

HALACHIC AND HASHKAFIC ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY 212 - MEDINAT YISRAEL WITHOUT GEULA EXPLORING THE RELIGIOUS ZIONISM OF RAV SOLOVEITCHIK OU ISRAEL CENTER - SPRING 2021

- In the previous two shiurim we have looked at the ingathering of the exiles and establishment of the State of Israel in a binary manner: either (i) the redemptive and potentially messianic process of geula in the thinking of Rav Kook and his talmidim; or (ii) the narrative of the non-Zionist Charedi world which sees no intrinsic religious positivity in the establishment of the State of Israel or the anti-Zionist perspective of the Satmar Rebbe which sees Israel and Zionism as religiously negative and even demonic in nature.
- In this shiur we will explore an intermediate alternative - a Religious Zionist perspective which sees the State of Israel as religiously positive at the same time as eschewing any redemptive or messianic agenda. This position was most famously proposed by R. Yosef Ber Soloveitchik and his talmidim.

A] HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Rav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik was born in 1903 in Poland into the well-known Soloveitchik family. His grandfather - Rav Chaim, his uncle - Rav Velvel (the Brisker Rov) and his father - Rav Moshe had established the school of Brisk, with its scientific, abstract and analytical approach to Torah. The Soloveitchik family were also solidly opposed to Zionism - both secular and religious.
- After a rigorous Torah education in Eastern Europe, he moved to Berlin to pursue secular studies, receiving a PhD in 1931.
- In 1932 he moved to Boston and became a representative of Agudat Yisrael, which adopted a non-Zionist or anti-Zionist agenda.
- In 1935, R. Soloveitchik made his one, and only, visit to Eretz Yisrael to submit his candidacy for the chief rabbinate of Tel Aviv. The application was not successful.
- Over the following years, R. Soloveitchik's views on Zionism changed gradually and this transition was accelerated by the Holocaust. By 1944 he was chairman of the Central Committee of the Mizrahi Religious Zionists of America¹.
- In 1941 he succeeded his father as Rosh Yeshiva of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University, where he was also Professor of Philosophy.

1. I was not born into a Zionist household. My parents' ancestors, my father's house, my teachers and colleagues were far from the Mizrahi religious Zionists ... My links with the Mizrahi grew gradually; I had my doubts about the validity of the Mizrahi approach ... If I now identify with the Mizrahi, against my family tradition, it is only because ... I feel that Divine Providence ruled like 'Joseph' and against his brothers² ... I built an altar upon which I sacrificed sleepless nights, doubts and reservations³. Regardless, the years of the Hitlerian Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the accomplishments of the Mizrahi 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.

Rav Soloveitchik, Five Addresses - p34,36

- Over the next 50 years, until his death in April 1993, Rav Soloveitchik⁴ developed a position⁵ on Religious Zionism which came to be known by some as 'the Third Way'⁶.

1. Rav Soloveitchik's father, Rav Moshe, had earlier connections with the Mizrahi movement when, in 1920, he became head of religious studies at the Mizrahi-affiliated Takhkemoni Rabbinical Seminary in Warsaw. Accounts of this period indicate that this affiliation of Rav Moshe caused significant tension and friction - involving rejection by his family because of the connection with Mizrahi at the same time as rejection by the Religious Zionist school establishment because of his anti-Zionist roots.
2. In the previous section of the Address, Rav Soloveitchik develops the idea that, like the biblical Joseph, the Mizrahi movement dreamed of a new paradigm which would be needed for the Jewish world in the 20th Century and, like the brothers, the anti-Zionist religious establishment rejected this dream and insisted that the Jewish future would be run along precisely the same lines as the Jewish past.
3. Rav Soloveitchik also broke with his family hashkafa by engaging deeply in secular studies. He did not however express the same doubts and reservations about this shift as he did concerning the shift from Aguda to Mizrahi.
4. Scores of books have been written on the thought of Rav Soloveitchik. The best overall summary is *Majesty and Humility* by Rabbi Reuven Ziegler.
5. The 'messianic Zionist' perspective of Rav Kook and 'non-messianic Zionist' perspective of Rav Soloveitchik have their historical and philosophical roots in the earlier writings of the first Religious Zionist thinkers - Rav Zvi Hirsch Kalisher (1795-1874) and R. Yitzchak Yaakov Reines (1839-1915) respectively.
6. In his article *Is This the Final Geula* (see below), Rabbi Alan Haber proposes a 'fourth way' - a position between the messianic Religious Zionism of Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook and the non-messianic position of Rav Soloveitchik. Invoking the Rambam's ruling in Hilchot Melachim 11:4 that the status of Mashiach may not initially be clear - when he only has a 'chezkat Mashiach' - Rabbi Haber proposes that we adopt a similar position regarding Geula. Since current events do look very promising be'H and appear to be the beginning of the process of redemption, we should regard these times as 'bechezkat' the beginning of Geula, and adopt a halachic and hashkafic approach which works on the presumption that we are indeed in a process of Geula until proved otherwise.

2. 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.

Community, Covenant and Commitment, 163-164

- The classic works of Rav Soloveitchik which formulate his hashkafa on Religious Zionist are:
 - Kol Dodi Dofek - his 1956 Address⁷ which was later published and translated⁸.
 - The 5 Drashot (1962-67)⁹
 - Other addresses have recently been translated and published, mostly from R. Soloveitchik's earlier years, which also throw light on his evolving conception of Religious Zionism.

B] KOL DODI DOFEK

3. (ב) אָנִי יִשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עֵר קוֹל דּוֹדִי דּוֹפֵק פִּתְחֵי־אֵי אַחֲתִי רַעֲיִתִי יוֹנְתִי תַמְתִּי שְׂרָאֲשִׁי נִמְלֵא־טָל קוֹצוֹתַי רְסִיִּסִי לִלְחָה: (ג) פִּשְׁטָתִּי אֶת־כְּתָנִי־אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשְׁנָה רְתָצְתִי אֶת־רִגְלִי אֵיכָכָה אֶטְנַנֶּם: (ד) דּוֹדִי שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר וּמַעֵי הָמוּ עָלָיו: (ה) קָמֹתִי אָנִי לִפְתּוֹחַ לְדוֹדִי וְנִדְי נְטִפּוֹ־מֹר וְאַצְבָּעֵתִי מֹר עִבֵּר עַל כַּפּוֹת הַמַּנְעוּל: (ו) פִּתְחֵתִי אָנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי חִמַּק עִבֵּר נִפְשִׁי יִצְאָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ בְּקִשְׁתִּיהֶּן וְלֹא מִצְאֵתִיהֶן קָרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנָנִי:

שיר השירים פרק ה

I sleep, but my heart is awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking: Open for me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is full of dew, my locks with the drops of the night. I have taken off my tunic; how can I put it on? I have bathed my feet; how can I soil them? My beloved stretched forth his hand from the hole, and my insides stirred because of him. I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with flowing myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had hidden and was gone; my soul went out when he spoke; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he did not answer me.

The central narrative of Shir HaShirim is the mutual search of the Lover (the Jewish People) and the Beloved (God) for each other. At the climax of the song, they almost make the elusive contact. He knocks on the door when she is home but, in a moment of laziness and almost incomprehensible apathy, She cannot be bothered to dress enough to simply answer the knock and open the door. When she realizes the madness of this reaction and runs to the door, He has already left.

4. 22. The Rabbi: ... It is better to dwell in the Holy Land, even in a town mostly inhabited by heathens, than abroad in a town chiefly peopled by Israelites; for he who dwells in the Holy Land is compared to him who has a God, whilst he who dwells abroad is compared to him who has no God. Further, the atmosphere of the Holy Land makes wise. They expressed their love of the land as follows: He who walks four yards in the land is assured of happiness in the world to come

23. Al Khazari: If this be so, you fall short of the duty laid down in thy law, by not endeavoring to reach that place, and making it your abode in life and death All nations agree on this point. Everybody turns to it in prayer and visits it in pilgrimage. Your bowing and kneeling in the direction of it is either mere appearance or thoughtless worship!

24. The Rabbi: This is a severe reproach, O king of the Khazars. It is the sin which kept the divine promise with regard to the Second Temple from being fulfilled. Divine Providence was ready to restore everything as it had been at first, if they had all willingly consented to return. But only a part was ready to do so, whilst the majority and the aristocracy remained in Babylon, preferring dependence and slavery, and unwilling to leave their houses and their affairs. 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocks' means God's call to return The words: 'I have put off my coat,' refer to the people's slothfulness in consenting to return.... . Were we prepared to meet the God of our forefathers with a pure mind, we should find the same salvation as our fathers did in Egypt. If we say: 'Worship his holy hill, worship at His footstool, He who restores His glory to Zion' (Psalms 99:9, Psalm 99:5), and other words, this is but the chattering of the starling and the nightingale. We do not realize what we say by this sentence, nor others, as you rightly observe, O Prince of the Khazars.

The Kuzari 2:22-24

7. This was given in Yiddish to the Conference of the Religious Zionists of America on the 8th anniversary of the State of Israel - May 1956. It was later rewritten in Hebrew and published in the anthology 'Torah U'Melucha' (1961).

8. Kol Dodi Dofek: Listen - My Beloved Knocks, translated by David Gordon, YU 1990. Tradition Journal dedicated an entire issue (39:3) in 2006 to an analysis of Kol Dodi Dofek 50 years on. It is fascinating to read these articles concerning the then state of Religious Zionism in the context of the expulsion from Gush Katif which in progress at that time.

9. These addresses were originally delivered in Yiddish at conferences of the Religious Zionists of America between 1962 and 1967. Four were published in Yiddish (*Fir Drashes*) and the fifth as a separate pamphlet. They were all translated into Hebrew and published in 1973 as *Chamesh Derashot*. In 1982 they were translated into English and published as *The Rav Speaks*.

Rav Soloveitchik's essay divides into four major units:

(i) An exploration of the Torah's perspective on the meaning of evil in the world.¹⁰

(ii) The notion of the "six Divine knocks" reflected in events surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel and their religious message. This section concludes with sharp criticism of the Diaspora religious community for not making aliya, nor helping sufficiently to build, defend and shape the nature and character of the young state.

(iii) An analysis of the concepts of the two covenants. These are the covenant of fate - *brit goral* - which the Jews entered in Egypt (as an *am/go*), and the covenant of destiny or purpose - *brit yeud* - which the Jews entered at Sinai (as an *eida/machane*). Together, these covenants bind the Jewish people throughout history. Divine activity is experienced by man as *goral* (fate), impervious to the questioning mind. In the *brit goral* the Jewish people experience a shared history, shared suffering, shared responsibility and shared activity. Only when man chooses to accept his fate and convert it into an opportunity for spiritual growth (*ye'ud*—destiny), does it yield to human categories of thought.

(iv) An assessment of the role of the Religious Zionist movement in the national life of the State of Israel at that time (1950s) and a critique of the religious and spiritual weaknesses of secular Zionism.

B1] THE DANGER OF MISSING THE MOMENT

5. Miraculous grace places upon man an absolute responsibility to fulfill the larger imperative that calls out from the miracle. A transcendental imperative always accompanies miraculous activity. ... Woe unto the beneficiary of a miracle who does not recognize it for what it is, and whose ear is deaf to the echo of the imperative that arises out of this metahistorical event. Pity the one who benefits from the miracles of the Master of the Universe but the spark of faith is not kindled in him, and his conscience is not stirred by the sight of this singular event.

When a miracle does not find its appropriate echo in actual deeds, a lofty vision dissipates and is squandered, whereupon Divine Justice indicts the ungrateful recipient of the miracle. Judaism has been very careful about not missing the appointed hour. It has a very sensitive time awareness; any delay is considered sinful. Man may sometimes lose his entire world for but one sin – that of tarrying.

What is the essence of the story of the Song of Songs, if not the description of a paradoxical and tragic hesitation on the part of the love-intoxicated, anxiety stricken Lover, when the opportunity, couched in majestic awe, presented itself? What is it, if not the deferral of a great and sublime opportunity pregnant with a possibility of which she dreamed, for which she fought, which she sought, and for which she had searched with all the fervor of her soul?

Kol Dodi Dofek Chap 3¹¹

B2] THE SIX KNOCKS

6. How many times did the Beloved knock on the door of the Lover? It appears to me that we can count at least six knocks.

First, the knock of the Beloved was heard in the political arena. From the point of view of international relations, no one will deny that the rebirth of the State of Israel, in a political sense, was an almost supernatural occurrence. Both Russia and the Western nations supported the establishment of the State of Israel. This was perhaps the one resolution on which East and West concurred [during the Cold War era]. I am inclined to believe that the United Nations was especially created for this end – for the sake of fulfilling the mission that Divine Providence had placed upon it. It appears to me that one cannot point to any other concrete accomplishment on the part of the United Nations.

Second, the knock of the Beloved was heard on the battlefield. The tiny defense forces of [the State of] Israel defeated the mighty Arab armies. The miracle of "the many delivered into the hands of the few" materialized before our eyes, and an even greater miracle happened! God hardened the heart of Ishmael and commanded him to go into battle against the State of Israel. Had the Arabs not declared war on Israel and instead supported the Partition Plan, the State of Israel would have remained without Jerusalem, without a major portion of the Galilee, and without some areas of the Negev.....

Third, the Beloved also began to knock on the door of the tent of theology, and possibly this is the strongest beckoning. I have, on several occasions, emphasized in my remarks concerning the Land of Israel that the theological arguments of Christian theologians to the effect that the Holy One has taken away from the Community of Israel its rights to the Land of Israel, and that all of the biblical promises relating to Zion and Jerusalem now refer in an allegorical sense to Christianity and the Christian Church, were all publicly shown to be false, baseless contentions by the establishment of the State of Israel.

10. These themes were later developed and expanded upon in a number of essays and letters, many of which appear in the collection *Out of the Whirlwind*.

11. The English is taken from the 1990 Gordon translation, now available in full on Sefaria.

Fourth, the Beloved knocks in the heart of the youth which is assimilated and perplexed. The period of *hester panim* in the 1940's brought confusion among the Jewish masses and especially Jewish youth. Assimilation increased, and the urge to flee from Judaism and the Jewish people reached its apex. A seemingly unstoppable tidal wave stood over us and threatened to destroy us. Suddenly, the Beloved began to beckon to the hearts of the perplexed, and His beckoning, the establishment of the State of Israel, at least slowed the process of flight. Many who were once alienated are now bound to the Jewish State with ties of pride in its mighty accomplishments The very mention of the name Israel is a reminder to the fleeing Jew that he cannot escape from the community of Israel in whose midst he has been enmeshed from birth. Everywhere we turn we hear the name "Israel." When we listen to a radio station, when we open a paper, when we participate in a debate on current events, we encounter the question of Israel; it is always a topic of public concern. This phenomenon is extremely important for Jews who are afflicted with self-hatred and want to turn away from Judaism and run for their lives. They hide, like Jonah in his day, in the recesses of the ship (Jonah 1:5) and seek to "slumber". The Captain, however, does not permit them to ignore their fate.

The fifth knock of the Beloved is perhaps the most important. For the first time in the annals of our exile, Divine Providence has amazed our enemies with the astounding discovery that Jewish blood is not cheap! If we want to courageously defend our continued national and historical existence, we must, from time to time, interpret the verse of an "eye for an eye" literally. So many "eyes" were lost in the course of our bitter exile because we did not repay hurt for hurt. The time has come for us to fulfill the simple meaning of "an eye for an eye." Pay no attention to the saccharine suggestions of known assimilationists ... who ... think they are still living in Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, and Minsk of the year 1905, and openly declare that revenge is forbidden to the Jewish people in any place, at any time, and under all circumstances. ... Revenge is forbidden when it is pointless, but if one is aroused thereby to self-defense, it is the most elementary right of man to take his revenge.

Thank God we have lived to see the day when, with the help of God, Jews have it within their power to defend themselves. Let us not forget that the poison of Hitlerite anti-Semitism (which made Jews fair game to all) still permeates this generation, which looked with equanimity upon the horrible scene of the suffocation of millions in gas chambers as a normal event that need not be challenged. The antidote for this venom that poisoned minds and dulled hearts is the readiness of the State of Israel to defend the lives of its citizens. ...

The sixth beckoning¹² ... was heard at the time of the opening of the gates of the Land of Israel. A Jew escaping from an enemy's land now knows that he can find refuge in the land of his forefathers. Had Israel been born before the Hitlerian Holocaust, hundreds of thousands of Jews could have been saved from the gas chambers and the crematoria. The miracle of the State tarried somewhat, and in the wake of its delay, thousands and tens of thousands of Jews were taken to the slaughter.....

Kol Dodi Dofek Chap 4

7. What was our reaction to the beckoning of the voice of the Beloved, to the munificence of His loving-kindness and miracles? Did we get out of our beds and immediately open the door, or did we continue to rest like the Lover [in the story of the Song of Songs], and were we too lazy to get out of our beds?....

All the trembling and fear for the geographical integrity of the State of Israel, all the suggestions of our enemies which are directed at territorial concessions by the State of Israel, and all of the brazen demands of the Arabs for boundary changes are based on only one fact: the Jews have not populated the Negev and established hundreds of settlements there. Had the Negev been settled with hundreds of thousands of Jews, even Nasser would never have dreamed of the possibility of rending it from the State of Israel. Wide and unpopulated expanses constantly and perpetually endanger the tranquility of the State.

.... We are terribly guilty for this gross negligence. American Jewry could have certainly accelerated the process ... Yet, why should we examine the faults of others and place the responsibility on the shoulders of non-observant Jews? Let us admit our own faults and confess to our own derelictions. Among the Jews of America, Orthodox Jews bear the most blame for the slow pace of the conquest of the Land through settlement. It was for us, the loyalists of Judaism, to heed the call of the Beloved more acutely, and to respond to it immediately with extraordinary effort.

Let us publicly and frankly confess: we complain about certain Israeli leaders and their attitude toward the values of our tradition and religious practice. The complaints are justified. We have serious charges against the secular leadership of the Land of Israel. However, are only they to be blamed, and are we as faultless and pure as the heavenly angels?

What did the scholar tell the King of the Khazars? "You have embarrassed me, King of Khazars! ... And our saying 'worship at His holy hill' [Psalms 99:9] is but the chirping of a starling" (HaKuzari 2:24). Do we not hear in our trembling over the safety and tranquility of the Land of Israel in our day, the beckoning of the Beloved who begs the Lover to let Him in? He has already been beckoning for eight years, and still He has not been properly responded to. Nonetheless, He continues to beckon. To our good fortune, our inherited Land has become more beautiful. The Beloved has not shown the Lover any favoritism, but He has compassion for her. The Beloved beckoned for only a short moment that night and disappeared, yet with us He has exhibited extraordinary patience. It is eight years that He has continued to beckon. Hopefully, we will not miss the opportunity!!

Kol Dodi Dofek Chap 5

12. Noticeably absent from Rav Soloveitchik's analysis is any 'knock' relating to Geula or Mashiach.

C] DIFFERENT VISIONS OF KEDUSHAT ERETZ YISRAEL

8. For [R. Yehudah Halevi and the Ramban], the attribute of *kedushah*, holiness, ascribed to the Land of Israel is an objective metaphysical quality inherent in the land. With all my respect for the Rishonim, I must disagree with such an opinion. I do not believe that it is halakhically cogent. Kedushah, under a halakhic aspect, is man-made; more accurately, it is a historical category. A soil is sanctified by historical deeds performed by a sacred people, never by any primordial superiority. The halakhic term *kedushat ha-aretz*, the sanctity of the land, denotes the consequence of a human act, either conquest (heroic deeds) or the mere presence of the people in that land (intimacy of man and nature). *Kedushah* is identical with man's association with Mother Earth. Nothing should be attributed a priori to dead matter. Objective *kedushah* smacks of fetishism.

Rav Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*, 150

9. ארץ-ישראל איננה דבר חיצוני, קננו חיצוני לאמה, רק בתור אמצעי למטרה של ההתאגדות הפללית והחזקות קיומה החמרי או אפלו הרוחני. ארץ-ישראל היא חטיבה עצמותית קשורה בקשר-חיים עם האמה, חבוקה בסגלות פנימיות עם מצאונתה. ומתוך כך אי-אפשר לעמד על התכן של סגלת קדשת ארץ-ישראל, ולהוציא לפעל את עמק חביתה, בשום השכלה רציונלית אנושית כי-אם ברוח ד' אשר על האמה בכללה
המחשבה על-דבר ארץ ישראל, שהיא רק ערך חיצוני כדי העמדת אגדת האמה, אפלו כשהיא באה כדי לבצר על-גדה את הרעיון היהודתי בגולה, כדי לשמר את צביונו ולאמץ את האמונה והיראה והחזיק של המצוות המעשיות בצורה הגונה, אין לה הפרי הראוי לקיום, כי היסוד הזה הוא רעוע בערך איתו הקדש של ארץ-ישראל. האמוץ האמתי של רעיון היהדות בגולה בוא יבוא רק מצד עמק שקועו בארץ-ישראל, ומתקנות ארץ-ישראל יקבל תמיד את כל תכונותיו העצמיות. **צפית ישועה היא כח-המעמיד של היהדות הגלותית, והיהדות של ארץ-ישראל היא הישועה עצמה.**

אורות מאופל ארץ-ישראל / א

The Land of Israel is not some external entity. It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people. It is not merely a means of uniting the populace. It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence. It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence. Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning. It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life. Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities. Therefore, it is impossible to appreciate the content of the sanctity of the Land of Israel and to actualize the depth of love for her by some rational human understanding – only by the spirit of God that is in the soul of Israel. ...

The view of the Land of Israel as only an external value serving as a cohesive force – even when it comes only to reinforce the Jewish idea in the Diaspora, to preserve its identity and to strengthen its faith, fear [of Hashem] and observance of mitzvot- bears no permanent fruit, for this foundation is shaky compared to the holy might of the Land of Israel. The true strengthening of the Jewish idea in exile will come about only through the depth of its immersion in the Land of Israel, and from the hope of the Land of Israel it will receive always its essential characteristics. **The expectation of salvation is the force that preserves exilic Judaism; the Judaism of the Land of Israel is salvation itself.**

• This is the tip of the iceberg of a much bigger debate as to the nature of kedusha and tahara - of time, objects, places, language and people. The Rambam adopts a much more instrumental approach - these things, places etc impact upon the person, enabling them to connect more deeply with God and create a kedusha through that relationships. Ramban and R. Yehuda HaLevi adopt a far more ontological approach, whereby kedusha inheres in the very things/places themselves and activates the spiritual dimension of man to connect with God.¹³

D] RAV SOLOVEITCHIK & RAV KOOK - CONTRASTING VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Some of the key elements¹⁴ of Rav Soloveitchik's Religious Zionism, and broad contrasts with that of Rav Kook, include the following¹⁵:

	<u>RAV SOLOVEITCHIK: NON-MESSIANIC ZIONISM</u>	<u>RAV KOOK - ATCHALTA DEGEULA</u>
THE JEWISH MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each individual and the nation to hear the call of the times and transform their FATE (acting on them as objects) to DESTINY (where they act upon it as subjects). To transform <i>bodedut</i> (aloneness) to <i>levadiut</i> (uniqueness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the nation to bring ultimate redemption to the Jewish people and the whole world.

13. For a detailed development of this theme see *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism* by Prof Menachem Kellner.
 14. These are short summaries and do not come close to expressing the nuance of their respective hashkafot. A good comparison of some of the key differences between 'messianic' and 'non-messianic Zionism' is *Is This the Final Geula?* by Rabbi Alan Haber - <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/783203/rabbi-alan-haber/is-this-the-final-geula/>
 15. This includes the talmidim of Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik. Rav Kook himself died in 1935 - before the Holocaust and the State of Israel. As with all great thinkers, the students of Rav Kook (in particular his son, Rav Tzvi Yehuda) and of Rav Soloveitchik (in particular his son-in-law, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein) continued and developed their thought, sometimes in in different directions from their masters. The summaries in this section, particularly that of Rav Kook's position, strongly reflect the positions of his talmidim and successors.
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	RAV SOLOVEITCHIK: NON-MESSIANIC ZIONISM	RAV KOOK - ATCHALTA DEGEULA
RESPONSE TO SUFFERING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We should not try to understand WHY current events (good or bad) happen to us (individually or as the Jewish people). Since we can never achieve a full understanding, partial understandings are futile and unhelpful. We must however decide HOW to react to the challenges and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can and should interpret current events as part of the Divine Plan for redemption. The reality of our current Geula is not a matter of interpretation of speculation - it is as clear as day and an absolute certainty.
THE HOLOCAUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We cannot and must not explain <u>why</u> the Holocaust happen but must <u>respond</u> to the tragedy by deepening our chesed and sense of responsibility for others. We must not make the same mistake again of failing to support the Jews of Eretz Yisrael as we failed to adequately support the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holocaust, despite is inexpressible tragedy, resulted in the following 'accomplishments': (i) disengagement from foreign lands as God forced the Jews out of the Diaspora; (ii) training of the refugee-survivors for the task of redeeming the Land of Israel. The suicidal struggle of the ghetto uprisings in the Holocaust was reintroduced (successfully) in the underground struggle which led to the establishment of Israel; (iii) a cathartic event which deepened nationalist sentiment and created awareness of national psychological characteristics.
ZIONISM & REDEMPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The success of Zionism and the State have enormous religious value and theological significance, without having clear redemptive standing. Not necessarily 'reishit tzemichat ge'ulateinu'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The success of Zionism and the State is clear evidence of the beginning of Geula - redemption. Clearly 'reishit tzemichat ge'ulateinu'
THE ROLE OF SECULAR ZIONISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secular Zionism has been a partial success in the <i>brit goral</i> in that it has enabled Jews to find safety, security and solidarity. It is however a betrayal of <i>brit goral</i> in that it fails to recognize that the fate of loneliness - <i>bodedut</i>, and uniqueness - <i>levadiut</i> that has been decreed upon the Jewish nation. Secular Zionism, eager to flee from loneliness and suffering, has deluded itself that anti-Semitism will be allayed, rather than exacerbated, by the founding of a Jewish state. Secular Zionism's departure from halachic norms are also a deep betrayal of <i>brit yeud</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secular Zionism has at its source a 'holy rebellion' against decadent forms of Orthodox Judaism. This rebellion will ultimately purify and rejuvenate Orthodoxy.
ERETZ YISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eretz Yisrael is the land in which Torah & Mitzvot can be fulfilled in the broadest and most meaningful way. The proper approach to the Land is 'instrumental' - as a means to full realization of halacha, and devoid of inherent metaphysical meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eretz Yisrael is a Land with a mystical and spiritual <i>segula</i> (with a metaphysical identity of its own) with which the mystical <i>segula</i> of Torah and the mystical <i>segula</i> of the Jewish People can bond - Am Yisrael/Torat Yisrael/Eretz Yisrael.
THE HAND OF GOD IN THE STATE OF ISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dramatic and improbable events leading to the State of Israel are unquestionably the Hand of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dramatic and improbable events leading to the State of Israel are unquestionably the Hand of God and the beginning of the Geula.
THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND PROPHECY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foundation of the State of Israel is a miraculous salvation by God of the Jewish people. It is not necessarily the fulfillment of any prophecy concerning Geula or the coming of Mashiach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foundation of the State of Israel is the beginning of fulfillment of the prophecies of Geula and, ultimately, the messianic process which will unfold gradually, naturally and step by step.
RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES OF THE STATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State of Israel has many practical and religious advantages, including: (i) as a refuge for persecuted Jews; (ii) as a bulwark against assimilation; (iii) as a fulfillment of the mitzva to settle the land; (iv) to promote Torah study and rebuild the lost Torah centers of Europe; (v) to apply halacha to a broader range of societal issues; (vi) to live a more organic, whole and integrated Jewish life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While not disagreeing with these advantages, the main goal of the State is in furthering the process of Geula and ultimately the coming of Mashiach ben David.

	RAV SOLOVEITCHIK: NON-MESSIANIC ZIONISM	RAV KOOK - ATCHALTA DEGEULA
CELEBRATION OF THE STATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yom Ha'atzmaut should be marked by celebration, Tehillim and thanksgiving but without significant changes to the existing synagogue services (and no Messianic overtones). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yom Ha'atzmaut requires a new service - expanded Pesukei deZimra, (al Ha-Nisim?), Hallel (with/without a beracha), Haftara, Shofar, Shema Yisrael/Hashem Hu HaElokim, Ani Ma'amin.
THE SECULAR STATE & SECULAR ISRAELIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the religious role of the secular State and secular Israelis varies according to the individual - from largely positive to largely negative. There is no 'predetermined role' for the <i>chilonim</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The secular state and most secular Israelis have assumed the collective predetermined role of Mashiach ben Yosef. They are building the physical infrastructure of the Land and will ultimately do teshuva enabling Mashiach ben David (ie the religious renaissance) to come.
THE SECULAR STATE IN HALACHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The secular State of Israel is the most significant expression of the mitzva (according to the Ramban) to settle the land of Israel. The State, as an entity, does not however have a specific halachic place in Jewish thought. Sovereignty is not an inherent value but a means to achieve other objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The secular State of Israel has the halachic status of <i>malchut</i> with all the halachic implication that raises. Jewish Sovereignty has an inherent value.
WARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wars fought by the State of Israel must be conducted morally and ethically and in such a way to maximize the safety of the population of the State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wars fought by the State of Israel are considered to be waged by a Jewish king for the protection of the Yishuv and thus have the halachic status of <i>milchemet mitzva</i>, with all the halachic implications that brings, such as universal military service.
THE VALIDITY OF JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE DIASPORA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Jewish community in the Diaspora is not able to fully express its Judaism and Torah life in the same way as it can in Israel and large scale aliya is desirable (although, realistically, R. Soloveitchik called on American Jewry to support Israel financially). The Jewish people CAN legitimately build Torah institutions, strive for kedusha and apply halacha to modern society in the Diaspora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judaism is deeply deficient outside Israel - like a mind without a body. There is no justification to continue long-term investment in building Jewish communities in the Diaspora. All Jews should be encouraged to make aliya as soon as possible.
THE FAILURE OF JEWS IN THE DIASPORA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Diaspora Jews have failed to heed the call of God to make aliya and aid Israel just like they failed morally in not aiding the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. Failure to act in aid of Israel may endanger the entire enterprise of the Jewish State, which could c'v fail. Redemption through the State of Israel is not assured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Diaspora Jews have failed to heed the call of God to make aliya but they will eventually be forced to come to Israel by the non-Jewish nations if they do not come willingly. The current Geula is irreversible and the project will not fail. Redemption through the State of Israel is assured.
METAPHYSICAL VS ETHICAL/HALACHIC VIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speculation as to the metaphysical meaning of world events is harmful. The correct response must be 'ethico-halachic' through focus on the appropriate halachic response and understanding - practically, methodologically and philosophically. The State of Israel should embody the broadest ethical and societal vocation of Judaism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are living through the metaphysical unfolding of the culmination of history (or at least the beginning of the end of days). World events must be viewed through a lens of metaphysical redemption; speculation as to the meaning of these events is appropriate.
FOCUS ON MAN OR GOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main religious focus is on MAN - God is 'knocking' to call each individual to action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main religious focus is on GOD as the Divine Plan unfolds for the nation in Eretz Yisrael.
REALISM/IDEALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The value of kedushat Eretz Yisrael is one of many important Torah values which must be weighed in a realistic and pragmatic manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The value of kedushat Eretz Yisrael. The approach is highly idealistic - 'the Arabs will convert to Judaism'.
JEWISH VALUES - THE MEANS AND ENDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The moral/ethical/halachic values of the State are paramount. The ends do NOT justify the means. (R. Soloveitchik demanded a commission of inquiry to investigate Israel's failure to prevent the massacres of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon) This will also impact significantly on the treatment of non-Jewish minorities in the State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The goal is redemption and war is part of that process. The treatment of minorities and other ethical/moral issues should ultimately be conducted in accordance with halacha and Torah values, as applicable to a Torah State with a <i>melech</i> and related structures.

	RAV SOLOVEITCHIK: NON-MESSIANIC ZIONISM	RAV KOOK - ATCHALTA DEGEULA
PURPOSE OF JEWISH RETURN TO THE LAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of the Jews in the Land and the renaissance of Jewish national life in Eretz Yisrael have deep <u>practical</u> significance for national safety, and deep <u>theological</u> significance since they enable Torah to be restored to its greatness through the return of Torah values to the political, economic, military and social realm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of the Jews in the Land and the renaissance of Jewish national life in Eretz Yisrael have deep theological significance as being part of kibbutz galuyot and Geula.
NATIONAL TESHUVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National teshuva is through the return of each individual to a life committed to Torah & Mitzvot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National teshuva starts with the return of the people to the Land.
GIVING AWAY PARTS OF ERETZ YISRAEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it were necessary to cede parts of Eretz Yisrael to Arab countries on the advice of the military experts in the cause of peace, this would be permitted and required. The safety of the people in Israel is the paramount priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is completely prohibited to cede any part of Eretz Yisrael to any non-Jewish entity. This would be a betrayal of the State's responsibility, as <i>melech</i>, to establish sovereignty over all of Eretz Yisrael.
1947 UN PARTITION PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sadness ("I could not go out and participate in the festivities . . . for indeed, God's word - 'They have divided My land' (Joel 4:2) - was being fulfilled... . In that condition - my whole body shaken, wounded all over, cut up into pieces - I could not rejoice" - R. Zvi Yehuda Kook)
REVERSAL OF REDEMPTION	<p>Redemption is not promised. Reversals are possible and even likely in the pragmatic development of events. Even significant reversals do not cause religious crises but demand new responses.</p>	<p>Redemption is assured. Reversals are merely a '<i>yerida letzorech aliya</i>'. Where significant, such reversals may lead (and have led) to religious crisis (eg the expulsion from Gush Katif)</p>
WORLD REDEMPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The return of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael is the mechanism for restoring Torah, Mitzvot and Halacha to its fullest expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The redemption of the Jewish people and return to Eretz Yisrael is the beginning of a redemptive process for the entire world - בְּיָמֵינוּ הַהֵוא יִהְיֶה ה' אֶחָד וְשִׁמְרוּ אֶחָד
INFLUENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rav Soloveitchik's world view was shaped by his experience as a Jewish leader in America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rav Kook's world view was shaped, changed and developed as a Jewish leader - first in Russia but then in Eretz Yisrael.

- Historically, many have found the passion and energy of Rav Kook's eschatological vision, especially after the miraculous events of the 1967 Six Day War, more inspiring than the more mundane aspirations of Rav Soloveitchik's ethical and moral visions.
- This has historically led to the former becoming more dominant, although there are those who understand the pendulum to be swinging back to a more non-Messianic model of Zionism over the last 25 years since the Oslo Accords and the expulsion from Gush Katif.

E] RELIGIOUS ZIONISM - PASSION WITHOUT MESSIANISM

10.

<p>אני לא אומר שזו לא אתחלתא דגאולה. אני רק מבקש קצת צניעות רעיונית; קצת יושר אינטלקטואלי; לא להגיד דברים שהם מעל ליכולת האדם לדעת. אם יבוא המשיח — נקדם פניו בברכה — אחרי שנגמור את עבודתנו, כפי שאמר רבי יוחנן: „אם יאמרו לך בא בן-דוד, תחילה נטע נטיעתך ואחר כך הקדם לו שלום." כל עמלנו בעד הארץ הזאת, כל גישתנו ויחסנו למדינה הזאת, צריכים להיות חוקים ואיתנים, אף בלי האמונה שאנחנו בשלב מסוים של הגאולה. אם אנחנו מערבים לתוך הפרשה הזאת את המשיחיות — אנחנו מסבכים את כל הענין, עד שלא נוכל להחליץ ממנו. כל המטען הזה לא מוסיף, ואני חושד שהוא אף גורע.</p>	<p>אני לא צריך להאמין שתקופתנו היא אתחלתא דגאולה, או באמצע הגאולה, או בסוף הגאולה — בכדי להיות יהודי שמדינת ישראל יקרה לו מכל חייו! אף בלי משיחיות, הלא זוהי המדינה שנבנתה על חורבן יהדות אירופה! האם אין זו המדינה שציפינו לה משך כל ימי גדודינו בארצות אירופה וערב? לשם כך אני לא זקוק לבסיס האידיאולוגי והרעיוני של המשיח. ואם זה לא המשיח שגרם לתקומת המדינה — אני לא אהיה קרוב למדינת ישראל כל ימי חיי? אדרבא, כל הויכוח על אתחלתא דגאולה — רק מסבך.</p>
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Rabbi Dr Norman Lamm, Mai Nafka Mina (1975)¹⁶

Rabbi Lamm insists that one can be a staunch supporter of the State of Israel, Religious Zionism and even Jewish settlement of Yehuda and Shomron, without taking a position as to whether what we see today is 'atchalta degeula'. He is extremely nervous at the introduction of messianic tones into the political and religious debate.

16. Printed in the notes of Kenes Lavi 1975 - a conference hosted by the Kibbutz HaDati movement comprising a conversation of Jewish leaders from America and Israel on issues of Religious Zionism.

11. ולעולם לא יתעסק אדם בדברי ההגדות. ולא יאריך במדרשות האמורים בעניינים אלו וכיוצא בהן. ולא ישימם עקר. שאין מביאין לא לידי יראה ולא לידי אהבה. וכן לא יחשב הקצין. אמרו חכמים 'תפח רוחם של מתשבי הקצים'. אלא יחפה וינאמן בכלל הדבר כמו שבארנו.

רמבם משנה תורה הלכות מלכים יב:ב

Ultimately, these issues will not be clear until the actual redemption comes. The Rambam, while ruling that belief in the redemption and the ultimate coming of Mashiach is one of the 13 Ikarim, denial of which is heresy, nevertheless warns against messianism, which only damages the Jewish people. Redemption and Mashiach must not become the core principles of our Torah outlook.

- In 1999 Rav Soloveitchik's grandson, Rav Moshe Lichtenstein, expressed his perspective on Geula and Religious Zionism in the context of the Oslo Accords and the strains then emerging in the Religious Zionist community.

12. Religious Zionism, a movement that seeks to bring about Geulah, cannot disassociate itself from the general public. Geulah is a national event, the historical fulfillment of a nation. The individual can achieve personal redemption; historical Redemption, though, is granted only to a nation. Therefore, the Religious Zionist vision requires the alignment of the nation; estrangement from the people is possible from the Bnei Brak perspective of individuals and social groups striving to lead their individual Torah lives, but is impossible from the Mercaz HaRav Kook vantage point of atchalta de'Geulah. The division within the nation, a reality that can no longer be denied, is what has brought about the current plight of Religious Zionism.

The strife within the nation and the disparaging rejection of the Religious Zionism Geulah model by the general public as messianic can either lead to the adoption of a Geulah model, in which the nation is unwillingly coerced into participation or to a recognition that the current situation is a setback to the realization of the dream. The dangers of the first approach are alienation and increased confrontation with the non-religious public. The frustration and bitterness accompanying the unsuccessful attempt to thrust the Religious Zionist agenda upon an unwilling public have only paved the way to the verbal and physical violence that have all too frequently occurred in recent years. The more the general public does not respond to the attempt to force the Geulah upon it, the greater the need to go to greater extremes to do so.

However, postponement of the vision's fulfillment, while undoubtedly the truer and more responsible course of action, is not without its perils either. The shift from a prophetic vision on the verge of being fulfilled to a distant long term curve is a very difficult transition, requiring great spiritual fortitude. Despair and the search for alternate spiritual expressions are the possible, or even likely, outcomes of such a transition for many.

Simply put, both alternatives are due to the fact that a spiritual world rooted in the historical moment, viewing the world of action as its primary focus, is paying the price for its insistence upon the sphere of action. Having raised a generation on the idea of spiritual fulfillment through the historical process, it must now cope with the current historical situation. This, though, has proven to be very difficult under the circumstances, thereby inducing some misguided souls to try and force History's hand, while others who feel perplexed are seeking alternate sources of spiritual fulfillment, whether they be in the world of action, military or otherwise, or in other forms of the world of spirit.

The shift in focus from the historical achievement to the spiritual situation of the people is a vital spiritual and religious need that is necessary and imperative in and of itself, not only as a means to solving a contemporary crisis. This, though, is an issue of much greater scope (and importance) than the topic at hand. To state the matter telegraphically, Judaism is interested in the love, awe and commitment to God much more than in bringing about Geulah. If one must choose between a society that is religiously corrupt accompanied by Geulah or an average society living a standard Judaism without Geulah, there is no doubt that the latter choice is the preferable one.

Reordering Priorities: From Historical Action to Spiritual Achievement, R. Moshe Lichtenstein, Jewish Action, Fall 1999¹⁷

F] RAV SOLOVEITCHIK ON THE REDEMPTION OF THE SHECHINA

- At the June 1948 Convention of the Mizrahi Organization of America, Rav Soloveitchik gave a drasha in Yiddish concerning the implication of the new State of Israel. This was recently translated and published for the first time.¹⁸

13. דרש רבי בא סרונגייה (זכריה יב:א) והושיע ה' את־אהלי יהודה בראשונה. והושע כתיב. דרש ר' זיכיי (מיכה ד:א) כִּי־עָתָה תִּצְאֵי מִקְרָאָה וְשִׁכְנֵת בְּשׂוּדָה. 'שכינתי בשדה'. חנניה בן אחרי ר' יהושע אומר (שמות כ:ב) אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. 'הוצאתיך' כתיב. אמר... ר' עקיבה ... מה ת"ל (שמואל ב ז:כג) אֲשֶׁר פָּדִיתָ לָךְ מִמִּצְרַיִם. כביכול כאילו עצמך פדית.

תלמוד ירושלמי (וילנא) מסכת סוכה פרק ד

Chazal explain that God's Shechina also goes into exile with the Jewish people and requires redemption with them.

17. Available in full at <https://jewishaction.com/jewish-world/israel/reordering-priorities-historical-action-spiritual-achievement/>

18. Tradition Journal 53:1 (2021) - <https://traditiononline.org/jewish-sovereignty-and-the-redemption-of-the-shekhina/>

14. כְּהוֹשַׁעַת מֵאֶמֶר וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם. נִקְוֶה וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם. כֵּן הוֹשַׁע נָא:

סוף הושענות בכל יום של סוכות

This is expressed every day of Succot as part of the Hoshanot.

15. The Talmud Yerushlami really developed two ideas. The first is a premise, the second a conclusion. Reading *ve-shakhant* as *ve-shekhinati* established a premise: Israel's exile equals the exile of the Shekhina. As long as Knesset Yisrael is in exile in the political and economic sense, God Himself suffers. Hanania's reading of *hotzeitikha* as *hutzeiti itkha* is the conclusion: When the redemption comes, it will be a two-fold redemption, Israel's redemption and the redemption of the Shekhina.

Jewish Sovereignty and the Redemption of the Shekhina, p2

16. The exile of the Shekhina can be conceptualized in a twofold sense. First, we understand it simply in the sense of the defilement of the Shekhina due to modern exile, in daily contact between Knesset Yisrael and the nations of the world. But we must also understand the exile of the Shekhina in a much deeper sense, in the sense of Her diminution, *tzimtzum*. In exile, even in the most religious and ideal circumstances, even when the Shekhina does not become impure, She contracts and is reduced. This contraction is due to the fact that man lives not only within his own private domain, but is also part of a society and a community. The more life becomes modernized, the more constrained the domain of his intimate, private life, while conversely, public-social life expands.

Piety in countries where one is a minority means being pious only in his private personal life—Shabbat, family purity, kashrut, etc.—surrounded by the curtains of one's home-sanctuary. It is completely impossible to represent such a life as an embodiment of a full and complete Torah. My social-economic existence is linked to the general political-economic structure, which is based on other principles. As such, it does not embody my social, political, or legal relationships with society. Whether I sin or not is an entirely different question—the entire complex of my external interactions with society is divorced from Judaism.

Jewish Sovereignty and the Redemption of the Shekhina, p4

17. The masses cannot learn the Ketzot and the Netivot. They cannot understand the Torah in abstract; they must see it, physically sense it. In exile they only see a small part of Judaism, and therefore they despise it. "Balak said to him, 'Come with me to another place from where you will see them; however, you will see only a part of them, not all of them, and curse them for me from there'" (Numbers 23:13). If you observe only a fraction and not the totality, you will curse, you will misunderstand. ... When one sees only a little, he will draw incorrect conclusions. Only when the vision is total—not only of laws of kosher meat and the prayer-book, but also of the Hilkhot Melakhim, Sanhedrin, financial law concerning corporations and the employment of workers, the individual and public Torah, at home, the street, and the factory—does the whole Torah reveal itself. And then in the totality, one will be enabled to utter a blessing. "Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel dwelling according to its tribes, and the spirit of God rested upon him" (Numbers 24:2). At one time, the Ru'ah ha-Kodesh rested upon the Jewish masses. Religious Zionist ideology is based upon the equation of the exile of Israel with the exile of the Shekhina. The motto of Mizrachi must be Rabbi Ba of Serungiya's axiomatic simple reading of *vehoshiya* as *vehosha*, God saves and is Himself redeemed from exile.

Jewish Sovereignty and the Redemption of the Shekhina, p7-8

18. With regard to redemption of the Shekhina from defilement, I am definitely optimistic. Whoever ultimately stands at the helm, life in Israel will to a certain extent be completely Jewish. I read in the press that the kitchens of the Israeli army are strictly kosher. When, on that fateful Friday, the establishment of the State of Israel was proclaimed, the ceremony was held eight hours early so as not to desecrate the Sabbath, despite various logistical difficulties associated with doing this. The act alone sanctified the Sabbath more than fifty rallies dedicated towards Sabbath observance. Naturally, religious Jewry must stand watch and fight for it, but I can assure everyone that Shabbat in Eretz Yisrael will be holier than it was in the Jewish neighborhood in Berlin, in the Frankfurt Ghetto, or even on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn.

Jewish Sovereignty and the Redemption of the Shekhina p14-15

19. However, the redemption of the Shekhina from *tzimtzum* is a much more complicated and important task, and a great deal of time, dedication, energy, and work must be devoted to the realization of this hope. The religious Zionist parties Mizrachi and HaPoel HaMizrachi must contribute substantially to the realization of the vision. With regard to the redemption of the Shekhina from *tzimtzum*, I understand this idea simply to mean the revival of many parts of the Torah, the rewriting of abstract letters upon the concrete parchment of historical reality. I specifically mean the public Torah laws. Indeed, there is Shabbat, the laws of forbidden foods, other commandments applying to individuals. But even in regard to public Sabbath observance, there is no *tzibbur*, no collective aspect. When an individual is multiplied by hundreds of thousands, their acts are not public per se. Their individual character remains.

However, the social-political economic life of Israel, needs to be expressed via the seal of Judaism, of Jewish law and morality. The various phases of state life must be permeated with the Jewish spirit, understood and interpreted by Torah and spiritual giants. I am convinced that when the Israeli social-political institutions embody the Torah's ideal civil code, we will be the most advanced state in regard to social justice and truth. To summarize, the expansion of the Shekhina is the realization of a total Torah worldview with regard to external social justice and universality.

Jewish Sovereignty and the Redemption of the Shekhina p14-15

20. Feeling complete dependence on someone, whether in a positive or the negative sense, is idolatry. Such a false relationship is not only a sin of the individual, but can also become a sin of the collective. A people's deification of a public figure through having absolute confidence in him, or despair on account of him, at a moment when the people's very destiny is determined, can be transformed into the tremendously negative force which is Avoda Zara.

We Jews have truly committed this sin in exile. When I say exile, I do not mean medieval exile, but the exile of modern times, with the beginning of the emancipation movement and the resulting spiritual-cultural proximity between the congregation Israel and the nations of the world. What is the basis of this social-cultural idolatry that we have worshipped? It resides in giving away our entire trust, our entire naïve, childish faith, to the goodness, the fairness, and to the truth of our fellow human beings in our host societies.

At one time, our eyes were open to human-created and relativist culture. We believed that the Haskala would solve all the problems of the eternal Jew. Once upon a time, we believed passionately in social revolutionary movements and in economic-political revolutions. We built based on that decision. We once believed in autonomous political work. Precisely in whom our confidence in people has been expressed is immaterial. Berlin Jews deified Goethe and Kant; Parisian Jews deified Voltaire, Rousseau, and the French Revolution. At the beginning of the century, children of Warsaw and Vilna pledged allegiance to Marx, Engels, and Kautsky. In sum, we have planted and built our entire lives on one rule: Absolute confidence in people and the deification of their cultural values. This axiom is idolatry.

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21. As I have previously defined, Avoda Zara characterizes the sense of absolute trust and reliance on what the Knesset Yisrael gives to civilized society on one side, and the bitter feeling of helplessness when it is ridiculed and disappointed. Let us see: Did political Zionism sin in this regard? The honest answer must be: Yes, it sinned severely. I must add something more. If we had not engaged in the sin of political Avoda Zara, the Zionist movement would have accomplished far more. We would have made much more progress. Who knows how far we could have gone?

..... Later, after World War I, in the Balfour period, we made fatal errors through our naïve belief and child-like trust. The absolute idols that we made of England and the League of Nations, which we worshipped, had paralyzed our energies and delayed the realization of Shivat Tzion for many generations. The Zionists were so politicized that they considered a resolution by a Lithuanian parliament or the flattery of a cheap French politician as a great victory. Avoda Zara was expressed, firstly, in trust in international justice and truth as represented by public organs; and, secondly, in a sense of despair and helplessness if the English colonial office or the doomed People's Bund were to remove its mercies from the Jews. Wasted, unfruitful years were lost through dealing with the English Colonial office. But Jews still worshipped idols, believing in Zionist legalism, meaning the return of Zion with the approval of the Gentiles. The period came to an end in Treblinka and in the Lublin Ghetto, and I would also say, through the false, hypocritical policies regarding Zionism of President Roosevelt and Churchill, whom a great Zionist leader once called Moses and Aaron!

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22. But this sin of idolatry must be viewed from a completely different perspective. A Jewish state was created. But as vital and as historically important as the state may be, it should not become an Avoda Zara. By this I caution against an axiology which values the state as the highest, most precious, and greatest value in Jewish life, for which everything must be dedicated and sacrificed. Such a political philosophy is generally universally dangerous, but especially so for eternal Israel. The state can be a blessing, through which Knesset Yisrael can revive itself. She can also become a curse. It just depends on how we think about and value it¹⁹.

I want to formulate my idea clearly and briefly. Statehood is important not as a goal, but as a means. The goal transcends statehood, time, and history. I do not want you to misunderstand me. I do not underestimate the value of political sovereignty. I am just opposed to a cult of sovereignty; no idol must be made of the Land of Israel itself. She must serve a higher objective. What is this objective? A Knesset Yisrael which represents not just any political nation, but a Torah nation, a kingdom-of-Heaven nation which is not limited to territorial borders. If the concept is properly understood, deepened and enhanced by the Jewish state, then, I am sure, we will end up welcoming the Messiah. But if it will become a cult of absolutism, and all Judaism in the state is diminished—then, God forbid, we will have lost everything: both the state and Knesset Yisrael!

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19. Rav Soloveitchik was described by R. Shalom Carmy as "a religious man who was a Zionist, not someone who wanted Zionism to become a religion".

23. My colleagues, happy are we that we merited to see that today the Knesset Yisrael can interpret “great, mighty, and awesome” according to its simple meaning, in the sense of physical and political heroism. This is an *Athalta de-Ge'ula*, a beginning of the Redemption. Today, together with Moses, we sing: “I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted. The horse and rider He has thrown into the sea” (Exodus 15:1). The heroes of Eretz Yisrael sanctify God’s Name. But not for one moment can we forget that “great, mighty, and awesome” must become an expression and manifestation of a much higher ideal, and this idea must not be lost. Otherwise, the deification of the State will become Avoda Zara.

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G] WHY DID RAV SOLOVEITCHIK NOT MAKE ALIYAH?

- In 1968, a class of Israeli children studying *Kol Dodi Dofek* in Givat Washington asked their teacher, Miriam Shilo, to write to Rav Soloveitchik asking him why he did not make aliyah.

24. I thank you for your words, and accept your rebuke willingly. Indeed, I sinned against the Holy Land. I am amongst those who have fallen back [in not coming to the Holy Land]. Of course, many factors that were out of my control prevented me. In spite of this, I am not searching for an excuse, nor am I justifying myself. I am guilty, and the blame rests on my shoulders. Last year, we - my wife z'l and I - decided to come to Israel and remain for about six months, to see the land and the people who dwell therein. However, ‘many are the plans in a man’s heart’ (Mishlei 19:21), what happened, happened, and ‘my sighs are many and heart is sick (Eicha 1:22).
- I, too, a simple Jew, would say, in the words of the rabbis of Yavneh (Berachot 17a): I teach, and many others who work in the field of Torah education teach; my work is in the large city of New York, in an institution with great numbers of students, and they, their work is in Givat Washington or some other moshav in a similarly small institution. One may do much or one may do little; it is all one provided he directs his heart to Heaven ...

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