



RABBI MOSHE

TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

Geulas Yisrael Jews Who Oppose the State of Israel

After thousands of years being dispersed across many cultures and across different continents we have finally returned home. Despite the myriad differences which divide the Jewish people, our beloved State of Israel deeply unites Jews across the ideological spectrum. So many have returned home and so many others courageously support our national project of homecoming. It is therefore frustrating to encounter Jews who are severely disaffected and even alienated by the State of Israel. Debating particular policies is legitimate and valuable; however, many Jews stridently contest our State, exhibit public opposition, and sometimes, even cooperate with our sworn enemies. Processing this strange resistance in Jews can

be very puzzling and even infuriating.

It is simple-minded to just dismiss these opponents as self-loathing or self-hating Jews: “what type of proud Jew could possibly be opposed to the Jewish state?”. To be sure, there are Jews who revile their Jewish identity and despise any Jewish symbols. However, in all honesty, many Jewish opponents of Israel are proud Jews who struggle to reconcile their Jewish identity with their perception of Israel and its policies. Understanding their narrative and why we differ can help us better sharpen our own basic Jewish values.

Our historical calling is meant to inspire humanity toward moral and religious values. At the core of our message to humanity are the values of morality, ethics and social justice. To many Jews, the Zionist ethos greatly imperils this Jewish agenda. How can Jews exemplify morality when our State doesn’t appear to offer equality to its inhabitants? How can we stand for justice and compassion when our State is being restored upon disputed Lands? How can we sound universal messages when the spiritual ambitions we harbor for the State challenge democratic norms? For some, these contradictions create unsolvable tensions between their Jewish identity and their support for the State of Israel.

Where and how do WE differ? Don’t we

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also believe in morality, ethics and social justice? Why do we believe that our settlement of this Land is consistent with the Jewish message of morality? We “differ” in at least two crucial issues: the Divine authorship of our mission and our view of history.

Divinely-Crafted Mission

Indeed, Jews possess a historical mission and indeed that mission includes the spread of moral values. However, our mission is Divinely-crafted and delivered, not one which merely evolved over the passage of history. The ultimate barometer of morality is Divine will and not popular opinion or current moral trends. Often, we must uphold values or pursue agendas which differ from common moral conventions but are based upon absolute and eternal Divine will.

Our Divine-crafted mission isn't just ideological but geographical. We are meant to disseminate these important moral messages from our national platform in Israel; our moral voice isn't meant to reverberate in a historical vacuum. Our tragic absence from Israel for close to 2000 years severed our historical mission from our Divinely-designed platform. Without efforts to return to Israel, our agenda of disseminating moral guidance is, at best, limited.

Messianic History

It is frustrating to live in a world which doesn't recognize our broader religious mission and, even worse, which is extremely antagonistic to our efforts to resettle Israel. We are routinely depicted

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as an imperialist regime imposing an iron-fisted occupation upon innocent victims. How can an 'apartheid' state opposed by so many, possibly contribute to a historical agenda of morality and compassion?

It all depends on how you view history. If history is evolutionary and open-ended, current enlightened voices condemning Israel are convincing and compelling. The current historical culture casts our return to Israel as immoral and if current views are definitive, then indeed, settling this Land against international opposition is immoral and antithetical to our Jewish mission.

However, religious Jews are all Messianists, who view history differently - as predetermined and cyclical - careening back to an earlier time and to a different set of conditions. Our current historical reality - though impressive- is fundamentally "broken". We currently inhabit a world in which our efforts to re-establish Jewish nationhood and reassert our moral voice appears hypocritical and imperialistic. One day these perspectives will change. One day the world will be Divinely re-aligned and even our fiercest enemies will thank us for the values

we stand for, and the G-d we continue to represent in this very hostile world. Sadly, many who view the State of Israel as an immoral enterprise, seem trapped in our current historical reality with little or limited Messianic horizons.

As a West Bank "settler" I struggle with this dualism on a daily basis: I believe in an overarching "Messianic" recalibration of our world and I take active measures to advance that reality. I believe that a Messianic overhaul will advance humanity and that my "settler" efforts are universally beneficial. Most of the world, however, still doesn't view me that way. While living under the current situation, I attempt- to the best of my capabilities and without surrendering my historical vision- to be respectful to all inhabitants of this Land and to operate within legal, moral, and practical means.

It is important to accurately assess anti-Israel sentiment among deeply proud Jews, who are unable to reconcile their sense of Jewish mission with the current struggle to resettle our Land. By understanding their qualms, we can better appreciate our differences and better reinforce our own values. ■

		
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