

## ~The history of Zionism~

### One of our most oft-asked questions is "what is Zionism?"

Zionism is a movement founded by Theodor Herzl in 1896 whose goal is the return of Jews to Eretz Yisrael, or Zion, the Jewish synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. The name of "Zionism" comes from the hill Zion, the hill on which the Temple of Jerusalem was situated. Supporters of this movement are called "Zionists".

The purpose of this website is to explain why traditional Jews do *not* support Zionism (the return to the land called "Israel") and why the Zionist ideology is totally contrary to traditional Jewish law and beliefs and the teachings of the Holy Torah.

This text is from an article called "**An Open Letter**" published in the Jewish magazine, "**Hachoma**". We think it provides a good historical overview of the history of Zionism and why the Zionist ideology is opposed by religious Orthodox Jews.

The Jewish people, from its inception, has been unique by its identity as a religious entity. Through the centuries its religious character had been a premise agreed upon by Jews and non-Jews alike. Our faith demands as the fundamental condition for recognition as a Jew, belief and adherence to the word of G-d, as was revealed to our forefathers on Mount Sinai. This is in itself, according to the tenets of the Jewish religion, sufficient to fulfill the definition of a Jew. Our religious and traditional history bears no aspect of racism. Hence, one of non-Jewish origin is capable of being proselytized and attaining the same status as a born Jew. Conversely, one of Jewish birth who does not recognize his being bound to the Jewish Torah, is by Jewish law a heretic, and therefore forfeits his spiritual birthrights as a Jew.

The purpose of the Jew is to bear witness to the existence of G-d, through his adherence to the Torah. The Al-mighty granted the Jews the land of Israel as the particular setting which would serve as the most conducive atmosphere to their performance of their duties to G-d.

The Jews in ancient times were banished from the land of Israel because they had failed to fulfill their obligations to the Al-mighty. Every Jew acknowledges this in his prayers (Umipnei Chatoeinu Golinu Meiartzeinu). They accepted the penalty of exile and were at that time expressed sworn by the Al-mighty not to accelerate their redemption on their own, and especially not to rebel against the nations under whose rule they were found. To the contrary, every Jew is commanded to pray for the peace and well being of the government of which he is the subject.

Through all the years of exile, pious Jews as individuals were attracted to reside in the Holy Land because of its innate holy character and the opportunity it offered for the observance of various precepts bound in the land. Jews as a whole continue to pray that the Al-mighty return his Divine presence to the Land of Israel, by the coming of the Messiah, who will build His Temple, from whence will emanate Divine Wisdom and ultimate spiritual fulfillment of the entire human race.

Through the many years that Jews resided in the Holy Land for this purpose, they enjoyed tranquil and

cordial relations with the non-Jewish population there.

The Zionist movement which was formed at the latter part of the last century, sought to endow the Jews with a nationalistic character which was heretofore strange to them. It sought to deprive them of their historically religious character and offered in substitution of faith in G-d and adherence to the Torah, and belief in their ultimate redemption by the coming of the Messiah, a nationalistic ideology and the possibility of establishing through political media, a Jewish national homeland.

During the period of the British Mandate, the Balfour Declaration, which recognized the eventual possibility of founding a Jewish national homeland, in Palestine, was affirmed to be the British government. The Jewish Agency, who then was the Chief representative of Zionist interests in the Holy Land, was entrusted with the issuance of visas to the Holy Land, thus resulting in an increased Zionist immigration from various parts of the world, which ultimately succeeded in superceding in numbers, the veteran Orthodox dwellers.

Orthodox Jewry all over the world and the Orthodox Community in the Holy Land in particular, immediately sensed in this stage of Zionist success, the threat of grave danger for the religious future of Jews. The Arab inhabitants began to exhibit open hostility to their Jewish neighbors. The British government failed to distinguish between the Orthodox community, who for generations inhabited the Holy Land, and the newly arrived Zionist immigrants.

With the acquisition by the Zionist nationalists of the power to organize communities in Palestine, they formed the Vaad Haleumi Leknesset Yisroel (National Jewish Council Committee). This committee ignored the rights of the Orthodox veteran dwellers who did not recognize this validity of Jewish nationality, and whose identification as Jews was solely with their loyalty to their religious heritage. The religious inhabitants, on the other hand, shuddered at the prospects of spiritual disintegration of World Jewry, with the new rise to power of the Zionist nationalists.

The Orthodox inhabitants actively objected to being subject to the authority of the secularists. They appealed their cause to the League of Nations, who consequently granted them a "Right of exclusion" to the subjugation to the Vaad Haleumi, which rights provided that any Jew wishing not to be incorporated into the Vaad Haleumi, may remain lawfully independent if he so stated his wish in writing. Thousands of Jews did so.

Such was the case until November 1948, when the United Nations finally sanctioned the establishment of a Zionist State. We do not doubt that their success in finally realizing their goal was due in great measure to their having misled the world into viewing the Zionist cause as the Jewish cause. The formation of the Zionist state resulted in the automatic deprivation of the autonomy heretofore possessed by the Orthodox inhabitants of the Holy Land.

The Zionists grasped in the acquisition of their new powers, the opportunity to openly disassociate themselves from any identification with Jews as a religion. They systematically began to orient the minds of their generations according to the tenets of Zionist nationalism. Through the Ministry of Religions they employed part of the Rabbinate to assist them in their aims.

The religious Jews who by virtue of their faith, clearly contradicted Zionist nationalism, and who had lived peacefully with their Arab neighbors for generations, became unwillingly identified with the Zionist cause and their struggle with the Arabs. They requested the United Nations that Jerusalem be designated as a defacto international city. They appealed to the diplomatic corps assigned to Jerusalem -- but to no

avail. They were hence confronted with the choice of either becoming a part of the Zionist State, which diametrically opposed the interests of Jews as a religion, or abandoning the land of which their forefathers were the first Jewish settlers.

We find it of supreme importance to emphasize that we are fearful of the consequences of the Zionist rebellion against the Creator, as stated expressly in Jeremiah, "For it is bad and bitter your renunciation of G-d..." We wish not to be affected by the behavior of this government who in the name of Israel, persist in their renunciation and utter disregard of religious Judaism such as is clearly attested by their laws expressly permitting wanton autopsies (Law of Anatomy and Pathology, 1953), forcible desecration of the Sabbath (Law of Emergency Labor Draft 1967: PPS 1, 19; 27, 36), profanation of Holy Sites by retaining non-religious custodians, desecration of Holy Cemeteries by Safed, Beth Shearim and elsewhere, and countless more examples, proof of which is readily available.

Insofar as all human being find necessary the protection of their rights as human beings, we hereby request all those that find it within their power, to aid us in reacquiring the rights we possessed prior to the formation of the Zionist State\*, to remain lawfully independent of the Zionist authority.

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Following is a sentiment which I share with Babu Ranganathan, who sees the turmoil in the Middle East, and the inequities therein, being caused by a misunderstanding regarding the teaching of Biblical eschatology. My prayer is that all Christians and non-believers will also see the truth of it. (bob)

"The best way for Israel to stop terrorist attacks in its territory is by first ceasing its occupation of Arab land in the West Bank and Gaza. However, Israel will not pull back to its pre-1967 borders so long as many Israelis and most evangelical Christians in America continue to believe that present day Jews have a biblical right to all of Arab territory in Palestine. For this reason a biblical examination of the issue is necessary. As an evangelical Christian, of Indian origin, I wish to set the biblical issue in proper perspective. Although the modern state of Israel now has every right to exist as any other nation this does not mean that Zionism ( the belief that Jews have a biblical right to all of Palestine ) is correct. And it is Zionism that is primarily fueling the building and expansion of Jewish settlements on Arab land. From a purely biblical perspective Zionism has enormous problems. The fact is that almost none of the Jews in modern Israel today are descendants of the original Jews of Palestine thousands of years ago. Most of the Jews in Israel today are descendants of Europeans who had converted to Judaism in the Middle Ages (known as Khazar Jews). The last time that God had promised in Scripture to bring the Jews back to their ancestral homeland was already fulfilled centuries ago when He brought them back from their Babylonian captivity. Thus, the Jews in present day modern Israel are not a fulfillment of that ancient promise. Furthermore, God's promises concerning the land to the Jews in the Old Testament were conditional - only so long as they obeyed Him were those promises concerning the land binding. Most evangelical Christians today are looking forward to the seven year tribulation period of Israel which would require for the Jews to be in the land. But this period had already occurred in history during 63 A.D. to 70 A.D. ( seven years ) when the Roman army besieged and destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. It was this destruction that Jesus said would mark the end of the age ( the Jewish Age, that is ). Evangelical Christians who are dispensationalists are still seeking for an Israel that the New Testament says is the spiritual body of Christ made up of both Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ and who together inherit the same promises. The modern state of Israel, now that it has been established, has every right to exist and almost all Palestinians now will agree to Israel's right to exist. What they do not agree with is Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and Israel's continued building of settlements there. Most Palestinians will stop supporting terrorism if Israel simply gets out of their "lawn" (the West

Bank and Gaza) and that is the best way for Israel to stop the terrorism and preserve its security and peace  
- not to mention the security and peace of others."  
Sincerely, Babu G. Ranganathan