

Jewish State or State for Jews?



Aims

- 1) To look in to whether Israel should be a Jewish State or State for Jews
- 2) To see some opinions about when and how Halacha should be taken into consideration when deciding state laws
- 3) To look at some controversial issues that come up when

Volume 31

Issue 13 discussing this topic

Shabbat Veyechi 5774

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Dear Madrichim,

This question is one which has been discussed since the beginning and even before the state was declared and one which we as Bnei Akiva should be discussing and making our opinions and voices heard

I wish everyone has had an enjoyable and successful term, an unreal winter machane and all the best of luck for your Shabbatot Ha'irgun!

Good Luck and Shabbat Shalom

Bevirkat Chaverim l'Torah va'Avodah
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Since the state of Israel was declared there has been a massive question that the people of Israel have been asking...

Is Israel a Jewish state or a state for Jews????

The character of the state, regarding whether it should enshrine more Jewish culture, encourage Judaism in schools, and enshrine certain laws of Kashrut and Shabbat observance is a non-stop conversation. This debate reflects a historical divide within Zionism and among the Jewish citizens of Israel, which has large secular and traditional/Orthodox minorities as well as a majority which lies somewhere in between.

Secular Zionism (in a nut shell)- *the historically dominant stream, is rooted in a concept of the Jews as a people that have a right to self-determination. They also claimed that the reason Jews should have a state was to have a place where Jews would not be afraid of anti-Semitic attacks and live in peace.*

Hadracha Hot Tip 1

Split in to teams. Each team must come up with a new country for the Jews; laws, a flag (explanation), location etc. present to the rest and discuss why they did what they did and should it be more 'Jewish' or more 'state'

Religious Zionists- *Believe that religious beliefs and traditional practices are central to Jewish people hood. Assimilating to be a secular "nation like any other" would be*



oxymoronic in nature, and harm more than help the Jewish people. They seek instead to establish what they see as an "authentic Jewish commonwealth" which preserves and encourages Jewish heritage. Zionism is rooted in a concept of the Jews as a nation, in this capacity, they believe that Israel has a mandate to promote Judaism, to be the centre of Jewish culture and population, perhaps even the sole legitimate representative of Jews worldwide.

Secular and religious Zionists argue passionately about what a Jewish state should represent. Post-Zionists and Zionists argue about whether a Jewish state should exist at all. Due to the fact that Israel was created within the sphere of international law as the instrument for Jewish self-determination, these polarities are captured by the questions 'Should Israel maintain and strengthen its status as a state for the Jewish people, or transition to being a state purely for "all of its citizens", or identify as both?' and, if both, 'How to resolve any tensions that *arise from their coexistence?*' To date, Israel has steered a course between secularism and Jewish identity, usually depending on who controls the Israeli High Court of Justice.

The Big Debate:

1. How should Israel be run? Should it be a state for all Jews in which everyone can do what they please (including the government) or should it be a Jewish state which is run according to Jewish values but allows people to live how they please?



2. Do Charedim and Religious Zionists want the same thing when they ask for the government to pass certain religious bills?

3. Would there be any secular Jews who also want the government to pass certain religious bills?

Some opinions on the issue:

1. Professor Ariel Rosen-Zvi, an observant Jew, and one of the authors of a proposed constitution for the State of Israel, believes that religion must not be imposed by force; it can only function within the framework of freedom of choice. Every person is entitled to freedom of religion and conscience. The United States has no official religion in accordance with Thomas Jefferson's "wall of separation" between Church and State. Although Rosen-Zvi does not recommend the American 'wall of separation' to Israel, he does not go to the other extreme either. Both sides, religious and secular, must learn to compromise, or it may prove to be impossible to live together.

Hadracha Hot Tip 2

Stage a debate (in independence hall about what the new country will be like) and give three chanichim these opinions. See what the other chanichim say about the different opinions...

2. Aviezer Ravitsky a liberal-minded Professor of Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew University. He feels that the secular Jew requires the country to be free and the religious Jew must go along with that, but at the same time, the secular Jew must cooperate in keeping the nation Jewish. He believes that a

compromise can be reached. As an observant Jew, he is prepared to make significant concessions for the sake of



freedom. Yet, he still wants the Knesset to base its decisions as far as possible on Jewish law and tradition. Concerning the Shabbat observance, Ravitsky would ban all transport because it is financed in part from the public purse. He would, however, permit private taxis and cars to run since the individuals who travel in them finance them.

But wait a minute. That is all fine and dandy for those that can afford to own a car or take a taxi, but what about those who need to travel on Shabbat but cannot afford it?



3. **Rabbi Zvi Weinman** - "If we don't believe in religion, what are we doing in this land? Hashem promised it to our ancestors on condition that we observe the Torah. If we do not, then we are here as conquerors. We were united over the ages not by common ethnic descent nor by a common history, territory or language...but by a common faith."

Hmmm there seems to be a difference in opinion as to what the state of Israel can be defined as..... (Surprise surprise)

- ***Where do you stand?***
- ***Maybe ask your chanichim to stand behind the statement they agree with??***

Some controversial topics



Buses on Shabbat - *Should religious people pay, through taxes, for irreligious people to break Shabbat?*



The Israeli Army -

Should people be allowed to not join the army in order to learn in yeshiva? Why, if the

Religious Zionist world has found a compromise which works both

spiritually and with the army, hasn't the Charedi world taken up the Hesder program?

Hadracha Hot Tip 3

YOUNGER CHANICHIM!!!!

For younger chanichim concentrate only on these three areas. Do activities on each area e.g. on shabbat, army, kashrut then discuss their importance and whether or no when building a Jewish state they should be taken in to account



Kashrut - *Should Israel promote the sale and farming of non-kosher food within its borders? Two specific examples would be the sale and farming of pork and the sale of Chametz during Pesach, both of which have been issues in the past for the State of*

Israel.



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JPost Aliyah Haredi man arrested for harassing women over 'modest dress' By YAAKOV LAPPIN 01/02/2012 12:10

JPost Conference JPost Salutes MDA Talkbacks (2)

TEKUMA JPost Supports Drug Rehab

A Haredi resident of Modiin Illit was arrested on Monday morning on suspicion of verbally harassing women he deemed were "dressed immodestly." Judea and Samaria police say at least four complaints have been lodged against the suspect in recent days, though some of the alleged offenses took place months ago.

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Haredim also have rights

Op-ed: Does Israel's majority have deep desire to make the haredi minority disappear?

Hanoch Daum Published: 01.01.12, 11:02 / Israel Opinion

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A moderate haredi I spoke with last week praised M Livnat, who said that segregated buses should be placed in haredi areas. People don't realize it, but these buses started because of women's complaints, he said. According to one study, one-third of all women in Israel report being harassed on a bus at least once in their life.

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JPost Aliyah Haredi use of Holocaust symbols reaps condemnation By JEREMY SIVAN 01/02/2012 12:10

JPost Conference JPost Salutes MDA

Children in mock concentration camp uniforms, yellow stars expresses how "Zionists are trying to eliminate us spiritually," says Eda Haredit.

Photo by: Matt Israel Salem

A modern day

evolution

In the past few weeks this argument of Religious vs. Secular has taken a massive leap in the headlines of almost every news outlet in Israel. These are just a few of the headlines that have been published in the Israeli news over the past few weeks. A large part of this argument came about because the Charedi community wanted to try and eradicate women in public places (advertising billboards etc.) however I think it is very important that we don't look at this argument as Charedi vs. the world rather as a need to stand up for religion. As the first two articles show, the treatment of Charedim can be sometimes be seen as unimportant because 'they don't care how they treat others', however perhaps, although sometimes in inappropriate ways, they highlight religious issues that should be at the forefront of our minds and should be something that we as Religious Zionists are thinking about. I am not saying that we should be running round scratching women's faces out of billboards but perhaps that we should make our voices heard and show some passion for our religious beliefs and not stand idly when inappropriate

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'Treatment of haredim – like Nuerenberg Laws'

Eda Haredit member who participated in 'Holocaust display' during Jerusalem rally claims 'persecution of haredim resembles race laws passed in Germany against Jews'; slams secular Jews for 'making Hitler proud by acting like goyim'

Kobi Nachshoni Published: 01.01.12, 23:45 / Israel News

pictures of men and women are plastered around our country for no reason other than to sell products 'the western way'.

Hadracha Hot Tips for younger Chanichim

Shabbat :

- Ask each chanich to say the first word that they think of when they hear shabbat then play Adman with those words

Army:

- Split in to teams. Give each team information about a war that Israel has fought in. Ask each team to make a play on the war and then present it to everyone else
- Spend five or so minutes teaching your team some things from the army (marching in a line, push-ups, dropping to the floor) then every so often throughout the peulah ask them to do one of those things
- Ask them what they think an army is (they will hopefully say shooting guns, going to war, fighting people etc.) and discuss what the **IDF** is. (Israeli **DEFENCE** Force) and how its main aim is defence rather than attack

Kashrut:

- Do a food tasting session (just for fun!)

- Place pictures of animals on the floor ask what is kosher and what isn't then discuss why one is and one isn't kosher

לגע בעברית - Rega B'Ivrit

7

חץ

Stress

Stop being stressed, there is Shabbat Ha'irgun in five weeks!





Bnei Akiva 5774: Dates for your Diary

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