Song of World-Creation**, to whom it is promised that one will be worthy of the World-Yet-to-Come.

And then there is one who arises with all these songs together in concert, all parts contributing their voices, all together harmonizing their melodies. One with another creating polyphonic vitality and life: they are the sounds of joy and jubilation, the sounds of rejoicing and exultation, the sounds of ecstasy and holiness.

The Song of Self, the Song of Nation, the Song of Humanity, the Song of World-Creation – they all symphonise together within this person at every moment and at all times.

And this perfection in its plenitude ascends to become the song of holiness, the song of Kel (G-d), the song of Israel, with passionate intensity and beauty, with fierce integrity and grandeur. Yisrael shir Kel – Israel [means] the song of G-d. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, a fourfold song. It is the **Song of Songs** of Solomon, *Shir haShirim*

asher liShlomo, [the song] of the King in whom is the peace of wholeness."

[R. Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook zt"l, *Shemona Kevatzim* 7:112; *Orot HaKodesh* 2:444-5. Translation by Benjamin J. Samuels, with borrowing from Ben Zion Bokser, *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook* (Paulist Press, 1978), 228-229; and Ari Ze'ev Schwartz, *The Spiritual Revolution of Rav Kook: The Writings of a Jewish Mystic* (Gefen Publishing House, 2018).]

Background: This poem was likely composed around 1917. World War I was ravaging Europe; Russia was aflame in revolution; the 1918 flu pandemic was incubating, and Rav Kook was forced by circumstance to remain away from his home in the Land of Israel, exiled in London through 1919, until after the war's end and safe passage could be regained back to what would shortly become British Mandate Palestine. "The Fourfold Song" resounds with the competing, and often conflicting, secular socio-political movements and ideologies of the first quarter of the 20th century - Zionism, nationalism, socialism, universalism - and yet harmonizes them within a redemptive Jewish religious framework of soulful lyricism, rabbinic reference, kabbalistic allusion, and messianic longing.

Why this is The BEST: Rav Kook models resilient faith and righteous aspiration at a time of world war, profound global crisis, dramatic dislocation, gross inhumanity, revolutionary upheaval, and grave uncertainty. Although the maelstrom of historical forces churning within the backdrop of Rav Kook's poem were certainly unique to his time just over a century ago, it is remarkable how wondrously resonant "The Fourfold Song" is with the competing, and sometimes conflicting, ideational and ideological pulls of our own time.

The Song of Self: At a time of global pandemic and its attendant economic decline, in an era of social unrest and civil discord, is it reasonable to sing the Song of Self? Hillel taught: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" (Avot 1:14). Self-preservation mandates that we shutter our shuls and schools, shelter in place, and avoid health risks all while needing to evade financial collapse and societal dysfunction. Civil unrest can lead us to seek refuge in the protective laws and order of society, for as Rabbi Hanina Segan HaKohanim philosophized, "Without the dread of government, neighbor would swallow neighbor alive" (Avot 2:16). And yet is it morally and religiously sufficient to sing the Song of Self alone?

The Song of Nation: At a time of increasing antisemitism and anti-Israelism, how shall we full-throatedly sing the Song of Nation, standing stalwart with the people of Israel, and zealously championing the cause of the Jewish people in all their habitations? Is singing the Song of Nation restricted, though, to political advocacy, community security, and anti-

defamation? Singing the Song of Nation arguably also entails living robust Jewish communal lives, with Jewish education and religious practice nurturing our particular identity. As patriotic citizens committed to the realization of the affirmative principles, values, ideals, and aspirations of our polity, how else do we sing the Song of Nation? And does a two-part song of Self and Nation fulfill the fullness of our Divine charge? Might we even find in our Jewish particularism the resources lifting us to universalism and humanism?

The Song of Humanity: Our global pandemic has reminded all humanity of our common origins, vulnerabilities, and destiny. Have scarce medical resources and under-determined scientific understanding inspired multi-national collaboration or competition? Has our international awakening to persistent, systemic racism and its mortal toll triggered our moral outrage, and stimulated our ethical and political imagination? Do we hear the call to join our Jewish voices on behalf of black lives, and sing the Song of Humanity?

The Song of World-Creation: Although less at the forefront of global concern these past few months, Climate Change arguably remains the greatest existential threat to Earth's biodiversity, and even to the future human habitability of our planet. What did Rav Kook understand to be the musical score of the Song of World-Creation? What do we understand it to be?

The Song of Songs: The Song of Self, the Song of Nation, the Song of Humanity, the Song of World-Creation ... It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, a fourfold song.

Rav Kook calls upon us across time to appreciate the music of a symphony of resonances, dissonances, and contrapuntal polyphonies. We know, as surely Rav Kook did, that a complexity of challenges and problems requires us to orchestrate a complex of solutions. Which song shall we sing? Let us dare to sing together the Fourfold Song, the Song of Songs, the song whose dynamic peace is found in its synergistic wholeness.

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K4 - Israel Today

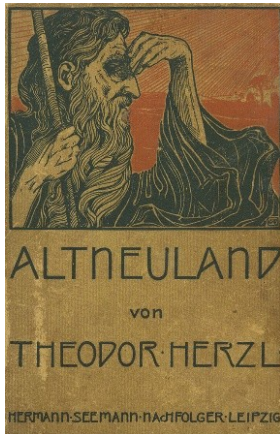


Aims:

- ❑ **Learn** about different types of people and cultures that exist in Israel
- ❑ **Explore** the idea of an 'Israeli culture' given the 'oleh-culture'
- ❑ **Discover** the impact poetry and music has had on Israeli life
- ❑ **Recognise** that Israel isn't perfect

Israel's mandate as an ingatherer of the Jewish exiles from all four corners of the earth has made it a very ethnically diverse country. It is amazing to

think that there is such a variety of Jewish ethnic groups and communities in one small country, in addition to the plethora of other religious and cultural groups. What is even more amazing is they all call Israel home!



As Theodor Herzl suggested, Israel is an old-new country (Altnueland), small in size, but with a widely varied landscape and a culturally active, varied population of some 8.3 million. It is a place where East meets West, where past and present touch, and where ideologies mould lifestyles. Four thousand years of Jewish heritage, more than a century of Zionism, the 'ingathering of the exiles' and seven decades of modern statehood have contributed to a culture which has already created an identity of its own, while preserving the uniqueness of many different communities.

Jewish Groups:

Chareidim make up 11.7% of the Israeli population with a 5% growth rate (Israel Central Bureau of statistics, 2014). They live their lives strictly according to Halacha and tend to live in isolated communities. Chareidim do not usually view the State of Israel as 'Reishit Semichat Geulateniu' ('first flowerings of our redemption') but view living in the Land of Israel as a fulfillment of a positive Mitzvah.

Secular Jews (Chilonim) make up the largest sector of Israeli society. Besides Yerushalayim, most major cities have a secular majority, made up mainly of Mizrachi Jews.



It is important to note that whilst most of these people would consider themselves secular, the majority of Israelis (72%) say they light Shabbat candles and over 90% have mezuzot on their doors. It seems that whilst people are not necessarily religious, they have a strong connection to their Judaism and see an inherent value in traditional customs. Even in Israeli popular culture, for example the music industry, it

is not uncommon to hear songs with verses from Tehillim and various other passukim making up the lyrics.

Religious Zoinsts (dati le'umi), like the Chareidim, also live according to Halacha. They believe that we have a G-d-given right to the Land of Israel, and it is one of the most important Mitzvot to settle and build the land. They also believe that the building of the State of Israel is the beginning of the redemption (Reishit Tzemichat Geulateinu). So even though the Medina is not perfect from a religious perspective, they point out that after 2000 years of exile there is a Jewish government and Jewish country in the land. If Hashem has chosen to bring about the Geula this way, they argue, then the State should be viewed as holy, and an important part of the modern religious Jewish story.

Non-Jewish National Groups:

Israeli Arabs make up 20.7% of Israel's population Israel (2014 census). They are mainly Muslim but there are also many Christian Arabs. Palestinians living in Yehuda v'Shomron (West Bank) and in the Gaza Strip do not have Israeli citizenship, whereas Israeli Arabs living on the Israeli side of the Green Line are offered full Israeli citizenship. Arabic culture has worked its way into society with Arabic phrases and foods popular with Israelis.

Christianity in Israel is practiced by more than 161,00 Israeli citizens and 127,000 of them are Arab Citizens and live mainly in urban areas, including Nazereth, Shefarim and Haifa. Although many denominations are nominally represented, the majority are affiliated with the Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

These are 129,800 Arabic-speaking **Druze** living in approximately villages in northern Israel (2011 census). They constitute a separate cultural, social, and religious community. While the Druze religion is not accessible to outsiders, one known aspect of its philosophy is the concept of taqiyya which calls for complete loyalty by its adherents to the government of the country in which they reside. Druze actively participate in the army, as well as many other state institutions and Majalli Wahabi, a Druze politician was in 2007 Acting President of the State of Israel.



Bedouin Arabs are also Muslim (estimated at 170,000 though this growing quickly), and belong to some 30 tribes, a majority scattered over a wide area in the south. Formerly nomadic shepherds, the Bedouin are currently in transition from a tribal social framework to a permanently settled society and are gradually entering into Israel's labour force.

Point to Ponder

- Is Israel a 'chulent pot' (technically all together but the meat and beans/potatoes are separate) or a 'melting pot' (think cheese fondue with multiple cheeses)? Is this a good thing?

The Impact of New Olim:

Israel's Jewish populations are largely an immigrant and second-generation society, and the Influx of these people has had various impacts on Israeli society.

Ethiopian Olim:

The first major wave of aliyah from Ethiopia took place in the mid-1970s. In 1984/5 during Operation Moses some 6,500-8,000 Ethiopian Jews were flown to Israel. In 1991 Operation Solomon was launched to bring home the Beta Israel Jews of Ethiopia. On 24th May 1991, 34 aircraft landed at Addis Ababa and brought 14,325 Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. Since that time, Ethiopian Jews have continued to immigrate to Israel bringing the number of Ethiopian-Israelis today to over 100,000. Currently, Operation Rock of Israel is aiming to bring a further 2,000 members of the Falash Mura community from Ethiopia. In the past they have struggled significantly to integrate in society and get jobs, but this situation is certainly improving; there are more Ethiopians in more



distinguished positions in business, politics, and the army, and the Beta Israel festival of Sigd was even recognised as an official festival in Israel in 2008.

Russian Immigration:

The wave of immigration from the Soviet Union that began at the end of 1989 brought 200,000 new immigrants to Israel by the end of 1990, and was a surprising shift after long years of low immigration. The Soviet immigration, the largest wave of immigration in the history of Israel, continued steadily until 1994. They brought with them expertise, experience and training. However, their professional skills had been developed in Russia, and therefore could not manage the Israeli system. Furthermore, mass Russian immigration led to a population growth of about 6% and as such the job market became very saturated, with many highly qualified immigrants and local residents found it difficult to find work due to the amount of people looking for jobs.

Immigration from Arab countries:

From 1948, between 800,000–1,000,000 Jews, primarily of Sephardi and Mizrahi background, migrated from Arab and Muslim countries such as Iraq, Iran & Syria. Some reasons for this are push factors such as persecution, anti-Semitism, political instability, poverty and expulsion. Others are with pull factors like the desire to fulfil the Zionist dream or find a better economic status and a secure home.

Deep Dive - How Have Olim Contributed to Israeli Society?

Café Shahor Chazak

Uri Elman and Ilek Sahalu are cousins born in Ethiopia, raised in Israel, and served in the Israeli Army. Sohlo was a First Lieutenant, platoon commander, and combat officer in the Nachal Brigade of the IDF. Together they make up “Café Shahor Hazak” (Strong Black Coffee)- known for the single “Yihyeh B’Seder.”



In July 2015, Chris Brown chose the duo to open a concert of his in Rishon LeZion, Israel. They were invited by then U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Dan Shapiro to perform on the Fourth of July at the official residence of the Ambassador. The duo was a nominee for the 2015 MTV Europe Music Awards Best Israeli Act award.

Pnina Tamanu-Shata

Pnina Tamanu-Shata was born in 1981 in the village of Wuzaba in Ethiopia, and in 1984, at age three, she immigrated to Israel through Sudan as part of Operation Moses. She was recruited to the IDF in 1999 and served as an operations sergeant in the Home Front Command.

Tamanu-Shata began her public career in 2004, after being elected chairperson of the Ethiopian Israeli Student Union. In 2006 she was one of the founders of the Headquarters for the Ethiopian Jews' Struggle for Social Equality, and led protests against racism and discrimination, mainly in relation to the blood donation affair, religious discrimination and the discrimination against Ethiopian-Israeli students in the education system.

In recognition of her social activism over the past decade - mainly the struggles she has led against discrimination and racism - Tamanu-Shata received the 2016 Unsung Hero Award from the Drum Major Institute. The award was presented to her by President Reuven Rivlin and Martin Luther King III, the son of



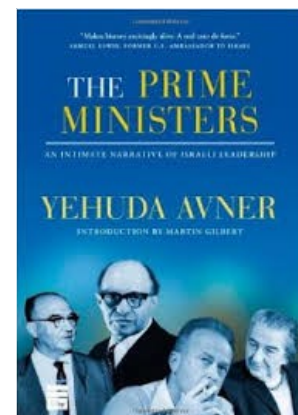
American civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr. and President of the Drum Major Institute. In 2012 Tamanu-Shata ran for the 19th Knesset on behalf of the Yesh Atid party headed by Yair Lapid. At 31 years old, she was elected to the Knesset for the first time, making her the only Israeli woman of Ethiopian origin to be elected to the Israeli parliament. She was also appointed as Deputy Speaker of the Knesset during her first term.

Following the March 2020 elections, she was appointed Minister of Aliyah and Integration, also known as Minister of Immigrant Absorption, becoming the first Ethiopian-born minister in the Israeli government.

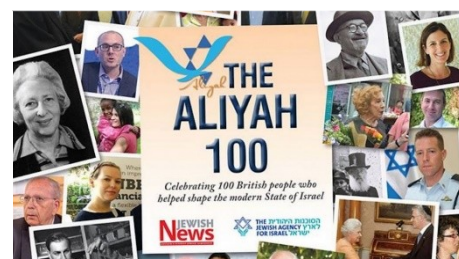
Yehuda Avner:

Yehuda Avner was born in Manchester in 1928 and made Aliyah in 1947 after being heavily involved in BAUK, Avner fought in the war of independence and was one of the founders of Kibbutz Lavi before moving back the UK on shlichut to be Mazkir for 3 years.

Over the next 25/30 years, he worked for five Israeli prime ministers. He was Speechwriter and Secretary to Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir, and as Advisor to Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin, and Shimon Peres. Avner was a top aide and was present for major decisions including Operation Entebbe, and the signing of the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty. Avner also served in diplomatic positions at the Israeli Consulate in New York City, and the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C. Ambassador to Britain, Non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland and Ambassador to Australia. In 2010, he authored *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership*, in which he shares his first-hand experiences working with Israel's political leaders (*highly recommended reading!*).



There are many more Olim from different countries that have made a significant Impact on Israel in a wide variety of fields from many countries. Perhaps a glimpse of this can be seen through the Jewish News' feature "The Aliyah 100 List". Over 25% of the list had been involved in BAUK! Let's see some of you and our Chanichim in the Aliyah 150 list!



Israeli Culture or Oleh-Culture?

Israel's creative expression has absorbed many different cultural and social influences from a variety of places, as the traditions of each group not only compete with those of other groups, but also contend with the country's recent history and life in a Middle Eastern context. The constant search for cultural identity is expressed through creativity in a broad range of art forms, appreciated and enjoyed by many people as part of daily life.

Point to Ponder

- Is there a difference between Israeli culture and an Oleh-culture?

Israeli Music:

What's amazing about Israeli music and poetry is it does more than entertain; it provokes emotions, discusses issues of the day and makes people think. These musicians aren't popular because they have the 'X-factor', they're popular because it's real and relates to their audience's lives.

Point to Ponder

It

- How does this compare to Western music?

is important for us to inform our chanichim that Israel is not just about tourist sites and beaches, but that it is also a very cultural country - and that the culture is incredibly different to what we are used to in England. Sure, there were songs written at the time of WW2 and when Princess Diana died, but come on, Lewis Capaldi and Ed Sheeran not exactly singing about the congestion charge (*ask Ari what they are singing about...*). We are fortunate in England that politics doesn't dictate our culture, but this is what Israel is all about! Israeli songs try to unite Jews and non-Jews - but are they all in vain? The fact that this music is so popular makes us wonder exactly what Israelis are thinking.

Cost of living

Another key issue is the socio-economic situation in Israel. Rising cost of housing and living expenses, government corruption and rising poverty rates which the OECD defined as being twice the average of other developed countries, and a widening gap between rich and poor led to the 2011 Israeli social justice protests



(Hebrew: מְחָצֵת צֶדֶק הַחֲבֵרָתִי), which are also referred to by various other names in the media, which were a series of demonstrations in Israel beginning in July 2011 involving hundreds of thousands of protesters from a variety of socio-economic and religious backgrounds opposing the continuing rise in the cost of living (particularly housing) and the deterioration of public services such as health and education. A common rallying cry at the demonstrations was the chant; "The people demand social justice!" Let's look at some responses to these protests:

- The mayor of Jerusalem at the time Nir Barkat stated "the government must produce affordable housing" and "the government and the Israel Lands Administration should take responsibility for the matter."
- Labour MK Isaac Herzog (now leader of the opposition but not no longer party leader) stated that "all efforts to encourage affordable housing construction in Tel Aviv fail due to the resistance of the Israeli Finance ministry, the Israel Lands Administration, the Israeli ministers and due to the position of the prime minister against government intervention of market prices," and that "it's time to examine an intervention."
- Rav Meir Lau, former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel and current Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, noted that the protest movement is unprecedented in Israel, and added that *"this is the first time I remember ever having seen this many people who didn't know each other before, coming together - outside of a time of war. You have captured my heart."* In addition, Rav Lau promised to contact Prime Minister Netanyahu personally and tell him to honour the mandate of the Trachtenberg committee and accept its recommendations. (This committee was appointed by the PM (Bibi) in 2011 in response to these protests.

In 2014, Naor Narkis, a 25-year-old former intelligence officer, sparked the "Milky Protests" by making an online post on the "Olim I'Berlin" group comparing the price of

■ There have been 16 housing ministers since 1999, all with different agendas.
 ■ When building a house, a developer goes to the council gets permission and starts building. In England this takes 3 months, In Europe the average is 3 years, and Israel 10/11 years.

the “Milky” desert pot in Israel to its equivalent in Germany, which was 20-25% of the price. This symbolised the unreasonable cost of living that is perceived by many Israelis as crippling. This issue is not going away.

As a result, Israeli political parties now base themselves on this platform – one example being the Kulanu Party who were in the 2015 collation with 10 seats (they have since merged into Likud. There have been improvements to the cost of living and housing crisis. Duties on a lot of items have been reduced, bureaucracy but we are still far away from solving these issues.

There’s so much more we can talk about. Here are a few of them. If you’d like to talk about them in Kvutsa please do but discuss with the Rosh/Chinuch Worker first).

- Tension between Israeli societal sectors (Chilonim and Charedim etc).
- Over the last year Israel’s relationship with diaspora Jews has declined (mainly due to not implementing a pluralist section at the Kotel).
- The number of Israelis (home born or Olim) making Yerida has increased
- The Rabbinat’s control over religious affairs such as conversions and kashrut.

Whilst perhaps this leaves us in a negative mood regarding Israel it’s important to realise that living there is not doom and gloom. Many of the above issues are being solved to some degree at least, and there is always room to be active in Israeli society. The UN’s World Happiness Report 2020 ranked Israel at 14th, one place behind the UK.

Point to Ponder

- Is it realistic to expect Israel to be perfect?

K4 Summary:

- There are many different types of people, not just Jewish, who live in Israel.
- Olim are having a largely positive impact on Israeli Society.
- Israel as a melting pot? Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Will we lose our identity? What is our identity?
- Is there a true Israeli culture, or is there no such thing?

- Does Israeli music and poetry have more meaning than English music and poetry?
- Israel has socio-economic issues like any other country, yet still ranks very highly in terms of happiness.

Extra Chomer:



Playlist
Lyrics



The table below shows the progression of religious demographics since the beginning of the state in thousands/percentages. [Since the 2011 census, non-Arab Christians, estimated to number 25,000, were counted as "Jews and others".

Year	Druze		Christians		Muslims		Jews		Total	
1949	14.5	1.2352	34	2.89633	111.5	9.49825	1013.9	86.3702	1173.9	100
1960	23.3	1.08352	49.6	2.30655	166.3	7.73344	1911.3	88.8811	2150.4	100
1970	35.9	1.18792	75.5	2.49826	328.6	10.8732	2582	85.4373	3022.1	100
1980	50.7	1.29281	89.9	2.29237	498.3	12.7062	3282.7	83.706	3921.7	100
1990	82.6	1.71309	114.7	2.37883	677.7	14.0552	3946.7	81.8529	4821.7	100
2000	103.8	1.62969	135.1	2.12111	970	15.2293	4955.4	77.8013	6369.3	96.78
2009	125.3	1.65916	151.7	2.00874	1286.5	17.0352	5703.7	75.5257	7552	96.23
2011	129.8	1.65633	155.1	1.97917	1354.3	17.2817	5907.5	75.3835	7836.6	96.3
2014	135.4	1.632	163.5	1.971	1453.8	17.51	6219.2	75	8296.9	100(?)

Paternal country of origin of Israeli Jews (including non-halachically Jewish Russians) as of 2014 is as follows (CBS):

Country of origin	Born abroad	Israeli born	Total	%
Total	1,538,400	4,623,400	6,161,800	100
Israel	—	2,657,00	2,657,0	43

		0	00	%
Europe/Americas/ Oceania	1,046,100	884,300	1,930,400	31%
Soviet Union	618,500	270,500	889,000	14%
Africa	309,000	586,300	895,300	15%
Asia	183,400	495,700	679,100	11%
Morocco	144,400	342,000	486,400	8%
Iraq	55,700	172,200	227,900	4%
Romania	76,100	126,400	202,500	3%
Poland	39,900	149,200	189,100	3%
North America/Oceania	99,900	75,600	175,500	3%
Iran/Afghanistan	46,200	94,300	140,500	2%
Yemen	24,900	110,500	135,400	2%
Algeria/Tunisia	41,400	91,800	133,200	2%
Ethiopia	79,400	49,500	128,900	2%
Turkey	22,900	52,500	75,400	1%
Germany/Austria	21,500	50,200	71,700	1%
Libya	14,100	53,300	67,400	1%
France	47,500	33,000	80,500	1%
Czech Republic/Slovakia/Hungary	16,300	44,600	60,900	1%
Argentina	34,300	28,100	62,400	1%
Egypt	16,400	38,800	55,200	1%
Europe, other	28,100	32,600	60,700	1%
Bulgaria/Greece	14,000	32,300	46,300	1%
India/Pakistan	17,400	29,800	47,200	1%
Latin America, other	28,000	19,000	47,000	1%
United Kingdom	21,100	22,800	44,900	1%
Syria/Lebanon	9,700	25,000	34,700	0.5%
Other (Africa)	13,400	10,900	24,300	0.4%
Other (Asia)	6,600	11,400	18,000	0.3%



				%
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K5 - Vision vs Reality: Rav Kook's vision today



Aims:

- To think about whether the modern State of Israel today lives up to Rav Kook's vision
- To think about other visions of Israel, and their actualisation (or lack thereof)
- To think about what *our* vision is *now* for the future and to ask (and answer?) what we can DO to make this a reality

So, it's the final kvutza, where we bring it all together and essentially ask about all the other kvutzot - who cares? What has all this got to do with me?

We've seen all these lofty ideals, these dreams of the Jewish people returning and of essentially a messianic era, but does this match today's State of Israel? Has the state of Israel become **ראשית צמיחת** - the beginning of the flowering of our redemption, or is it another "Shabbatai Tzvi" (i.e. Satmar/Monty Python's approach - "He's not the Messiah he's a...")?

Rav Kook's vision and the reality today

On a very basic level, what Rav Kook wanted from the state of Israel was a return to the Land of our forefathers, but re-invigorated to even greater heights.

In his plea to religious people called *Degel Yerushalayim* (which came from England and was in fact signed by the rabbis of London, Manchester, Newcastle and Sunderland), Rav Kook put out his dream of Israel:

He dreamt of a state without a party political system, where everything and everyone would be harmonious. He called for a mass Religious Zionist movement for it. He wanted everyone religious to join together to make this happen.

Or, to put it even more succinctly, he wanted:

AM YISRAEL,
B'ERETZ YISRAEL,
AL PI TORAT YISRAEL

(Sound familiar???)

But his plea fell on deaf ears, the state came about with only a small religious element in the early governments. This led to a downhill slope; the State didn't support religious Jews, and this led to the Charedi world to distance itself from it. It spiralled to essentially what we have today.

Secondly, the dream Rav Kook had, and Yishayahu had before him, was one of Israel being an 'Or Lagoyim'. The new state was supposed to be an example to the world of how to run a country. Rav Kook said, at the founding of the Hebrew University:

"The [...] path of the spirit in the nation serves not only to deepen the holiness of the Torah deep within, but also serves as a path for a two-way traffic: to bring concepts and values of Judaism from our private domain to the public domain of the world in general, since it is for this that we stand

as a light to the nations; and to bring in the general sciences from the breadth of humanity, and adapt that which is good and elevated to the treasure of our life in its purity; for ultimately doing so makes it possible for us to bring forth a logical and lovely expression from our world to the world at large."

Rav Kook concluded that speech at Hebrew U with a warning....



"...alongside that, this university must function at a level where it will cause G-d, the Jewish people and the land of Israel to be publicly sanctified and not profaned in any manner ...Then our fear, together with our great sight of the "glorious" vision of this day, and together with the illumination shining upon our souls from the radiance of the lights of the various and multi-hued currents of spirit that pass over us, will bring us to that very "happiness of heart" that we seek, and which contains a blessing within itself."

Rav Kook's fears showed themselves pretty quickly and nowadays the academia in Israel is at the forefront of biblical criticism and similar things which were warned of. In that respect it didn't go quite to plan.

Other visions of Israel, and the reality today:

Before we look at the good and the bad of Israel it's worth considering 'other' visions for the State which different Zionists had in pre-state Israel (and see if they've fared any better...).

- ❑ Labour Zionism envisaged a class-less society (in the spirit of Marxism) based on agricultural work – FAILED
- ❑ Cultural Zionism wanted a cultural revolution to turn Israel into a cultural and educational centre of excellence, a revival of Hebrew, and not much more – MEH.
- ❑ Herzl's vision (set out in Altneuland – Old New Land) called for a modern welfare state, based on liberal and social values of equality, enterprise and culture – SUCCESS!!

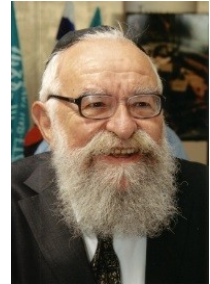
The truth is that all the various visions of Zionism, and how the State should be, were neither total failures nor complete successes. Rav Kook's Religious Zionism was partially successful, as were the other visions for the State. However, Israel still has a number of problems that in a lot of ways prevent Israel from being an Or Lagoyim. Nevertheless, we can be extremely proud of many contributions Israel has made.

In Ma'amrei HaRe'iyah, written almost 100 years ago Rav Kook writes of the early settlements that:

“When we compare their moral quality with the human morals of the masses of all nations that live on their lands, and to the state of our people in the previous period, we must admit that they stand on such a high level that we can take pride in them in the eyes of the entire world”.

However, Rav Amital zt”l says that, nowadays

“The violence, corruption and growing tensions among the various segments of society prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that we have not reached the ideal state of which Rav Kook dreamt”.



Rav Amital’s view is shared by Professor Yedidia Z. Stern. Read the following article and discuss if you think Professor Stern is correct based on what we have already seen in K3.



Point to Ponder

- What are we, as Madrichim/Chanichim of Bnei Akiva going to do about it?
 - What is our vision?
- What can we do to fulfil Rav Kook's (and our) vision?

K5 Summary:

- The modern State of Israel doesn't *fully* live up to Rav Kook's ideal.
- Religion/Torah, despite being a contentious issue, is not a defining issue within Israeli policy making as Rav Kook envisioned.
- The responsibility to bring Israel up to the lofty heights Rav Kook dreamt of falls upon our shoulders (see Extra Chomer for K3).