

Melilah

MANCHESTER JOURNAL OF JEWISH STUDIES

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A publication of the Centre for Jewish Studies,
University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

Co-published by



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Co-Published by Gorgias Press LLC

954 River Road

Piscataway, NJ 08854

USA

Internet: www.gorgiaspress.com

Email: helpdesk@gorgiaspress.com

ISBN 978-1-4632-0282-8

ISSN 1759-1953

This volume is printed on acid-free paper that meets the American National Standard for Permanence of paper for Printed Library Materials.

Printed in the United States of America

Melilah: Manchester Journal of Jewish Studies is distributed electronically free of charge at www.melilahjournal.org

Melilah is an interdisciplinary Open Access journal available in both electronic and book form concerned with Jewish law, history, literature, religion, culture and thought in the ancient, medieval and modern eras. *Melilah: A Volume of Studies* was founded by Edward Robertson and Meir Wallenstein, and published (in Hebrew) by Manchester University Press from 1944 to 1955. Five substantial volumes were produced before the series was discontinued; these are now available online. In his editorial foreword to the first edition, Robertson explained that *Melilah* had been established to promote Jewish scholarship in the face of the threat posed by the Second World War and its aftermath; the title of the journal refers to the ears of corn that are plucked to rub in the hands before the grains can be eaten (Deut. 23:25). The journal was relaunched as a New Series by Bernard Jackson and Ephraim Nissan in 2004 under the auspices of the Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Manchester. The current editors are Daniel Langton and Renate Smithuis.



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Volume 10 (2013)

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ABRAHAM ISAAC KOOK'S
ACCOUNT OF 'CREATIVE EVOLUTION':
A RESPONSE TO MODERNITY FOR THE SAKE OF ZION

Daniel R. Langton*

ABSTRACT: The Chief Rabbi of Israel and religious Zionist Abraham I. Kook is well known for having written about evolution. His mystical interpretation of the theory is often presented as a synthetic or complementary model that effectively offered a defence of Judaism in the context of the religion-science debate. But this is not the only context in which one might consider his views on the topic. From a political perspective, one might note his interest in the influence of Darwinism in the thought of secular Jews. And if one gives due weight to his appreciation of secular Zionists' work in building up the Land and combines this with his earlier, often overlooked writings on evolution in which the mystical dimension is missing, then it is possible to suggest that his engagement with evolutionary theory reflected as much a political concern to build bridges between religious and non-religious Zionists as it expressed a theological defence of traditional Judaism against the challenges of modern science.

Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935) was the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel, a position he held during the pre-State Mandate period 1919-1935, and the most influential leader of religious Zionism at that time. Strictly speaking, Kook was not primarily interested in biological evolutionary theory and certainly not Darwinian natural selection despite the fact that he is probably the Jewish religious authority best known for having engaged positively with evolution. Rather than the directionless, chance-driven theory of natural selection, Kook's interest in evolutionary theory was actually as a philosophical theory of progress. According to most commentators on Kook, including Shai Cherry, the chief authority on the matter,¹ he approached the subject through the prism of a mystical conception of ascent in an attempt to maintain the integrity of Jewish tradition in the face of the challenges of modernity. He sought to reassure anxious co-religionists that evolutionary theory posed no threat to Judaism but rather conformed to existing kabbalistic teachings about cosmic evolution and a progressive world. To achieve this end, Kook attempted to present mystical and scientific understandings of evolution as complementary to each other. What has been left out of this account, however, is the role of Zionism. In what follows it will be argued that there were actually two stages to Kook's

* Professor of the History of Jewish-Christian Relations at the University of Manchester. Email: daniel.langton@manchester.ac.uk My thanks to Marc Shapiro for drawing my attention to Kook's early sources, and for his estimates of the dates of several of Kook's other works, and to Noam Livne for his assistance with Kook's Hebrew and for his helpful comments throughout.

¹ Shai Cherry, 'Three Twentieth-Century Jewish Responses to Evolutionary Theory', *Aleph* 3 (2003). This is derived from his wider survey of Jewish engagement with evolution: Michael Shai Cherry, 'Creation, Evolution and Jewish Thought' (Doctoral thesis, Brandeis University, 2001).

thought, and that political considerations, as much as any theological ones, are necessary for understanding his interest in the subject.

Kook's influence and appeal as a traditionalist religious leader was in large part due to the seriousness with which he engaged with the challenges of modernity and secularism. This applied in particular to secular Zionism, to which many religious Jews, whether Zionist or non-Zionist, were implacably opposed. Kook, however, adopted a controversial position on the subject. Almost immediately after becoming Chief Rabbi of Jaffa in 1904 Kook argued in a newspaper article that the secularists' underlying national and ethical idealism was, for him, an expression of a fundamentally religious urge. He suggested that the Talmudic claim that the Messiah would arrive in a generation that was entirely guilty or entirely innocent (Sanhedrin 98a) could be understood to mean that the generation in question would be neither guilty nor innocent, but both at the same time. This, he argued, applied to those anti-religious Zionist pioneers who did not themselves appreciate that their motives were subconsciously religious ones; after all, the *chalutzim* demonstrated great idealism and self-sacrifice in attempting to realize what was the traditional messianic goal of a just and equal society and who called for the ingathering of the exiles.² In a letter dated 1912 he discussed secularism as one of several forces at work in the Land trying to build institutions according to their own philosophies. After criticizing secularist Zionists for having 'renounced everything holy' and for destructively distracting settlers in *Eretz Yisrael* from God and his Holy Torah, he went on,

But there is no denying that together with this there is also some important element that sustains life: a strong love for the nation and a clear and firm goal to develop the practical aspect of the settlement in *Eretz Yisrael*, to strengthen the national historic spirit of this generation toward attachment to the land and the people. With all its alienation [from tradition], there remains in this group a very powerful spark of holiness that is worthy of being activated by the efforts of the faithful ...³

His advice to his fellow religious Zionists was to engage with the secularists so as to 'minimise the destructive effects which it causes' and to 'try to arouse the holy spirit of Jewish people that is in the hearts of all the children of Jacob in whatever way it is possible.'⁴ He would articulate this kind of defence of the godless secular Zionists up until his death in 1935. Even that year, he wrote a newspaper article in which he countenanced patience with the *chalutzim* who should be regarded as valued workers rebuilding the Land, for there would be plenty of time to apply traditional standards of religious piety once their work was completed and Palestine had become a Jewish commonwealth.⁵

It seems that Kook's sympathy for the secularists stemmed in large part from his particular understanding of the crisis of modernity in Western culture, which had alienated these Jews from their religious traditions. In *Orot Ha-Kodesh* [Lights of Holiness],

² Abraham Isaac Kook, 'Hador', *Ikvevei Hatzon* (1904), cited in Tamar Ross, 'What Would Rav Kook Have to Say About the State of Israel Today?', in *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Lawrence J. Kaplan and David Shatz (New York, London: New York University Press, 1995), 303-304.

³ Open letter to Agudat Yisrael conference (1912) in Abraham Isaac Kook and Ben Zion Bokser, *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook* (New York: Amity House, 1988), 116-119.

⁴ Open letter to Agudat Yisrael conference (1912) in *ibid.*

⁵ Abraham Isaac Kook, *Ha-Hed*, Elul 1935, cited in Samuel Higo Bergman, 'On Reality in God', in *Essays on the Thought and Philosophy of Rabbi Kook*, ed. Ezra Gellman (New York: Cornwall Books, 1991), 84.

a three-volume collection of essays published posthumously in 1963-64, he would later explain that the crisis in 'man's outlook' that had brought about 'confusion and disorder' to wider society, had been caused by several factors. Of these, the theory of evolution was highlighted for having 'wrought a major revolution'.⁶ One possible response to this situation would have been to condemn the theory and those secularist Jews who held to it, as did many of Kook's co-religionists, of course. But, as we shall see, Kook did not do this. After all, secular Jews identified closely with Western secular culture, and evolutionary theory was one of the foundational truths of that culture, so to attack it in the name of Judaism would be to alienate secular Jews further from Judaism. If the theory lay at the root of the confusion, and if one hoped to bring secular Jews back to Jewish tradition, then one ought to adopt a more tolerant, conciliatory attitude towards it. To convince his co-religionists of the desirability of this, however, Kook needed to show that either the theory was compatible with Jewish faith and that one should regard it as an opportunity for debate, or that Judaism taught an even more powerful version of the theory. Arguably, one can trace two stages in Kook's thought on the matter, which roughly correlate with these positions.

The earliest direct reference Kook made to evolution can be found in *Li-Nevuchei Ha-Dor* [For the Perplexed of this Generation], written around 1900. In this work he rejected the idea that evolution challenged religion, and suggested rather that an understanding of the time and complexity of evolution would only increase our admiration and appreciation of God's creation of species. As he explained,

Evolution that comes with great gradualness, milliards of years, is what agitates the hearts of the small-minded. They think that evolution is a reason to deny the existence of the living God, but they are greatly mistaken ... When we see the great creation and how it is arranged according to laws of wisdom, and the ways of all living things in their bodies and minds and intelligence and how all is arranged in a single system, then we recognize the great Spirit present here, which gives life to everything and makes all possible. And if the ways of wisdom compel [us to acknowledge] that this came to pass through evolution over myriads of myriad of years, we feel the utmost wonder at how great and exalted is God the Eternal, that myriads of years working constantly to produce a desired end, are reckoned as naught or a instant.⁷

After all, Kook went on,

What is the difference between the evolution of the globes of the stars and the worlds according to their size over myriads of years, and the evolution of the fetus within its mother over months? And yet we understand that 'Wondrous are Your deeds and my soul surely knows ... that I was created in a secret place [and] formed in the very bottom of the earth, Your eyes have seen my unformed substance and in Your book all shall be written.' [Ps. 139:14-15]⁸

⁶ Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot Ha-Kodesh* [Lights of Holiness] (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1938, 1985), II:556-560. English translation in Kook and Bokser, *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*, 170, 171-172. The two other 'basic changes' in wider society were the change in social outlook and the change in the cosmological outlook.

⁷ Abraham Isaac Kook, 'Li-Nevuchei Ha-Dor' [for the Perplexed of This Generation], (<http://kavvanah.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/kook-nevuchai.pdf>, 2010), 11. Originally written c.1900.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

So, for Kook, the lawful nature of the universe, whether one is discussing the birth of stars or of babies, pointed to a divine cause; and if the science told us that the evolution of the cosmos and of life itself took millions upon millions of years to achieve, then this only added to the glory of the creator. It is also clear that at this stage of his thought, Kook located biological evolution within a tradition of Western natural philosophy, with which, he implied, the faithful Jew should familiarize himself.

[It is] only through lack of understanding that the perplexed of our generation think that the theory of evolution according to Kant and Laplace and Darwin, and other scholars of this time, will bring with it the destruction of the Torah.⁹

This expression of theistic evolution, utterly free of any suspicion of the science of evolution and even alluding explicitly to Darwin and to the idea of deep time, that is, to a geological conception of time rather than a biblical one, was repeated in a notebook entry he made on the subject in around 1904, around the same time that he first articulated the value of the secular Zionist. In it, he discussed the topic in strategic terms and in relation to how one might engage with secular Jews, drawing upon Maimonides as a model for rhetorical tactics. He argued that, just as for the sake of argument Maimonides had assumed the commonly accepted idea of the eternity of the world so that he could go on and prove the existence and nature of God in the medieval period, so now it was useful to assume the truth of evolution in the modern world. Even if one did not accept the theory of evolution, he suggested, it was better to present the eternal truths of Torah in relation to evolution than to set up Torah in opposition to evolution because this would only alienate those Jews who embraced a scientific worldview and would only cause them to discount the Torah.¹⁰ As a result, and with Maimonides as an authority, Kook could say that the theory of evolution posed no threat to the religious Jew. And this was important to him, because it meant that one did not have to unnecessarily offend Jewish secularists by denouncing the theory.

At this early stage, Kook saw no threat from evolution and had even articulated a theistic form of the theory. But he was also acutely aware that, with its supposedly anti-religious implications, the secular version of the theory appeared to polarize religious and anti-religious Jews and to set them against each other. Concerned as he was not to alienate the secular Jew, and especially the secular Zionist, he countenanced his fellow co-religionists to adopt a conciliatory approach to the subject, 'for the sake of heaven'. Considered alongside his concern to defend secular Zionists, Kook's early discussions of evolution suggest that his interest in it was not just theological but was also political, at least in terms of its implications for how to engage with secular Jews and, especially, secular Zionists. The second stage of Kook's thought on evolution, which will concern us for the remainder of the essay and which has been the main focus of previous scholarship, relates to the development of his mystical conception of 'creative evolution'. It, too, was

⁹ Ibid., 19. Kant appeared to assume the biological science of evolutionists such as Buffon and others, and in *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) he himself published a nebular theory for the origin of stars and planets that antedated the famous nebular hypothesis for the solar system found in Laplace's *Exposition du système du monde* (1796). In this context, Kook's interest in Darwin is in relation to the idea of transmutation in general, rather than any particular interest in natural selection as a mechanism.

¹⁰ Abraham Isaac Kook and Boaz Ofen, eds., *Kevatzim Mi-Klav Yad Kadsho* [Notebooks Written by His Holy Hand] (Jerusalem: Makhon le-Hotzaat Ginzei ha-Reayah, 2006), 66-67. Originally written c.1904.

written for a religious Jewish readership. The suggestion made here is that this was a more fully worked out theological justification for his earlier strategic conviction that no obstacles should be placed in the path of the secular Zionists, whose work in building up the Land was a vital contribution to the Messianic hope.

In his collection of essays, *Orot Ha-Teshuvah* [Lights of Penitence] first published in 1925, Kook suggested that if one properly understood the fundamental teaching of both Judaism and evolutionary theory from a mystical perspective, one could readily reconcile the two. Those who regarded the idea of evolution as antagonistic to Jewish religion were, in his view, ignorant of some of Judaism's deeper teachings and therefore unnecessarily despondent about evolution's widespread success. Like many before and since, Kook understood evolutionary theory in narrowly progressive terms, and saw life developing with a pronounced upwards trajectory, ever improving. As such, he saw parallels to the old Lurianic conception of a broken cosmos in which the divine fragments are strewn across the world and seeking to find their way back to perfect union in the godhead. As he explained,

The doctrine of evolution that is presently gaining acceptance in the world has a greater affinity with the secret teachings of the *Cabbalah* than all other philosophies. Evolution, which proceeds on a course of improvement, offers us the basis of optimism in the world. How can we despair when we realize that everything evolves and improves? In probing the inner meaning of evolution toward an improved state, we find here an explanation of the divine concepts with absolute clarity. It is precisely the *En Sof* [the indefinable God beyond all being] in action that manages to bring to realization the infinite potentiality. Evolution sheds light on all the ways of God. All existence evolves and ascends, as this may be discerned in some of its parts. Its ascent is general as it is in particulars. It ascends toward the heights of the absolute good.¹¹

So the theory of evolution was not as revolutionary as either its proponents or its opponents suggested. Religious Jews, properly enlightened in the ways of mysticism, had always comprehended the truths contained within this ostensibly modern theory. For kabbalists understood that the spiritual realm, which was characterized by a process or ascent, was profoundly connected with the physical world in which the evolutionary processes of progress also applied. He conceived of evolution, whether cosmic or biological, as a mending of the world (*tikkun ha-olam*) and a return to God (*teshuvah*). This understanding could also be found in *Orot Ha-Kodesh*.

The concept of evolution, which has become widespread in all circles as a result of the new studies of nature, wrought a major revolution in the circle of those accustomed to conventional [secular] thinking. This was not the case with enlightened individuals, the masters of thought and reflection who always envisioned gradual development – even in the realm of the spiritual,

¹¹ Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot Ha-Teshuvah* [Lights of Penitence] (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1925, 1985), II:555. English translation in Abraham Isaac Kook and Ben Zion Bokser, *Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, Lights of Holiness, the Moral Principles, Essays, Letters and Poems* (London: SPCK, 1979), 220-221.

which they viewed with profound mystical probing. For them it was not strange to understand in a parallel fashion the development of the material world. It is indeed appropriate to envision its emergence as similar to the unfolding of the spiritual dimension of existence, which does not show a hiatus of a single wasted step ...¹²

Kook went on to argue that one should not fear heresies of the secular world in so far as they often contained the seeds of their own destruction. Evolutionary theory was a case in point: while the secularists had attempted to use it to discredit religion, the faithful could view it as evidence of divine Providence.

Wherever the heretics [i.e. non-believers] find the basis of their disavowal of religious belief, there one can also find an appropriate response to their views ... All those arguments that are cited as leading to heresy, when one probes their basic assumptions, are themselves supportive of a deeper religious faith, more luminous and vital than was conveyed in the simple conception that prevailed before the confrontation of the challenge. Creative evolution, which tends to be embraced by all who follow the lessons of rationality based on sense perception, at first poses a challenge to religion which stresses the all-pervading power of God. In truth one cannot overemphasize the importance of the concept [of 'creative evolution'] which eliminates all deficiency in the emergence of existence.¹³

It was clear to Kook that, firstly, the process demonstrated a progressive aspect to nature and suggested a goal for all of existence.

Every creature is under a sufficient providential directive from God, and the infinite power of God is sufficient to guide the destiny of all things. When this concept [of organic evolution] emerged, though its initial direction was uncertain and, when viewed on a superficial level, it seemed to remove the light of God as a factor in our thinking, in its deeper implications it was the most significant source for establishing the belief in divine providence. The development which proceeds with such resoluteness, from below to above, from the lower creatures to the highest, without deviating from its path, points to a goal envisioned in the distant beginnings, beyond precise calculation, and it indicates an appointed goal for all existence.¹⁴

Secondly, such a progressive process had to have a guiding hand behind it, whether one is speaking of biological life or spiritual life.

Since everything moves toward a goal, there must be an eye that watches over everything, and since everything evolves, and there is room in man's self-perfection and his perfection of the world for ascending in stages, he fulfills in such acts the will of his Creator. The highest level of man's spiritual development thus reveals itself as more basic in the rhythm of existence, and man's ascent to higher levels thus appears preplanned. Moreover, the end of the design, and its anticipation, reveals the ultimate objective which was there from the inception.¹⁵

¹² Kook, *Orot Ha-Kodesh* [Lights of Holiness], II:556-560. English translation in Kook and Bokser, *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*, 170, 171-172.

¹³ Kook, *Orot Ha-Kodesh* [Lights of Holiness], II:565-566. English translation in Kook and Bokser, *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*, 173.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 173-174.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 174.

Thirdly, such a progressive process correlated with Jewish conceptions of spiritual progress and the afterlife. The authority of such teachings was only increased with the evidence that progressive principles underlay the natural world itself, and which might act to inspire the religious mind.

Our thinking necessarily reaches the position that the creation of this [physical] world and of the world to come, of the future of the individual and the general future of the world, were all envisioned in one perspective and all are interrelated ... All the moral values rise, invested with the divine significance. Moreover, we are given a basis for our hopes and an assurance that they will be fulfilled. The potency of anticipation is matched by the potency in the process of realization [in the biological realm]. It thus turns out that the possibility of progress beyond the limits of natural law becomes conceivable, and it is compatible with all the elements of accepted teachings.¹⁶

Thus Kook believed in a cosmic evolutionary process ('creative evolution') in which nature and human spirituality were evolving to ever higher levels of unity, and that the world in all its dimensions was moving towards perfection. Contra the heretics, modern evolutionary theory was by no means a threat; rather, it appeared to dovetail neatly with such a worldview. And, in principle, Kook believed this was true of science in general, asserting that one could successfully integrate the best of scientific thought with Judaism. For this he returned to Maimonides, whom he now presented as a model for an integrationist approach in an essay on the reasons for the commandments.

The relationship of the doctrine of evolution – in all its ramifications – to Judaism, and its fundamental concepts in our time, is similar to the ancient confrontation of the teaching about the eternity of the universe with Judaism in the time of the spiritual polemic with the Greeks. Here we need to follow resolutely the scientific method of Maimonides, although the methods of reasoning have changed with the changing times. With all the scientific defects in the theory of evolution, which is presently at the inception of its development and in its early stages, let us take courage to base the triumphant affirmation of Judaism on the basis of its assumptions, which, on the face it, seem so antagonistic to us ... [W]e shall endeavor to establish our spiritual position, not on the basis of any particular philosophy or on the basis of a commitment to some particular ideal, but through the fusion of all the idealistic forces, each now operative in isolation, integrating them into a comprehensive ensemble ... Through the graces of unending integration it gives us the faithful reassurance that even in the future, when 'new' songs will be heard, and when our intellectual and cultural claims will take on new form, even then a fountain of life will be open wide for us, to achieve great and new things, through the medium of clear understanding ...¹⁷

From early on Kook had disagreed with those who believed that the Darwinian 'new song' had challenged the Genesis account of creation. As he saw it, such critics had not adopted the correct perspective on the texts and thus misunderstood its inner meaning. For Kook, Judaism had at its disposal a hermeneutical approach to Torah that, regardless of whether or not one accepted the findings of the scientists, made such findings irrelevant and thus

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Abraham Isaac Kook, 'Talele Orot' [Fragments of Light], *Takhmoni* 1 (1910). English translation in Kook and Bokser, *Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, Lights of Holiness, the Moral Principles, Essays, Letters and Poems*, 306.

made opposition unnecessary. In one letter to a disciple, dated 1905, he asserted that no conflict exists if one bore in mind the allusive and parabolic nature of the Torah.

Even if it were shown that creation occurred through the evolution of the species, there would still be no contradiction. We calculate time according to the words of the Torah, which are far more relevant to us than are other sources. The Torah obviously obscures the account of creation and speaks in allusions and parables. All know that the account of creation is one of the secrets of the Torah. For if all these statements were taken literally, what secrets would there be? ... The main point [of the Genesis narrative] is the knowledge of God and the true moral life.¹⁸

And in a letter to the same individual in 1908, he wrote again:

I find it necessary to explain to your noble self how we are to respond to teachings imported to us through recent scientific research [on evolution] which for the most part tend to contradict the simple meaning of the texts of the Torah [i.e. the six day creation of Genesis 1]. It is my opinion that one who is of sound understanding must know that though it does not follow that these new teachings are necessarily true, we are not at all under the obligation to deny them categorically and to oppose them. It is not at all the intent of the Torah to tell us [factual] stories about past events. What is primary is the substantive content, the inner meaning of the subjects discussed ... It is of no consequence to us if there was once in the world a golden age, when man enjoyed much good, materially and spiritually, or that existence began by developing from a lower to a higher state and continues to evolve. What we must know is that there is the definite possibility that even if man should reach a higher state of development, and be in line to enjoy all the honor and delight life can offer, if he should corrupt his behavior he may lose everything, and injure himself and his descendants for many generations. This inference is suggested to us by the experience of man in the Garden of Eden, his sin and banishment ...¹⁹

For Kook, the meaning of the Genesis account had nothing to do with the process of biological evolution, *per se*. Furthermore, he went on, evolutionary theory was at an early stage and when it eventually came to recognize the distinct stages or leaps in creation, it would actually confirm the developmental stages outlined in Genesis.

In general the concept of evolution is itself in the early stages of its development. It will undoubtedly change its form, and it will come up with perceptions which will acknowledge that there were also leaps in the world's development [expressed in Genesis as days]. This will help to complete the vision of experience. Then will the light of Judaism be understood in its substantive brightness.²⁰

A little later, around 1910, Kook offered another explicit refutation of the claim that the science threatened a traditionalist reading of the Torah. In *Shemonah Kevatzim* [Eight Notebooks] Kook suggested that one can and should present the Genesis account of creation as being in harmony with the findings of modern science. Thus the six days could be presented as referring to vast periods of time; there were certainly millions of years

¹⁸ Letter to Moshe Seidel, 1905, in Abraham Isaac Kook and Tzvi Yehudah Kook, eds., *Letters of Rav Kook* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1967), letter 91.

¹⁹ Letter to Moshe Seidel, 1908, in Kook and Bokser, *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*, 78-79.

²⁰ Letter to Moshe Seidel, 1908, in *ibid*.

between mankind's origins and the emergence of family life and civilization, that is, the moment when humanity realized that it was separate from the rest of the animal kingdom. Likewise, the real meaning of the account that God caused 'a deep sleep' to fall upon Adam, and took one of his ribs to form woman, had to do with the time it took mankind to recognize the profound significance of marriage and the underlying unity of humankind. For Kook, the Genesis account was focused on the idea of the development of man's self-understanding of his special nature and inter-relationships, and not the specifics of the timeframe of creation or a literalist reading.²¹

Taken together with his proposed biblical hermeneutics, Kook's mystical appreciation of evolution offered a kind of synthetic account that appeared to reconcile Judaism with the science. It meant that the faithful need not feel obliged to attack evolutionary theory. However, this apparent complementarity was very one-sided. For Kook, the secular, scientific theory was a cruder version of a grander, infinitely more profound religious existential truth. There can be no doubt that he would never have countenanced the idea of science offering a corrective to Jewish teaching, not least because of the limitations of human knowledge and the dynamic nature of theoretical science. As he put it in one of his letters,

There is no contradiction between the Torah and any of the world's scientific knowledge. We do not have to accept theories as certainties, no matter how widely accepted, for they are like grass that withers. Before long, scientific knowledge will develop further and all of today's new theories will be derided. ... But the word of God will endure forever.²²

And in *Orot Ha-Kodesh*, he maintained the superiority of religion as a form of knowledge.

Religious wisdom ranks higher than all other sciences in this: religious wisdom transforms the will and the spiritual attributes of its learners, drawing them to the supernal heights on which its concern is focused. ... All secular sciences lack this capacity because they cannot, by themselves, engender anything new.²³

Furthermore, in *Orot Ha-Teshuvah* Kook even expressed concerns about the dangers of his proposed grand vision of evolution, which encompassed the secular theory of evolution. As he put it, 'A life-enhancing and a life-negating principle are embodied in it.' For while a proper understanding of cosmic evolution which focused on future spiritual perfection would set a man 'on the right course and strengthen his moral senses ... [and can act as] a great light that directs him to endless progress', he fretted that 'the [theory's] concept of the past will inspire him with fear'. This was because

When a person looks backward and sees the lowly [animalistic] state in his past, and considers his own present moral, intellectual and physiological condition, so fortunate, so happily in contrast to the past, his mind becomes disoriented on the one hand. His moral discipline is weakened. Whatever moral sensibility he may feel in himself when the evil inclination of some

²¹ Abraham Isaac Kook, *Shemonah Kevatzim* [Eight Notebooks], 2 vols. (Jerusalem: n.p., 2004), 1:594. Originally written c.1910.

²² Letter to Moshe Seidel, 1905, in Kook and Kook, eds., *Letters of Rav Kook* [Hebrew], letter 91.

²³ Kook, *Orot Ha-Kodesh* [Lights of Holiness], 1:1, cited in Cherry, 'Three Twentieth-Century Jewish Responses to Evolutionary Theory', 258.

lust should assail him he will say that it is too much for a creature like himself, whose origin is from dumb beasts and crude savagery.²⁴

So while he could even go so far as to accept the bestial origins of humankind, Kook's mystical appreciation of evolution was a limited one, and his response to modernity was very much constrained by his ultimate loyalty to the eternal teachings of Judaism. As Cherry puts it, Kook sought to integrate a devalued science into his worldview.²⁵ It is too ambivalent a theory to be a genuinely complementary or synthetic model. Even as a defence of the Jewish religion for the consumption of faithful Jews in the face of the challenges of a hostile modernity, this attempt to reconcile kabbalah with science was not entirely convincing. But as an attempt to give pause for thought, it possessed a certain political utility.

If one assumes, as does Cherry, that Kook addressed the question of evolution simply as one of science versus religion, and that he developed a mystical theology that could reassure his followers in the face of the uncertainties raised by secular science, then one can set Zionism aside. As we have seen, however, there are reasons for thinking that such an account fails to do justice to what Kook actually set out to achieve. Cherry's account of Kook's mystico-philosophical teachings on evolution not only fails to mention his religious Zionism, which was central to his thought, it also ignores earlier sources which suggest that the familiar mystical dimension was entirely absent from Kook's initial musings on evolutionary theory. If these aspects are taken into consideration, then another way of looking at it all emerges. It is possible to suggest that Kook's project was not simply an inward-directed response to modernity, but that his interest in evolution developed alongside a defence of secular Zionism, and that his fully-fledged theory of 'creative evolution' functioned to reduce the hostility of his fellow religious Zionists towards the science-orientated secular Zionists.

In summary, Kook, as a passionate religious Zionist, believed that secular Zionists were acting religiously and in accordance with God's will, whether they recognized it or not. He was concerned to understand the causes of their rejection of Judaism and became convinced that evolutionary theory played a significant role. In his early writings Kook claimed that, for enlightened Jews, evolution represented no threat to Judaism or to a correct reading of Genesis. But since, as he well understood, the scientific theory was important to secular Jews as a foundational truth of the Western culture they espoused, and since he preferred not to adopt a hostile, confrontational stance but rather a conciliatory, accommodationist one, he urged his co-religionists to act as if the theory was true, to accept it as true for the sake of argument. In this they would be following the example of engagement with unfamiliar philosophies first established by Maimonides. Later, Kook developed a more sophisticated, more engaged method to reconcile what he regarded as the partial truths of evolution with Judaism, and he did so without committing himself to any particular scientific theory, since, as he made clear, such theories were transient in contrast to Judaism's eternal truths. For this he focused, as we have seen, on the mystical parallels with the scientific conception of evolution, and to

²⁴ Kook, *Orot Ha-Teshuvah* [Lights of Penitence], II:561. Reproduced in Kook and Bokser, *Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, Lights of Holiness, the Moral Principles, Essays, Letters and Poems*, 231-232.

²⁵ Cherry summarized Kook's position on evolution as 'Western thought had finally caught up with the Kabbalah!' Cherry, 'Three Twentieth-Century Jewish Responses to Evolutionary Theory', 258.

present the science as a partial understanding of a fuller kabbalistic knowledge of cosmic evolution to his religious readership. While this scheme was not developed in any great depth or detail, it was sufficient for his purposes, namely, to persuade his co-religionists to avoid unnecessary conflict with the secular Zionists, at least in regard to their commitment to evolution. It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that Kook's interest in evolutionary theory was as much a strategic attempt to reconcile warring religious and secular Zionists as it was an apologetic endeavour to reconcile science and religion.

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ZIONISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM IN THE CATHOLIC GUILD OF ISRAEL: BEDE JARRETT, ARTHUR DAY AND HANS HERZL

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ABSTRACT: This article examines Zionism and Anti-Zionism in the discourse of key members of the Catholic Guild of Israel, an English Catholic movement for the conversion of the Jews. The central theme in the discourse of the Guild was Jewish 'power'. It was argued that the Jews had great vitality, zeal and energy, which made them dangerous outside of the Church, but an asset if they could be brought into it. This idea was disseminated by Bede Jarrett and Arthur Day, the two most senior and prolific members of the Guild. Their notions of Jewish power influenced their views about Jews and Zionism. They both saw Jewish power and Zionism as a threat and opportunity, but Jarrett placed the emphasis on threat, whilst Day placed the emphasis on opportunity. One prominent member of the Guild who did not gravitate to their views was Hans Herzl, a convert to Catholicism and the son of the Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl. On the surface Hans adopted the anti-Zionism of Jarrett. Unlike Jarrett, however, Hans believed in Jewish nationalism, although he interpreted it as a spiritual rather than political movement. His ideal Jewish nation was a 'Christian theocracy of Jewish faith' with the Pope as sovereign and protector.

During the early decades of the twentieth-century, Jews were often stereotyped and mythologized in English Catholic newspapers, books, sermons and pastoral letters, as usurers, cowards, bolsheviks, conspirators, Christ-Killers and Antichrists.¹ From 1917 onwards, following the Balfour Declaration, these myths and stereotypes combined with criticisms of Zionism to form a new composite construction: 'the Zionist Menace'. This construction drew upon contemporary stereotypes, suggesting that 'the Jew' was exploiting his political power, commercial expertise and dominance in finance, in order to wrest control of Jerusalem from Christians and Muslims. There was an explicitly religious dimension to these representations. Why, it was asked, was the scene of the Passion being handed over to the hereditary enemies of Christianity, and how could Zionism be supported when the Jews had desired the sacrifice of Christ?² However, whilst these stereotypes and myths were characteristic of the broader English Catholic discourse, there were exceptions. One organisation that did not quite correlate with the broader English Catholic discourse was the Catholic Guild of Israel.

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¹ These myths and stereotypes were examined in Simon Mayers, 'From "the Pharisee" to "the Zionist Menace": Myths, Stereotypes and Constructions of the Jew in English Catholic Discourse (1896-1929)' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2012). See also Simon Mayers, 'From the Christ-Killer to the Luciferian: The Mythologized Jew and Freemason in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century English Catholic Discourse', *Melilah* 8 (2011).

² Constructions of 'the Zionist Menace' in English Catholic newspapers from 1917 to 1922 were examined in chapter five of Mayers, 'From "the Pharisee" to "the Zionist Menace."'

The Catholic Guild of Israel, an organisation that has received very little attention from historians, was dedicated to the conversion of the Jews. Protestant evangelists were active amongst Jews in England throughout the nineteenth century. The decision to form a similar Catholic movement was in comparison remarkably late in coming. Father Bede Jarrett noted in an article published in June 1917 that English Catholics seemed to have agreed with Luther that there is no salvation for Jews, as almost no attempt had been made to convert them.³ Six months later in December 1917, Father Jarrett formed the Catholic Guild of Israel. This initiative received the blessings of Benedict XV, Pius XI, and the Archbishops of England and Wales.⁴ The vision for the Guild was a more proactive movement than the Sisters of Sion and the Arch-Confraternity of Prayer for the Conversion of Israel. The Sisters of Sion and the Arch-Confraternity of Prayer were Catholic organisations whose mission was merely to pray for the conversion of Israel.⁵ The leaders of the Catholic Guild of Israel were content to leave to the Sisters and the Arch-Confraternity the work of praying for the conversion of the Jews, so that the Guild could concentrate on the more proactive work of bringing Israel into the Church.⁶ This proactive work had many dimensions. Until it was forced by the Second World War to suspend its activities in 1939, the Guild was involved in publishing booklets and articles, and presenting sermons and lectures at churches, Catholic conferences, and meetings of the Catholic Evidence Guild and the Catholic Truth Society. Members of the Guild also addressed children at Catholic schools. The objective of these publications and presentations was to impress upon Catholics the importance of bringing Israel into the Church. One aspect of this was to try to overcome hostile images of the Jew. For example, according to a Guild pamphlet addressed to children, 'there is something very precious and holy about the Jews'. The pamphlet observed that there are many people who view the Jews as either dirty pawnbrokers, or 'millionaires who have made their money by exploiting Christians, and by all sorts of low, dirty tricks'. The pamphlet concluded that 'certainly, some Jews are like that – but many Christians are not much better'.⁷ The Guild was also proactive in the East End of London, setting up open-air platforms on street corners and parks to address Jews, with the goal being an exchange of views on religious subjects, through which, it was hoped, the Jews would be tempted by Christianity.⁸

³ Bede Jarrett, 'The Jew, part I', *Universe*, 29 June 1917, 5.

⁴ See Report of Guild Meeting, 27 November 1923, 8-9, Catholic Guild of Israel Archives, Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, London (hereafter cited as CGI Archives).

⁵ The Sisters of Sion was founded in 1842 and the Arch-Confraternity of Prayer in 1903. The only 'condition of membership' for the Arch-Confraternity was 'the daily recitation' of a prayer for the conversion and redemption of the Jews. In return, the volunteers were promised '300 days indulgence and a plenary indulgence each month'. Report of Guild Meeting, 27 November 1923, 7-8, 33, CGI Archives.

⁶ Guild Minute book, entry for 25 January 1921, 35-36, CGI Archives. The Sisters of Sion worked closely with the Catholic Guild of Israel, and the Guild regularly met at the Convent of Our Lady of Sion. It was Mary Judith, the Reverend Mother of the Sisters of Sion, who encouraged Bede Jarrett to found the Guild. A Member Of The Community [pseud.], *Memoir of Mother Mary Judith: Congregation of Our Lady of Sion, 1847-1932* (London: Longmans, Green, 1936), 135-143. The Sisters of Sion still exist, but their mission since Vatican II has been to help improve Jewish-Catholic relations.

⁷ [Reverend Mother Mary Judith?], 'Ideas for Addresses to Children on the Conversion of the Jews', pamphlet, undated, 1-4, CGI Archives. The pamphlet also contained the image of the energetic Jew whose zeal could be an asset to the Church: 'The Jews, as a rule, are very clever and ardent and eager in all they do. See how successful they are in business. What will they not do for the world when they apply their great gifts to the spread of the Kingdom of our Lord?' (ibid., 3).

⁸ Ulrike Ehret estimates that by 1924, the Guild's presence in the streets of London had reached about 150 meetings a year, with up to 100 listeners at each, mostly from the working-class. Ulrike Ehret, 'Catholics and Antisemitism in Germany and England, 1918-1939' (PhD thesis, University of London, 2006), 55.

The discourse that emerged from the Catholic Guild of Israel had some distinctive features from the broader English Catholic discourse. Superficially there were similarities. Jews were portrayed in some Guild publications as usurious, bolshevist and anti-Christian. However, these deprecating stereotypes were peripheral features of the discourse of the Guild. The central theme was Jewish 'power'. Jewish power *was not* the central theme in the broader English Catholic discourse, but when it was broached, it was almost universally portrayed as a dangerous and destructive force (for example, as part of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy or the manifestation of Antichrist). Conversely, Jewish power *was* the key feature of the discourse of the Catholic Guild of Israel, but it was portrayed in ambivalent rather than unequivocally hostile terms; a dangerous force if left to run wild outside the Church, but an asset if brought into the Church. This ambivalent construction of Jewish power produced correspondingly mixed views about Zionism.

Despite the attempts to present Jews in a more favourable light, ambivalence and power almost always found their way into Guild publications. The Jews, it was argued, had great vitality, zeal and energy, which made them dangerous outside of the Church, but a potential asset if they could be brought into it. This idea was disseminated by the two most senior and prolific members of the Guild: Father Bede Jarrett (1881-1934), head of the English province of the Dominican Order and the founder and president of the Guild, and Father Arthur Day (1866-1946), an English Jesuit, vice-president of the Guild and the author of several booklets and articles on 'the Jews'. Their notions of Jewish power influenced their views about Jews and their policies on various matters such as Zionism. Significantly, whilst they shared very similar views about the dangers and merits of Jewish power, they reached opposing positions about Zionism. The first two sections of this article examine the notions of Jewish power adopted by Day and Jarrett, and how it influenced their views on Zionism. Day and Jarrett have been selected for this article for two reasons. Firstly, whilst their discourse about Jews expanded over the years, certain key themes, such as their intertwined views about Jewish power and Zionism, remained stable and consistent. Secondly, they were not only the two most senior members of the Guild, they were also the two most prolific authors in the Guild. Most of the Guild booklets, pamphlets and articles were written by Day or Jarrett, and those that were written by other authors,⁹ usually adopted similarly ambivalent views about Jewish zeal and power. However, one member who did not cohere to the worldviews of Jarrett and Day was Hans Herzl (1890-1930), the son of the Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl. The third section of this article examines the Catholicism and anti-Zionism of Hans Herzl. On the surface, Hans Herzl seems to have shared the anti-Zionist views of Bede Jarrett (and many other English Catholics of that time), but unlike Jarrett and Day, his views on Zionism had little to do with Jewish power. His views were determined by his personal conceptions of identity, purpose, Jewish nationality and Catholicism. Whilst Day and Jarrett represent the central core of the discourse of the Catholic Guild of Israel, with most other members gravitating towards their views, Hans Herzl represents the outer boundary of the Guild's discourse.

This article aims to present the reader with a window into the largely unexamined Catholic Guild of Israel. It will thus present a distinctive segment of the English Catholic discourse, and improve our overall understanding of English Catholic attitudes towards Jews and Zionism during the early twentieth-century. It is of course impossible to present

⁹ For example, Hugh Angress, Stanley James, John Arendzen and Dudley Wright.

the entire discourse of the Catholic Guild of Israel, or a detailed analysis of every member of the Guild, in a single article. And whilst power and ambivalence were key features of the discourse, other important aspects – such as a reoccurring portrayal of Judaism as incomplete Catholicism – have had to go largely unexamined in this article. Whilst the picture that will emerge will inevitably be incomplete, it is hoped that by focusing on these key features, and by presenting the views of the two most prolific and central members of the Guild, combined with the views of a prominent individual who was on the periphery of the discourse, as representative an image of the Catholic Guild of Israel will be constructed as is possible.

Bede Jarrett and Arthur Day: Jewish Power

Bede Jarrett, the founder and president of the Catholic Guild of Israel, believed that the Jews were not merely a foreign presence in England; more importantly, he argued, they were a ‘power’ to be reckoned with. ‘It is time that we realised the power of the Jew here and elsewhere’, he argued, ‘and remembered that this power will increase’. The biggest threat, Jarrett reasoned, was the ‘liberal Jew’. When he referred to liberal Jews, Jarrett did not have Liberal Judaism in mind. In Jarrett’s worldview, Jews were either converts to Christianity (i.e. good Jews), ‘orthodox’ (i.e. religious Jews – portrayed as bad but relatively harmless) or ‘liberal’ (i.e. non-religious Jews – portrayed as dangerous, revolutionary, and either socialist or capitalist).¹⁰ The ‘orthodox Jew’ was relatively inconsequential because his power was turned in upon himself. According to Jarrett, ‘the orthodox Jew, hating Christ and loving the Law, is driven in upon himself, and consequently is harmless’. Jarrett explained that as long as he ‘remains separated from the world by the walls of the Talmud, his anti-Christianism is limited to his own atmosphere’. In a modern refinement of the well poisoning accusation, Jarrett explained that ‘the liberal Jew is the active enemy of Christian ideals and hopes, and works for their overthrow’. He stated that the liberal Jew ‘does not poison the wells of drinking water, as mediaeval Europe believed; [but] he does endeavour to poison the living springs of Christendom’.¹¹

Jarrett seemed to perceive the so-called ‘power’ of the Jews as something akin to a racial possession, and simultaneously feared and desired it. He expressed a desire to tap into this reservoir of Jewish energy for the benefit of the Church. In 1917, he argued that the Church has ‘great need of the Children of Israel’, in particular ‘their flaming zeal’ and their ‘fixed constancy’ which has endured ‘through the vicissitudes of these thousands of years’. He went on to explain that: ‘It is these people who still have something of the zeal and the flame which perhaps our own hearts lack. It is something of that fire, something of that flame, that we ask the Mother of God to bring into our midst’.¹² In 1921, he stated that ‘the Jew is nearly always a man of ideals, not wholly devoted to finance. He has shown himself a capable artist, a musician, a political leader; he has been a General in the British Army, a Lord Chief Justice, a Prime Minister’. Jarrett suggested that it may be deduced

¹⁰ Liberal Judaism does not fit comfortably into Jarrett’s schema.

¹¹ Bede Jarrett, ‘The Jew, part I’, *Universe*, 29 June 1917; Bede Jarrett, ‘The Jew, part II’, *Universe*, 6 July 1917.

¹² Report of sermon delivered by Bede Jarrett to the Arch-Confraternity of Prayers, in ‘The Conversion of Israel’, *Universe*, 4 January 1918, 6.

that 'the Jew' has 'climbed to power through injustice', but this, he argued, only strengthens the need for converting him. He concluded that 'the Catholic Church needs at this present moment, more than anything else, apostles such as the Jews have shown themselves to be, incisive, enthusiastic, unhampered by convention, able to throw themselves with ardour and whole-heartedly into the service of any ideal that can inspire and inflame'.¹³ In 1927, he again expressed his fears that 'the Jewish people' were the cause of 'extraordinary mischief' in the world, but he reiterated his belief that 'in an especial way, the Jew is an apostle by nature. He carries fire and enthusiasm with him. A great number of movements to-day have their most active flame-bearers in the Jews, for they are the most religious of all races; either in defence of it or in violent antagonism to it, the Jew cannot be kept clear of God'.¹⁴

Arthur Day, the vice-president of the Guild and the Guild's principle author, expressed similar ambivalent sentiments about Jews and Jewish power. For Day, the issue was the 'Jewish mentality', which he regarded as pervasive, anti-Christian, and at times violent.¹⁵ In 1924, Day expressed admiration for Hilaire Belloc's book, *The Jews* (1922),¹⁶ which he suggested presented the Jew in a 'scientific and judicial' manner, rather than as an 'idealised pastille portrait'. He agreed with Belloc that the Jews must accept some of the blame for the antipathy that has been felt towards them. Father Day stated that 'the fact that their ancestors had rejected Christ was necessarily a bad introduction' and 'their strict retentiveness of their ancient Eastern customs was often embarrassing for their hosts'.¹⁷ Father Day acknowledged that 'past experiences at the hands of ill-advised Christians' was possibly the reason why 'Jews are extraordinarily difficult to convert'. He concluded that Jewish resistance can be removed, because Catholics 'can show them, in a kindly way, that if they persist in that attitude of rigid exclusion towards Christians they cannot expect us to include them with any cordiality into our social system'.¹⁸ Day regularly referred to Jewish hostility to Christians to balance out Christian hostility to Jews. He suggested in 1925 that 'if Jews object to Christians being "anti-Semitic," they should set us the example of not being "anti-Christian."' ¹⁹ In 1930, he referred to a 'story ... told of a [Jewish] father in Prague who burnt his child because it had been baptized', as an illustration that Jews

¹³ Bede Jarrett, 'The Catholic Guild of Israel', *Month* 138 (September 1921): 197; Bede Jarrett, 'The Catholic Guild of Israel', *Harvest*, November 1921, 299.

¹⁴ Bede Jarrett, 'The Attitude of the Church Towards the Jews', *Tablet*, 27 August 1927, 266-267.

¹⁵ Arthur Day often referred to the Jewish 'mentality'. For example, after a heated exchange of letters with Cecil Roth (published in the *Jewish Guardian* on 28 December 1928 and 4 January 1929) about forced baptisms and the Mortara Affair, in which Roth refused to accept Day's position that under certain exceptional circumstances forced baptisms and the removal of the Jewish children from their families might be justified, Day concluded that the episode furnished a 'useful object-lesson regarding Jewish mentality when confronted by the Catholic claim'. Arthur Day, 'The Mortara Case', *Month* 153 (June 1929): 501. For a summary of the heated debate, see Simon Mayers, 'Cecil Roth, Arthur Day and the Mortara Affair', blog report, last updated 28 April 2014, <http://simonmayers.com/2014/02/23/cecil-roth-arthur-day-and-the-mortara-affair-1928-1929>. In his memoirs, Day argued that 'even a Jew who professes to be an atheist ... may yet retain an anti-Christian complex rooted in a substratum of subconscious religion'. Arthur Day, *Our Friends the Jews; or, The Confessions of a Proselytizer* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1943), 48.

¹⁶ In this book, as well as in the *Eye Witness*, Belloc claimed that the role of Jewish finance behind the Boer War, the Dreyfus Affair, the Russian revolution, and other episodes, was glaring. Jewish secrecy, he argued, has 'almost passed into an instinct throughout the Jewish body'. According to Belloc, bolshevism was Jewish 'racial revenge'. His proposed solution, which he called 'recognition' or 'privilege', was segregation. See Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable, 1922); Hilaire Belloc, 'The Jewish Question', *Eye Witness*, 7 September – 26 October 1911.

¹⁷ Arthur Day, 'Jews and Catholics', *Month* 143 (January 1924): 1-3.

¹⁸ Report of Guild Meeting, 27 November 1923, 5-6, CGI Archives. The address was also reported in 'Catholic Guild of Israel', *Tablet*, 8 December 1923, 744.

¹⁹ Arthur Day, 'Jews & Blasphemy: Anti-Christian Attitude Causes Anti-Semitism', *Universe*, 13 February 1925, 7.

were not always blameless.²⁰ Referring to the crucifixion and the ‘stiff-neckitis’ of Jews, Day stated in 1932 that ‘the Jew, with a few glorious exceptions, having chosen Barabbas, has never reconsidered his decision’.²¹ Father Day’s attempts to convince his readers of the bilateral nature of violence in the Jewish-Catholic dynamic, and that ‘provocation was not always lacking’ when Jews were ill-treated, continued into the late 1930s²² and early 1940s.²³

Like Jarrett, Day also argued that the Jews would be a powerful asset if brought into the Church. In 1924, in an article in the *Month*, a Jesuit periodical, he referred to his ‘pro-Jew proclivities’, described Jews as ‘interesting and attractive’, and expressed admiration for the works of the prominent Anglo-Jewish author, Israel Zangwill. He stated that the Jews are ‘a race that is on the whole more idealistic and versatile than we are’.²⁴ In his memoirs, Day concluded that the lives of Jewish converts demonstrate even to the most ‘incredulous’ that ‘a choice Jewish soul ... has qualities, intellectual and spiritual, that fit it pre-eminently to shine in the Catholic firmament’. He observed that the percentage of such souls was by no means a small percentage of the Jewish population.²⁵ Like Jarrett, Day argued that Jews are imbued with qualities that would make them an asset to the Church. ‘The Jew’, he stated, is ‘a hard nut to crack’, but the ‘kernel’ is ‘sweet’. He encouraged Catholics to look and listen for ‘the golden quality of the Jew’.²⁶ At a Guild meeting in 1923, he stated that ‘the Jew is gifted on an average with rather keener intelligence than the Gentile’.²⁷ And at a Catholic Truth Society meeting in Liverpool in February 1927, Day argued that ‘considering their small numbers – fifteen millions scattered over the world – Jews exercised enormous influence’. ‘Catholics, he reasoned, ‘should have some hand in directing this [influence]’.²⁸

²⁰ Arthur Day, ‘A Jewish Jesuit’, *Month* 156 (July 1930): 18.

²¹ Minutes of Catholic Guild of Israel meeting, *Our Lady of Zion* 37 (October-December 1932): 6-7. Issues of *Our Lady of Zion* can be found in the CGI Archives. Some issues are also available at the British Library.

²² In a Catholic Truth Society booklet published in 1938, Father Day argued that Jewish hostility towards Christians should be kept in mind when Jews feel ‘tempted to complain of the cruelties of the Inquisition’. According to the booklet, in 1854, the family of two young Jewish converts to Catholicism had used violence to force them to abandon the Church. Day stated that one uncle attempted to strangle one of the boys. ‘Whilst threatening the boy’s life, he kept exclaiming at the top of his voice: “Renounce, renounce!”’ Day claimed that another uncle assaulted the other boy with an iron bar and it was only the intercession of some passing soldiers which prevented a ‘martyrdom’. Arthur Day, *Twin Heroes of the Vatican Council* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1938), 5-7.

²³ In his memoirs published in 1943, Father Day acknowledged that it would be anti-Jewish to revive the accusation that ‘the Jews’ murder and sacrifice Christian children, but he argued that it would not be unreasonable or anti-Jewish to ‘suggest that there may have been ... isolated cases of such child-murder committed in the Middle Ages by Jews addicted to Black Magic’. He also concluded that ‘it is not inconceivable that superstitious Jews ... may have violated consecrated Hosts’. Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 49.

²⁴ Arthur Day, ‘Jews and Catholics’, *Month* 143 (January 1924): 1, 5.

²⁵ Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 13.

²⁶ Report of paper delivered by Arthur Day at the National Catholic Congress, in ‘The Conversion of the Jews’, *Catholic Times*, 18 August 1923, 4.

²⁷ Report of Guild Meeting, 27 November 1923, 6, CGI Archives. In 1930, Day referred to a Jewish Jesuit who was marked by his intelligence, memory and judgement. ‘He was’, Day concluded, ‘a true chip of the old Abrahamic stock!’ Arthur Day, ‘A Jewish Jesuit’, *Month* 156 (July 1930): 18.

²⁸ Report of lecture by Arthur Day to the Catholic Truth Society, Liverpool Branch, in ‘The Church and the Jew’, *Catholic Times*, 18 February 1927, 3.

Bede Jarrett and Arthur Day: Zionism and anti-Zionism

Jarrett and Day's obsession with Jewish power, influence and zeal, fed into their discourses about Zionism. Significantly, on this issue, they adopted opposing views. Whilst Jarrett only referred to Zionism occasionally, he did seem to lean towards the construction of a 'Zionist Menace'. He observed in 1917 that the consequences of Zionism should be a matter for 'profound reflection'. Zionism, he suggested, would mean the 'influence of eight millions of Jewish brains' let loose in an undeveloped land. He implied that a repeat of the so-called 'mischief' that occurred in Russia would probably ensue. He concluded that 'it may be a blessing and lead to a sudden and torrential widening of the Kingdom of God, or it may prove the inauguration of a great anti-Christian campaign in the west'.²⁹ In 1921, he argued that the influence and dominance of 'political Judaism' is everywhere, not only in England, but also in 'India, and of course Palestine'. Jarrett blamed the Jew for the anti-Christian revolution in Russia and the so-called Judaizing of Christianity in England, and he questioned why the Jew should even worry about Zionism. 'There is then no reason for wondering at the power the Jews wield today', he observed, for 'the Jew finds himself in a civilization which is based on capitalism, that is, on a system in which money counts most – and money is his flair'. He argued that it was ludicrous for the Jew to head back to Palestine, where survival would be based almost entirely on agriculture, when banking and capitalism were his speciality. 'Indeed', he concluded, 'why should he worry over Palestine when he has the world at his feet?'³⁰

Significantly, Arthur Day's ambivalent perception of the so-called Jewish mentality led him to the opposite conclusion. Day was one of a small number of English Catholics during the 1910s and 1920s to approve of Zionism (along with Mark Sykes³¹ and G. K. Chesterton³²). At the Catholic Truth Society meeting in Liverpool in February 1927, Day referred to the 'wonderful transformation' of the Jew which was being effected in Palestine, and he recommended that the Zionist movement should be kept under critical but sympathetic observation.³³ During a debate on the subject of Zionism at a meeting of the Catholic Citizen's Parliament at Vauxhall in December 1927, Day argued that it is an abnormal state of affairs for a people with a historic past to be without a country to call their own. He reasoned that in addition to 'arguments drawn from prophecy', which he suggested were 'cogent' enough on their own, Palestine was the 'natural seat of the race' and a 'natural Homeland and spiritual centre'. Like Jarrett, Day's reasoning was connected to his ambivalent perception of Jewish power. He explained to his Catholic audience that 'if the Jew had under the stress of adversity degenerated to the status of a

²⁹ Bede Jarrett, 'The Jew, part I', *Universe*, 29 June 1917, 5.

³⁰ Bede Jarrett, 'The Catholic Guild of Israel', *Month* 138 (September 1921): 194-195; Bede Jarrett, 'The Catholic Guild of Israel', *Harvest*, November 1921, 297-298.

³¹ Mark Sykes (1878-1919) was an official in the British government. Sykes had occasionally repeated deprecating stereotypes about Jews, but he supported Zionism, and assisted negotiations between Zionist leaders and the Vatican.

³² Though by 1925, Chesterton had abandoned Zionism as his preferred solution to the so-called 'Jewish problem', in favour of distinctive clothing and Belloc's idea of special 'recognition' or 'privilege' (i.e. segregation).

³³ Report of lecture by Arthur Day to the Catholic Truth Society, Liverpool Branch, in 'The Church and the Jew', *Catholic Times*, 18 February 1927, 3.

gipsy,³⁴ we might regard him as a negligible factor; but so far from this being the case, he is generally credited with exercising great influence for good and evil'. 'Selfish considerations alone', he explained, 'should suffice to force us to grapple with the problem of relieving Jewish discontent, and thereby exercising that "malaise" which it engenders'. Furthermore, he suggested, the Jewish pioneers will find themselves 'surrounded not only by Old Testament memorials but also by those of the New Covenant'. 'Sunshine and sweat – two splendid medicines – will remove, where it has existed, the obsession of bitter memories, and Jews will be in a far better frame of mind for considering the merits of Christianity', he concluded.³⁵ He argued in 1931 that 'however much we may dislike the religion or the irreligiousness of Jews', the revival of their Hebrew language and their return to 'the tiling of the soil on which the Saviour trod, is calculated sooner or later to bring them nearer to the heart of truth'.³⁶ In his memoirs, Day stated that Zionism has 'some fine achievements to its credit'. He praised the fact that it had brought a vast number of the 'scattered Children of Israel' back to 'their native soil', and argued that 'sunshine and starlight have gladdened their hearts, and honest toil, in all weathers, has weaned them from the false charm of a parasitic existence'. He referred to the brave work of the pioneer colonists, who had drained the marshes at risk to their own lives. He saluted those who had paid the price 'in death and disease', concluding that it was not too big a price to pay considering that as a result they were on the brink of winning back the country of their ancestors. He concluded that the prospects for Zionism were still fraught with deadly perils, and he offered his prayers that the Jews would emerge triumphant from the adventure.³⁷

Hans Herzl: Zionism and Catholicism

In a somewhat ironic twist, Hans Herzl, the son of the Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl, stood opposed to Zionism, whilst being mentored as a recent convert to Roman Catholicism by Father Day, an advocate of Zionism. Hans Herzl's path to – and from – Catholicism was not a straight one. For Hans, the Church proved to be but a brief sojourn in a life spent searching for a core belief to sustain him. During his life, he tried Theosophy, Anglicanism, a Baptist community in Vienna, Catholicism, Quakerism and Liberal Judaism. Even after he formerly left the Church in 1925, he did not entirely turn his back on Catholicism. However, none of his religious commitments brought him lasting happiness, or purged his feelings of angst and uncertainty, and at the age of thirty-nine, he committed suicide.³⁸

³⁴ A year earlier, Day has stated that if the Jews had 'not been gifted with a most remarkable character and watched over by a special providence, they would almost inevitably have degenerated into gipsies'. Arthur Day, *Jews and Catholics* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1926), 1.

³⁵ Report of a debate at the Catholic Citizen's Parliament at Vauxhall, 'Priest's Defence of Zionism: Fr. Arthur Day, S.J., Advises Catholics to Support it', *Universe*, 9 December 1927, 9.

³⁶ Arthur Day, 'The Re-Birth of Hebrew', *Month* 158 (November 1931): 415

³⁷ Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 64-65.

³⁸ Hans Herzl shot himself the day before the funeral of his sister Pauline Herzl. He felt guilty for not being able to help Pauline to overcome her emotional problems and addiction to drugs. However, whilst the occasion was his sister's funeral, the likely cause was his prolonged depression, exasperated by his inability to find a lasting faith to give his life meaning and direction. At the time, Hans and Pauline were both considered an embarrassment to their father's legacy (Hans because he converted to Christianity and committed suicide, and Pauline because she had a

According to Hans, his mother had a 'leaning towards religion', but his father was influenced more by the 'habits of Free Thought'. He explained that he and his sisters 'were only taught two or three simple and short prayers'. Living in England after the death of his father, he 'outwardly observed the principal Jewish customs', whilst losing whatever 'inward religion' he possessed. He described his life during this period as 'in the main a futile existence', becoming largely 'apathetic in the matter of religion'.³⁹ In fact, Hans felt himself in desperate need of a faith to sustain him. Ilse Sternberger, in her book about Theodor Herzl's children, observed that Theodor had regarded the need for God a 'passing weakness', but that Hans needed 'the security of a supra-human power to give his life the motive and direction he could not find within himself. There was, Sternberger convincingly observed, a sense of internal emptiness that Hans was desperate to fill with a 'core of certainty, a centre of gravity', and this led him on quest to find 'a religious faith which would totally sustain him'. According to Sternberger, 'it was a quest that would leave him disillusioned, drained and desperate'. In his letters and diaries, he frequently recorded his feelings of worthlessness, stated that he 'despised' himself, and expressed thoughts about suicide. As early as 1910, he had written to an uncle explaining that he felt himself 'unfit for life', and that he often thought about putting 'an end to so miserable an existence'. In 1919, he wrote a letter to his sister Pauline, informing her that he had come to the conclusion that he had 'lived too long', that his life had been 'unsuccessful' and 'sinful', and that his 'psychic energy' had been exhausted. He was extremely self-critical in his diary, condemning his 'hankering after distinction' and 'greatness', which he observed had led to his missing 'all the realities of life'. He recorded that he needed to learn to respect people, that he was full of 'all sorts of contempts, spites, hatreds', and that there was something 'warring' within him. 'Oh God, I am so ugly!', he declared.⁴⁰ Father Day had also observed and reported this melancholic side to Hans Herzl's nature, and his 'habitual self-deprecation'. Day observed that Hans was 'was a continual self-tormentor', and that he suffered from a 'strain of melancholia in his temperament'.⁴¹

After the First World War,⁴² Hans felt completely uncertain about the course of his life. He set out to find a definite religious creed to bolster his sense of identity and to give direction to his life. During the war he attended the Anglican Church, theosophical meetings, and spiritualist séances, but none of these maintained a lasting hold over him. It was during the early 1920s that he developed his attraction for Catholicism, having been impressed by meetings of the Catholic Evidence Guild in Hyde Park. He did not however immediately convert to Catholicism, which he claimed was partly because he felt 'unworthy

problem with drugs and a controversial love life), and were denied their final wish: to be interred with their father. However, in 2006, their coffins were disinterred from Bordeaux and reburied on Mount Herzl. According to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, their reburial in Israel was 'hailed by JAFI officials, Israeli government representatives and members of the French Jewish community as a historic moment'. 'Decades After Their Deaths, Bodies of Herzl's Children Brought to Israel', *JTA*, 21 September 2006, <http://www.jta.org/2006/09/21/archive/decades-after-their-deaths-bodies-of-herzls-children-brought-to-israel>

³⁹ Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Universe*, 7 November 1924, 1, 12; Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Tablet*, 8 November 1924, 604.

⁴⁰ Ilse Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home: Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodor Herzl's Children 1900-1945* (San Francisco: International Scholars, 1994), 163-164, 341, 366-369. For more about his identity struggles, inner-conflict, persistent depression and thoughts about suicide, see also pages 156-175, 189-192, 202-205, 336-341, 413-415. I am indebted to this volume for extracts from Han Herzl's diaries and letters (which are held at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem).

⁴¹ Arthur Day, 'Hans Herzl', *Our Lady of Zion* 34 (1932): 4, 7; Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 19, 22.

⁴² Hans served in the British Army during the war.

of being a Catholic'. However, he did embrace Christianity, being baptized by a Baptist community in Vienna. The happiness he gained from joining the Baptist community was short-lived. Before long he doubted his decision, arriving at the conclusion that it was not enough to accept the Christian faith, he must also embrace the Catholic Church in order to become a member of 'the larger community of Christians'.⁴³ According to Sternberger, after a momentary elation, he 'relapsed into darkness', felt doubt about his conversion into the Baptist community, and doubted 'the world as he doubted himself'.⁴⁴ Hans returned to England and discussed his feelings of doubt with a cousin, who put him in touch with Father Day.⁴⁵ Day provided him with guidance and instruction for joining the Catholic Church. He was received into the Church at the Chapel of Our Lady of Sion (the home of the Catholic Guild of Israel) on 19 October 1924.

In 1924, the Catholic Guild of Israel was still a relatively new organisation. Whilst it had received the blessing of popes and archbishops, it was finding the actual work of converting the Jews to be difficult and slow.⁴⁶ The securing of Hans Herzl, a Jewish convert with a very distinguished name, was thus a much needed propaganda coup for the Guild. As Day later acknowledged, this 'good news' was spread, albeit on a 'modest scale', and Hans was 'induced' to 'write a short account of his adoption of Catholicism'.⁴⁷ This account appeared in two prominent English Catholic newspapers, the *Tablet* and the *Universe*, in November 1924.⁴⁸ Five months later, in March 1925, Hans published another article in the *Universe*, discussing Zionism and the Mandate for Palestine, which he believed should be passed to the Holy See. It seems unlikely that this article was induced by Father Day, as Day supported Zionism, but it is possible that Jarrett encouraged Hans to write it. Hans stated that he was opposed to the Balfour Declaration because he believed that 'the Jewish people no longer require a national home in Palestine'. Hans observed that from 1881 onwards, the Jews poured out of Russia into Western Europe in order to escape persecution, setting up Jewish colonies in various cities, creating 'a minor Jewish problem wherever they appeared, setting up that local irritation which alien bodies produce in living organisms'. He suggested that his father had recognised that this irritation led to a so-called 'legitimate anti-Semitism'. Hans believed that his father's solution, political Zionism and the setting up of a 'Jewish National Home in Palestine', was no longer necessary, because 'there no longer exists a Jewish problem in Eastern Europe'. Hans argued that Jewish money and sentiment should be channelled to Russia rather than Palestine. 'If those large sums which wealthy American Jews are now pouring into the

⁴³ Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Universe*, 7 November 1924, 1, 12; Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Tablet*, 8 November 1924, 604; Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 339.

⁴⁴ Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 349.

⁴⁵ See Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Universe*, 7 November 1924, 12; Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Tablet*, 8 November 1924, 604; Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 353; Arthur Day, 'Hans Herzl', *Our Lady of Sion* 34 (January-March 1932): 5.

⁴⁶ At the annual meeting of the Guild in 1923, Father Day informed the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster that Jews were extremely difficult to convert and that the work was progressing very slowly. He repeated these observations in a booklet in 1926. Report of Guild Meeting, 27 November 1923, 5, CGI Archives; Arthur Day, *Jews and Catholics* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1926), 6. In 1932, Day compared the task of bringing Israel into the Church to that of moving an iceberg: 'As with an iceberg the progress is slow. If we were working alone, the process might take 5,000 years; but we are counting on securing the kind and efficient services of the physician Archangel Raphael'. Minutes of Catholic Guild of Israel meeting, *Our Lady of Sion* 37 (October-December 1932): 7.

⁴⁷ Arthur Day, 'Hans Herzl', *Our Lady of Sion* 34 (January-March 1932): 5-7.

⁴⁸ Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Universe*, 7 November 1924, 1, 12; Hans Herzl, 'How I Became a Catholic', *Tablet*, 8 November 1924, 604.

Zionist coffers were diverted towards the restoration of Russia', he argued, then 'that country which has so long been the national home of the Jewish people in the past could be made habitable for them in the future'. He stated that the only 'sort of Mandate in the Middle East' that he could personally conceive of was for 'the custody of the Holy places' to be 'held by the Holy See'.⁴⁹ Significantly, shortly after writing this article, he left the Church.

According to Day, Hans Herzl's 'full membership' of the Church cannot have lasted more than six months.⁵⁰ This would suggest that he started to abandon the Church around April 1925 (i.e. approximately one month after the article). Day explained that 'H. H. got it into his head that his conversion had been too much boomed by the Catholic Guild of Israel'. He observed that Hans could be over-sensitive, at times morbid, and was hurt by the Guild's rejoicing at the securing of a distinguished Jewish convert. After he left the Church, Hans accused the Guild of 'fanaticism' in his diary on account of being pressured to write about his conversion to Catholicism. According to Day, Hans claimed that his Catholicism collapsed because he felt the Guild was more interested in making converts than actually steering souls to God, and because he 'had never been convinced of the Divinity of Christ'.⁵¹ Sternberger observes that even though he was no longer admitted to holy communion after his departure from the Church, he still regularly attended mass throughout his life. Sternberger also refers to a number of near reconciliations with the Church. On one occasions, Hans claimed he was considering an offer to help form a special episcopate of Jewish converts to Catholicism in Jerusalem. Towards the end of his life, he talked to a Catholic priest, Father Rigby, about being reconciled to the Church, though it led to nothing.⁵² Father Day also observed that Hans Herzl remained loosely affiliated with the Church. According to Day, whilst his complete membership of the Church only lasted about six months, his falling away from Catholicism was a more gradual process.⁵³ According to Day, he and Hans continued to be friends after Hans's departure from the Church, and Hans continued to attend Catholic services. Day observed that Hans often expressed a desire to be reconciled with the Church, but that this was thwarted by his inability to overcome his 'pet objections against Catholic theology'.⁵⁴

Hans Herzl's rejection of Zionism continued after his departure from the Church, and he continued to maintain the belief that the Catholic Church should hold the mandate for the Holy Places in Palestine. After he left the Church, he became friends with a Jewish journalist, Marcel Sternberger. According to Marcel's wife, Ilse Sternberger, Hans explained to her husband that he believed Zionism had become imperialistic, territorial, and covetous for land, having lost the national idealism which would unite the Jewish people. He argued that Jewish nationalism should be more about a love for the Jewish people, and not tied to territory. Despite his departure from the Church, he still believed that 'the Jewish nation' would be best served by affiliating with 'the Papal State', 'the Synagogue' becoming a 'constituent member of the World-Church', with 'the Pope, as

⁴⁹ Hans Herzl 'National Home for the Jews', *Universe*, 20 March 1925, 1, 6.

⁵⁰ Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 18.

⁵¹ Arthur Day, 'Hans Herzl', *Our Lady of Zion* 34 (January-March 1932): 5-7; Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 20-21.

⁵² Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 362-363, 401-404.

⁵³ Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 18.

⁵⁴ Arthur Day, 'Hans Herzl', *Our Lady of Zion* 34 (1932): 5-6; Day, *Our Friends the Jews*, 20.

sovereign of dispersed Jewry'. Hans concluded that the Pope 'would be the surest guarantor of Jewish human rights'.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Jewish 'power' was clearly something that Day and Jarrett simultaneously feared and desired to bring into the Church. Whilst they shared similar views about Jewish power, they reached opposing views about Zionism. Whilst Jewish power (or zeal, fire, flame, energy and vitality) was a key factor, there were other considerations that fed into their reasoning. Like Day, Jarrett wanted to bring this energy into the Church, but he seems to have been driven more by his fear that liberal Jews – i.e. non-religious, non-orthodox Jews – were poisoning the 'living springs of Christendom'. For Jarrett, traditional Judaism was a good thing, but only because he believed that the orthodox Jew's energy and so-called hatred for Christianity was turned in upon itself and rendered harmless by it. He feared that with the Jews abandoning the Talmud, this energy would be – or was being – turned against Christendom in a series of violent anti-Christian revolutions. 'He is giving up his Talmudic faith', he warned, and 'without any other to take its place he will be, is, violently revolutionary in the varying extremes of anarchism and chaos'. His solution was to give the Jew another religion, to 'give him Catholicism', as then 'there is a chance for some steadiness in our political and social life'. In essence therefore, Jarrett believed that Judaism was good because it neutralised the Jews' power, but with the Jews abandoning Judaism, the only other solution was to bring them – and their zeal and energy – into the Church. As one Jewish Catholic observed in 1917, Jarrett seemed to sound 'the call to arms for the conversion of the Jew' as an act of 'self defence' on behalf of the Church.⁵⁶ He believed that the liberal Jews had caused extraordinary mischief in Russia, and the last thing he wanted was for them to be given an opportunity to run rampant again, causing mischief in the Holy Land.

Day conversely, whilst sharing similar views about Jewish power and the so-called Jewish 'mentality', seems to have been driven by awe rather than by fear. For Day, Judaism was not a set of walls to render the Jew harmless. He considered Judaism an incomplete form of Catholicism rather than an act of rebellion or revolution. According to Hugh Angress, a Jewish convert to Catholicism and the Chairman of the Catholic Guild of Israel, the Jewish Catholic had not ceased to be a Jew because Catholicism was not a replacement to Judaism, but rather a complete and fulfilled Judaism.⁵⁷ Day accepted this view. He observed that 'Judaism did not break off from Catholicism, it only stopped short – a terribly sad failure ... but not a rebellion or revolution'.⁵⁸ However, he also believed that Judaism was a problem, because it acted as 'a mighty bond of union' that made it difficult to convince Jews to embrace Christianity.⁵⁹ Day considered the Jew a great

⁵⁵ Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 393-398.

⁵⁶ Jewish Catholic [pseud.], 'The Jew: A Reply to Prior Bede Jarrett, O.P.', *Universe*, 13 July 1917, 6.

⁵⁷ See Hugh Israelowicz Angress, *I am a Catholic because I am a Jew* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1921) and Report of lecture by Hugh Angress to the Catholic Truth Society, Manchester Branch, in 'Solving the Jewish Problem', *Catholic Federationist*, November 1923, 2.

⁵⁸ Arthur Day, 'Jews and Catholics', *Month* 143 (January 1924): 8.

⁵⁹ Report of paper delivered by Arthur Day at the National Catholic Congress, in 'The Conversion of the Jews', *Catholic Times*, 18 August 1923, 4.

challenge, a 'hard nut to crack', but he believed that within the hard shell there lay a 'sweet' kernel. He wanted to bring that sweet kernel into the Church, and he believed the best way to overcome Jewish resistance was to support Zionism.

Whilst Day and Jarrett reached opposing viewpoints on the matter of Zionism, they were essentially a part of the same discourse. Whilst on the surface Hans Herzl adopted the anti-Zionism of Jarrett, he was in essence a part of a completely different discourse. Day and Jarrett were part of a Catholic discourse about Jews and Zionism that was influenced by their views of Judaism and Jewish power. Conversely, Hans Herzl was part of an Anglo-Jewish discourse about the merits and demerits of Zionism, which in his case was influenced by his view of Catholicism.⁶⁰ Whilst on occasion Hans referred to Zionism as a form of imperialism, his concern was not primarily a matter of Jewish power but rather the best form of Jewish nationalism. Even before he embraced Catholicism, Hans was ambivalent about Zionism.⁶¹ He believed in Jewish nationalism, the bringing together of Jews in a great bond of love and unity, but he viewed Zionism as too territorial and political. Unlike Jarrett, Hans recognised that Jews had been persecuted in Russia, but he believed that the time was right for the Jews to turn their energy to rebuilding Russia rather than the Middle East. Even after he formally left the Church, he was still influenced by Catholicism. As he informed Lucien Wolf in 1926, i.e. after he had left the Church, he was 'opposed to the continuance of the British Mandate over Palestine'. 'Instead of the Mandate', he stated, 'I advocate ... the custody of the Holy Places exercised by the Holy See'. As he later informed Marcel Sternberger, he believed that the Jewish nation should ideally be a 'Christian Theocracy of Jewish faith', a Jewish diaspora nation, with the Pope as sovereign and protector.⁶²

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⁶⁰ Many Anglo-Jews were against Zionism (such as Claude Montefiore and Lucien Wolf). Disagreements between prominent Zionists – such as Leopold Greenberg, Moses Gaster, Chaim Weizmann and Israel Zangwill – about the form that Zionism should take were also heated.

⁶¹ When he was young, there were those, especially among his guardians, who saw it as his duty to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Zionist leader. He tried to explain to them that he had little interest in getting involved with Zionism, but they usually dismissed this as the folly of youth or a fear of failure. Despite his ambivalence towards Zionism, he was occasionally involved with it (for example, by contributing to Zionist periodicals). See Sternberger, *Princes Without a Home*, 106, 159-161, 167, 173-175, 198, 303-305, 341.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 375, 396.

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DOWN WITH BRITAIN, AWAY WITH ZIONISM: THE 'CANAANITES' AND 'LOHAMEY HERUT ISRAEL' BETWEEN TWO ADVERSARIES

Roman Vater*

ABSTRACT: The imposition of the British Mandate over Palestine in 1922 put the Zionist leadership between a rock and a hard place, between its declared allegiance to the idea of Jewish sovereignty and the necessity of cooperation with a foreign ruler. Eventually, both Labour and Revisionist Zionism accommodated themselves to the new situation and chose a strategic partnership with the British Empire. However, dissident opinions within the Revisionist movement were voiced by a group known as the Maximalist Revisionists from the early 1930s. This article analyzes the intellectual and political development of two Maximalist Revisionists – Yonatan Ratosh and Israel Eldad – tracing their gradual shift to anti-Zionist positions. Some questions raised include: when does opposition to Zionist politics transform into opposition to Zionist ideology, and what are the implications of such a transition for the Israeli political scene after 1948?

Introduction

The standard narrative of Israel's journey to independence goes generally as follows: when the British military rule in Palestine was replaced in 1922 with a Mandate of which the purpose was to implement the 1917 Balfour Declaration promising support for a Jewish 'national home', the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine gained a powerful protector. In consequence, Zionist politics underwent a serious shift when both the leftist Labour camp, led by David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), and the rightist Revisionist camp, led by Zeev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky (1880-1940), threw in their lot with Britain. The idea of the 'covenant between the Empire and the Hebrew state'¹ became a paradigm for both camps, which (temporarily) replaced their demand for a Jewish state with the long-term prospect of bringing the Yishuv to qualitative and quantitative supremacy over the Palestinian Arabs under the wings of the British Empire. As a scholar of the Yishuv, Yehoshua Porat, explains,

[All the Zionist parties] believed that the British Mandate over the Land of Israel must be maintained and that the creation of the new Jewish society will be the result of a gradual process ... While the workers' parties opined that with the help of the proletariat ... it will be possible to develop voluntarily an autonomous society in the Land of Israel, the Revisionist movement stressed the importance of the British-Mandatory political factor: upon it lay the duty of forging political conditions ... which will enable the Zionist movement to advance

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¹ Joseph Heller, 'The Zionist Right and National Liberation: from Jabotinsky to Avraham Stern', *Israel Affairs* 1:3 (1995): 95.

unhindered the process of immigration to the land and its construction, until the Jewish Yishuv becomes a majority.²

Hence, the difference between the Labour and Revisionist Zionists was more of a tactical rather than strategic character: both treated Great Britain as an ally, though maintaining a balance of interests between it and the Yishuv was a wearisome task. When conflict arose between the Mandate and the Yishuv authorities, the latter usually chose diplomatic methods to push Britain to cooperate. Only when the Biltmore Platform, which defined explicitly the aim of Zionism as the establishment of a 'Jewish commonwealth' (a sovereign state, by any other name) in Palestine, was adopted in May 1942³ did the Zionist leadership begin to move away from the idea of the Yishuv's strategic dependence on Britain. By that time the Yishuv had grown in strength and numbers, and Hitler's persecution of the Jews had furnished the Zionist leadership with a powerful argument for Jewish independence. Using diplomatic and warfare tactics, the State of Israel was created in 1948.

Yet this narrative overlooks alternative standpoints on the Zionist-British relationship which rose within the ranks of the Revisionist movement back in the 1930s. They were enunciated chiefly in an informal circle of so-called 'Maximalist Revisionists'. This group of radical right-wing activists, disappointed with what it perceived as a lack of sufficient protection and support by the British for the Yishuv (especially after the Arab-Jewish clashes of 1929), came to doubt Britain's role as an ally. Their premise was based on two assumptions: that the Hebrew-speaking Yishuv in Palestine had become a *native* society, therefore deserving of self-determination instead of colonial protection; and that no actual alliance of interests existed between the Zionist movement and the British Empire. They insisted on presenting Britain with an ultimatum: either it would side wholeheartedly with the Zionist enterprise or the Yishuv would seek to replace the British Mandate with another protector (such as fascist Italy, to which the Maximalists were particularly sympathetic, as it represented a socio-political option close to their outlook) while simultaneously conducting a guerrilla war against it, modelled upon the Irish Sinn Féin. When the British Peel Commission, in 1937, recommended the creation of a Jewish state in a small part of Palestine (annexing the remainder of the territory to Transjordan and leaving the corridor leading from the Jaffa port to Jerusalem under British protection), the abolishment of the Mandate became for the first time a real option. With the British Empire questioning its own right and ability to rule Palestine, the Maximalists began drawing up detailed political plans for the day after the Mandate. Furthermore, they accused Zionist leadership (mainly Labour, but tacitly their own as well) of acting against the vital interests of the Jewish people and the Yishuv by clinging to the strategic alliance with the British Empire. The Maximalists approved of acts of terrorism directed at the

² Yehoshua Porat, *Shelah veet beyado: Sipur Khayav shel Uriel Shelah (Yonatan Ratosh)* (Tel Aviv: Makhbarot Iesifrut, 1989), 41. All translations from Hebrew, unless stated otherwise, are my own. See also Nathan Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel: Anashim, Re'ayonot, 'Alilot* (Jerusalem: Shikmona, 1975), 241.

³ For the Biltmore Platform text, see <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/biltmore.html>. For the historical circumstances surrounding its formulation, see David Arnow, 'The Holocaust and the Birth of Israel', *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 15:3 (1994): 261-2, 264-5; Eviatar Friesel, 'On the Myth of the Connection between the Holocaust and the Creation of Israel', *Israel Affairs* 14:3 (2008): 449-50.

British and, having renounced democracy, they called for an overthrow by force of Haim Weitzman, the president of the World Zionist Organization.⁴

By questioning the principal political paradigm of post-1922 Zionism, including that of their own Revisionist movement, the Maximalists came close to the limits of contemporary Zionist consensus; while most of them did not eventually break those limits, there were some who *did*. The aim of this article is to map out the process by which the Maximalist opposition to Zionist *policy* evolved in certain cases to oppose Zionist *ideology*. What was the point at which some Maximalists realized that the alliance with Britain was, for Zionism, not simply a *temporary* tactic but an *essential* ideological component? Finally, this article shall attempt to assess how Maximalists re-evaluated Zionism, and how their initial Zionist zealotness morphed into staunch anti-Zionism.

In order to analyze this, I have chosen to concentrate on sources that are representative of the aforementioned transformation. This article will offer a study of several works by two prominent political thinkers of the Yishuv, whose thought was profoundly shaped by Maximalist Revisionism. One is Uriel Shelah, better known under the pseudonym Yonatan Ratosh (born Heilperin, 1908-1981), one of the most prominent 20th century Hebrew poets, and also the figure most closely associated with the anti-Zionist movement known as the 'Young Hebrews', but more often referred to as the 'Canaanites'. The other is Israel Scheib (Eldad, 1910-1996), who is remembered for his renditions of Nietzsche's works into Hebrew, and who also co-headed the LEHI (Lohamey Herut Israel, 'Fighters for the freedom of Israel'⁵) underground movement from 1943. Beginning in the 1930s, both men expressed in the Revisionist press their dissatisfaction with the British rule, which later developed into a criticism of the entire Zionist movement and finally a rejection of the Zionist ideology, at least as it was professed by the contemporary Zionist leadership. It is the purpose of this article to follow their path from anti-Britishness to anti-Zionism, that is, to try and see how a particular political standpoint leads to a revision of basic values, by juxtaposing the two thinkers' intellectual development. It will be shown that Yonatan Ratosh broke the confines of Zionism once he adopted a historiographic 'commemorative narrative'⁶ which contradicted the Zionist historiographic base and made the Zionist cultural-political platform untenable. Israel Eldad, contrary to Ratosh, would commit himself to a radical redefinition of the Zionist ideology *without* undermining its historico-philosophical base. Thus, whereas Ratosh eventually adopted an alternative national idea, which regarded Zionism as a foreign and hostile monolith, Eldad renegotiated Zionism to such extent that he excluded from its limits all trends and currents except his own. It will be demonstrated that these different intellectual starting

⁴ James S. Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land? The 'Canaanite' Critique of Israel* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 28-30; Eran Kaplan, *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and its Ideological Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 148-58; Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 42-54, 66-7. A fresh though not entirely convincing analysis of Maximalist Revisionism is offered by Dan Tamir. See Dan Tamir, "Dictate more, for we should obey your orders!" Cult of the Leader in Inter-War Hebrew Fascism', *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 14:4 (2013), 449-67; Dan Tamir, 'Some Thoughts about Hebrew Fascism in Inter-War Palestine', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 63:4 (2011), 364-81.

⁵ In this context, 'Israel' refers not to the state, but to the entire Jewish nation, conceptualized, as we shall see below, in metahistorical terms.

⁶ Yael Zerubavel defines 'commemorative narrative' as 'a broader view of history, a basic "story line" that is culturally constructed and provides the group members with a general notion of their shared past'. Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6.

points resulted in a development of diametrically opposed political positions in post-1948 Israel.

The works by Yonatan Ratosh scrutinized below are his series of articles published in 1937 under the headline *We Aspire to Power*, while he was still a devout Zionist, and the essay 'The Opening Discourse', printed in 1944 as a manifest of his new anti-Zionist 'Canaanite' stance. Eldad's works analyzed below are his series of programmatic articles 'Foundation stones', which he published while still active in the LEHI underground in 1943, and several other pieces which he wrote after Israel's foundation, including two interviews given shortly before his death in 1996. The comparative analysis of these works will allow us to measure the extent of both men's intellectual transformation. It will be observed that while Ratosh changed his views profoundly over a short period of time, Eldad remained more consistent in his opinions from the 1940s to the 1990s, modifying them only slightly after the establishment of Israel.

Yonatan Ratosh – from Maximalism to Hebrew Nationalism

In order to adequately understand the transformation of Yonatan Ratosh from a radical Zionist to a radical anti-Zionist we must map the intellectual context in which he acted. Ratosh, who was involved since high-school with Revisionist activity, came soon under the influence of Maximalist Revisionists. They were especially appealing to him due to the fact that they used the Yishuv's ostensible nativeness to legitimate anti-British agitation. As Ratosh explained in an autobiographic article: 'Since my youth ... I conceived the British as a foreign power, therefore entirely superfluous', since 'if ... for the elderly who came from Eastern Europe the British rule was a progressive mandatory rule by the liberal and enlightened Great Britain, for me it was *naturally* a foreign rule'.⁷ Ratosh, who grew up in a Hebrew-speaking home in Warsaw and Odessa, and lived in Palestine from age 11, perceived the British presence in the eyes of a self-declared *native*, framing it within a wider question of his own identity as a Palestinian Hebrew/Jew. Thus, while for the Maximalist Revisionists the British presence in Palestine (and Zionist cooperation with it) was primarily a *political-strategic* issue, for Ratosh it was also a matter of native *sentiment*.

Ratosh found himself attracted to Maximalism due to his belief that it expressed the 'true' ideology of Jabotinskian Revisionism, which mainstream Revisionists avoided formulating explicitly due to tactical considerations. Yet disappointment soon followed:

I remember well how I was healed from this illusion. It was in Jerusalem, at the end of the first week of April, 1934 ... One of the Revisionist luminaries in the country [Palestine], a Russian intelligent, like most of the party's leadership, wanted to have an article printed in the newspaper [*Hayarden*, which Ratosh co-edited] ... He explained very eloquently that the 'Activists' ... were merely a marginal phenomenon, while the [Revisionist] Party line was actually the 'Ten-Year Plan'. The Plan envisaged a demand from Britain to introduce a settler 'colonizing regime' to facilitate through land allocation to Hebrew settlement and an encouraging taxation system the creation of a Jewish majority in the Land within a decade, and only then, at the end of the decade, when the hoped-for Hebrew majority will become reality in

⁷ Yonatan Ratosh, 'Hakdama', in Yonatan Ratosh, *Reshit Hayamim: Pithot Teriyot* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1982), 8, 20 (emphasis mine).

the Land, to grant it independence, as stipulated in the Mandate ... I became convinced that his words ... truly represented the line of the Party and its leader ... I found [in this article] a corroboration of my growing doubts regarding this movement.⁸

As James Diamond puts it, 'Ratosh's original suspicion of the entire Zionist enterprise now intensified: Revisionism, too, was part of what he saw as a collusion of European Diaspora Jews with European non-Jews to decide the fate of Palestinian Jews'.⁹

However, the stormy political dynamic of the 1930s gave Ratosh an opportunity to agitate for his views still within the Revisionist movement. In early July 1937 the Peel Commission published its report, which Ratosh saw as a geopolitical turning point, both for Britain and for Zionism, since mandatory rule became contestable (by explicit admission of the British authorities themselves). From July to December 1937 he published a series of articles in *Hayarden* (reprinted the following year in an expanded version in a booklet titled *We Aspire to Power*¹⁰), in which he urged the Zionist movement to press for an *immediate* transfer of sovereignty over Palestine to the Yishuv, in accordance with the original principles of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration. He argued that

The National Movement [the Revisionists] must adopt the first rule of political Zionism as its basic primary rule. When the Balfour Declaration was delivered, Zangwill demanded that the rule should be transferred to the Jews at once. We must revert to this demand ... We must claim it right now.¹¹

And furthermore:

The Hebrew rule is the only rule which can implement the aims of the Mandate wholly and sincerely, [that is] to ease the Hebrew aliya and Hebrew settlement.¹²

Yehoshua Porat explains that such a demand, 'which indeed constituted a return to the notions promoted by Herzl, Nordau and Zangwill, had been abandoned by that time by the Revisionist movement, and currently seemed too strong and revolutionary in light of its present-day policy'.¹³ Ratosh, who was perfectly aware of this, dedicated a lot of space to a harsh criticism of the Revisionist movement, which for him became similar to Labour Zionism by legitimizing the British presence in Palestine. Ratosh argued that by adhering to diplomatic policy vis-à-vis the British, the Zionist leadership effectively gave up its claim to Palestine:

The slogan of the [Zionist political] war is not freedom, but pressure for negotiations ... We do not claim the chair [of King David, occupied by the foreigner]. We only ask that he who occupies it improves his rule, fulfils our wishes.¹⁴

⁸ Ibid., 20-1.

⁹ Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 30.

¹⁰ Reprinted in Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 42-59.

¹¹ Ibid., 44-5.

¹² Ibid., 59. Note the usage of the adjective 'Hebrew', which Ratosh, still in accordance with the pre-1948 Zionist practice, applies indiscriminately to Palestine-born Hebrew-speakers and Jews immigrating to Palestine.

¹³ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 99.

¹⁴ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 44.

We, who do not demand the power, but a foreign patronage ... admit that we are not capable of ruling the Land.¹⁵

[The Zionist movement] does not conclude that [the mandatory] regime is illegal and cannot solve the Jewish question, it does not want to replace it with a Zionist regime ... It only asks from the present regime to replace its executors and to do what it refuses to do from its first day till today. The Zionist movement does not define the British administration in the Land of Israel as enemy; to the contrary, it sees in Britain the only faithful and desired ally.¹⁶

Despite Ratosh's dissatisfaction with both Zionist streams, his rhetoric still conformed to the Zionist paradigm, as he himself admitted in hindsight.¹⁷ The distinction that he makes between Jews and Hebrews is in accordance with Zionist principles (that is, a Hebrew means a 'better' Jew); he refers to the Diaspora as the potential rearguard for the Zionist thrust in Palestine; finally, he makes clear that the final end of his plan is to implement the Zionist objective and the Balfour Declaration. He does not rebel (yet) against the essence of Zionism, only against its leadership which supposedly betrayed its founding principles. Ratosh thus posits himself as the speaker of the younger Hebrew generation in Palestine, ready to deploy grassroots pressure upon the opportunist and weak-spirited 'elders'. We can therefore define Ratosh's 1937 standpoint as a 'fundamentalist' Zionism, calling for the return to the ideology's core values.¹⁸

Despite its overall adherence to Zionist orthodoxy, *We Aspire to Power* was subversive enough to cause consternation within the ranks of the Revisionist movement. The Revisionist youth, both in Palestine and abroad, is reported to have welcomed Ratosh's booklet enthusiastically, but the Revisionist senior ranks treated Ratosh as an over-zealous nuisance. Ratosh attempted to advance his program at the convention of the (Revisionist) New Zionist Organization in Prague in early 1938, but his propositions were voted off the agenda (only the Polish delegate, Menachem Begin, and most of the Palestine delegation objected). Ratosh held two personal meetings with Zeev Jabotinsky, also to no avail. He later described Jabotinsky as 'an old man ... whose world was totally and fundamentally different from mine',¹⁹ accusing him of ignorance in global geopolitics. Ratosh, like many other young Revisionists, was also indignant with Jabotinsky when he supported at the beginning of the Palestinian Arab Revolt in 1936 the 'restraint' policy promulgated by the Labour Zionist leadership. As a result, Ratosh wrote years later, he was removed from the editorial board of *Hayarden*,²⁰ though Porat questions this particular claim. The latter shows that Ratosh continued to publish articles in this newspaper after 1937 and that there was no abrupt termination of his publications, but rather a gradual decline. Porat admits that he is unsure of the exact cause, but attributes it quite reasonably to Ratosh's growing radicalization and remoteness from Zionism.²¹

¹⁵ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶ Ibid., 58.

¹⁷ Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 15. See also editor's footnote in Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 42.

¹⁸ For more on *We Aspire to Power* and its context, see Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 31-3; Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 70-2, 85-9, 97-104, 108; Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 15-24.

¹⁹ Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 16, 17.

²⁰ Ibid., 15.

²¹ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 103-18.

The relatively short time-span of 1938-1939, which Ratosh spent in Paris, is a key period in his intellectual formation, since it was then that he finally crossed the line between doubting Zionist politics to doubting Zionist ideology. He came to perceive the Revisionist movement as essentially identical with Labour Zionism (to which Ratosh admitted to have felt aversion since high-school), and the rejection of his propositions at the Prague convention, as Diamond sees it, 'reinforced his perception that Zionism was as foreign an entity as the British'.²² Ratosh recalled that what he saw in Prague was 'the [Revisionist movement] in its native habitat ... – the Diaspora. For me it was a first direct contact with the Diaspora, which forced me to reevaluate my own Hebrew world'.²³ Having realized the depth of the abyss between his own Palestinian society (or its rather small section which used Hebrew on a daily basis and regarded itself as indigenous to the Land) and Diaspora Jewry, he drew a sharp socio-cultural distinction between the two, defining the former as a territorial-linguistic nation and the latter as a cosmopolitan faith-community with no authentic aspiration for national sovereignty. In his last articles in *Hayarden*, Ratosh began advancing the idea that the current troubles of the Diaspora in the looming shade of Hitlerism should not bother the Revisionist movement; moreover, he began referring to the 'Hebrew golden age' before the emergence of monotheistic Judaism as the cultural foundation of Hebrew nationalism.²⁴

The adoption of these ideas should be attributed to Ratosh's acquaintance with another ex-Revisionist, Adya Gur Horon (born Adolphe Gourevitch, 1907-1972), who, as a student of the ancient Near East and Semitic philology at the Sorbonne, took part in the deciphering of the Ugarit epic poetry discovered in Syria in 1929. This inspired him to portray the pagan Hebrews as empire- and civilization-builders in the ancient Levant and the Mediterranean, whose demise came as a result of the dissemination and adoption of Judaism. Horon thus formulated a historiography of the ancient Hebrews which radically differed from the standard Jewish-Zionist historiography, with its strong messianic elements and the stress on the Jewish Diaspora sufferings and longing for redemption.²⁵ Subsequently, Horon shared his historical findings with Ratosh, who used them to construct a new political ideology, one that would aspire to recreate the national values and potency of the Hebrew 'golden age' and discard the historical baggage of Judaism and Diaspora as essentially non-nationalist.²⁶ When Ratosh returned from Paris to Palestine in September 1939, he arrived as a convert to anti-Zionism, espousing the 'Canaanite' ideology, which must be regarded as basically different from Zionism due to the dissimilar historiographic sources of both ideologies, since it should be argued that different visions of the past regarding a particular community would necessarily lead to a formulation of different visions of the future for the same community – in this case, the Yishuv. It can be argued furthermore that if Ratosh's opposition to the Revisionist and Zionist leadership

²² Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 33.

²³ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 114. See also Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 32-3, 147 (n. 41); Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 80, 96-7, 103-14; Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 15-22. Ratosh mentions sardonically that most of the delegates at the Prague convention did not understand what he was actually saying, since he spoke Hebrew (*ibid.*, 19).

²⁴ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 111.

²⁵ For Horon's historiography, see Adolphe G. Horon, 'Canaan and the Aegean Sea: Greco-Phoenician Origins Reviewed', *Diogenes* 58 (1967): 37-61; A. G. Horon, *Eretz-Hakedem: Madrikh Histori umdini lamizrah Hakarov* (Tel Aviv: Hermon, 1970); A. G. Horon, *Kedem va'erev: Knaan – Toldot Eretz ha'ivrim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 2000).

²⁶ On Horon-Ratosh intellectual tandem of 1938-39, see Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 34-8; Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 119-57; Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 12-15. On the 'Canaanite' idea in general, see Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*; Klaus Hofmann, 'Canaanism', *Middle Eastern Studies* 47:2 (March 2011): 273-94.

before his acquaintance with Horon was limited to a political disagreement, his post-1939 anti-Zionism was grounded in a strong intellectual base.

The most detailed exposure of the tenets of 'Canaanism' is the 1944 manifesto 'The Opening Discourse'.²⁷ Diamond is only slightly exaggerating when describing it as 'one of the most remarkable and important documents of Jewish intellectual history in [the 20th] century',²⁸ though the adjective *Jewish* is highly doubtful methodologically, since at the core of 'Canaanism' lies a firm dichotomy between Jews as an ethno-denomination and Hebrews as a nation, and Ratosh surely would have been seriously offended if he had been called a Jewish intellectual.²⁹ 'The Opening Discourse' lays bare the way which Ratosh went from 'fundamentalist' Zionism to all-out rejection of Zionism as a Jewish ideology formed in the Diaspora and hostile to the Hebrew nation-creation which he believed was taking place in Palestine as a non-Jewish phenomenon. By the time Ratosh wrote 'The Opening Discourse' he came to regard Zionism as a Jewish *imitation* of Gentile nationalism:

The Zionists were Jews who went out to the culture of the Gentiles because of an inability to find satisfaction in Judaism, but not because of the ability or the desire to take leave of it. Or perhaps they did seek to leave it but couldn't overcome the obstacles in doing so. So they sought to define Judaism for their purposes as a polity, as a nation among the nations in which they lived, in a world that is based on the principle of nationalism, as a ... substitute ... for the nationalism of the Gentiles which they found lacking in themselves; in other words [the Jewish Zionists were] bereft of any grounding in society, uprooted in a world of nations. Zionism from the outset came into being as a substitute for this need. It was created out of a vacuum, in the emptiness of the Jewish heart, in order to fill it with a substitute, in order to provide the possibility to continue to live as a Jew among the Gentiles.³⁰

Ratosh lists the founding principles of Zionism: 1) the Jews are a people, 2) that desires the Land of Israel as its homeland, 3) and for that aim have set up a movement of national liberation 4) which has caused the Jewish settlement in Palestine, thereby solving the 'Jewish question',³¹ and then proceeds to refute them one by one:

The Jews are not a nation and never were. They are not a nation but a faith-community [literally, '*edah*'] whose existence is in the Dispersion and whose homeland is the Dispersion. This Jewish faith-community has a Holy Land as do many faith-communities. But it has no homeland, nor does it need one, nor does it want one, neither this land nor any other land. A faith-community by its very nature does not have the capacity to establish a national liberation movement ... Zionism, as a Jewish phenomenon, as a phenomenon within a faith-community, can absolutely never, from its beginning to any form it will assume in the future, be a movement of national liberation or a national movement at all ... The Hebrews in Palestine are in no way the direct result of Zionism.³²

²⁷ Reprinted in Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 149-203.

²⁸ Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 51.

²⁹ It is not the author's intention to imply that we should accept 'Canaanite' assertions at face value, only to suggest that the uncritical annexation of 'Canaanism' to Jewish intellectual history betrays insensitivity to its basic principles.

³⁰ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 179, cited in Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 72-3.

³¹ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 176; Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 55.

³² Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 178, cited in Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 56.

We can infer from the above some of ‘Canaanism’s’ central assumptions: that Zionism, which the ‘Canaanites’ regarded as a surrogate for the community-forging function previously performed by Judaism, was inherently false and therefore anything it endeavoured in Palestine, even if helpful in the short-term, was inevitably ‘ill from the start’;³³ that Zionism was part and parcel of Jewish history, being a continuation rather than a break with it;³⁴ that it was inimically hostile to the Hebrew national consolidation and therefore must be fought against; that nation and faith-community were opposites, since ‘family and nation, biology and sociology, are two entirely different essences’;³⁵ finally, that the determinist law of history was that the [Hebrew] nation must supersede the [[Jewish] denomination, since in the modern world communities give way to nations.³⁶ By identifying Zionism with Diaspora Judaism, Ratosh essentially turns the Zionist weapon (its anti-Diaspora rhetoric, the so-called ‘shlilat hagaluṭ’, or ‘the negation of Exile’) *against* Zionism itself.

What is particularly interesting is that in ‘The Opening Discourse’ Ratosh abandons almost entirely his *We Aspire to Power* theses. Though he mentions ‘the eternal Jew Vladimir Jabotinsky’ who opposed an armed retaliation to the Arab Rebellion in 1936,³⁷ he makes *no* call for the expulsion of the British and does not demand the immediate establishment of a Hebrew state. Moreover, he accuses the anti-British underground organizations such as the ETZEL (the Revisionist-associated ‘Irgun Tzvai Leumi’, the ‘National Military Organization’, whose supreme commander was Jabotinsky) or the LEHI of being ‘an opposition preserving the existing order’.³⁸ Porat regards this as a severe weakness of the ‘Canaanite’ founding manifest and remarks that some contemporaries even believed Ratosh had become a British agent (nothing could be farther from the truth, of course), but he observes that at this stage Ratosh saw no sense in an armed struggle against the British under Zionist banners³⁹ (‘The Opening Discourse’ makes several sarcastic references, in Ratosh’s idiosyncratic style, to the Jewish underground organizations, whose activity, ironically, was partly inspired by Ratosh’s own *We Aspire to Power*⁴⁰). ‘The Opening Discourse’ is above all a piece of ideological education; Ratosh

³³ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 168.

³⁴ This unanimous conclusion effectively did away with Zionism’s severest dilemma: whether it had its sources in the Jewish historical legacy and thus constituted a natural continuation of Jewish history or was it a rebellion against the Jewish past, ushering in a revolutionary historical phase. See Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 9-23; Gerschom Scholem, ‘Hatziyonut – Dialektika shel Retzifut umered’, in *Ein Shaananim betziyon: Sikhot al Mekhir hatziyonut*, ed. Elud Ben-Ezer (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1986), 287-317; David Vital, ‘Zionism as Revolution? Zionism as Rebellion?’, *Modern Judaism* 18 (1998), 205-15.

³⁵ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 181.

³⁶ For further analysis of ‘The Opening Discourse’, see Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 49-75; Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 194-203.

³⁷ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

³⁹ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 198-200.

⁴⁰ For instance: ‘A Hebrew youngster, who imagines that the road to liberation leads through a dominant terroristic organization and yearns to attack a British policeman or a commissioner, is required to display excitement ... with a speech by some Jewish boy called Spiegermann, whose ailment is the Jewish sense of inferiority ... And to his younger brother [this Hebrew youngster] is obliged to teach diligently – using a special edition for teenagers published by the LEHI – a literary work of imagination and trepidation regarding the significant moods of various Jewish types of defectors from the Polish army [an allusion to the ETZEL leader Menachem Begin, who reached Palestine in 1942 as a soldier in the Polish army formed in the USSR by general Władysław Anders and was in fact legally discharged from service. See Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 146, 175], whereas they are assimilationists, and Zionists, and revolutionary Zionists ... A Hebrew youngster, who wishes to attack government centres, to blow-up huge buildings and to fight an ETZEL gun-fight in the night, is forced to make the demand for [Hebrew] power a kind of additional comment to heaps of Jewish demands’. Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 163; ‘While the “Israel-liberation-

believed that only when the Hebrew youth in Palestine is won over to 'Canaanism', not only the British but also the Zionists will be defeated.⁴¹ This redefinition of priorities regarding the chief enemy's identity is therefore perfectly plausible: having realized that his main front will be against the Zionists, the British became of secondary importance for Ratosh. Many years later he admitted to holding a grudge against them for having occupied so much of his time and intellectual effort.⁴²

Israel Eldad – from Maximalism to Redemption

Since Israel Eldad grew to be LEHI's foremost intellectual, we must examine his writings in order to assess to what extent LEHI was an 'anti-Zionist' movement. In 1941 Avraham Stern, the movement's founder, declared that Zionism, incapable to oppose the British mandatory power and unable to save European Jews from Hitler, had rendered itself obsolete and must clear the stage for a genuine Hebrew liberation movement, which, as Yalin-Mor interprets it, should become an 'anti-thesis' for Zionism.⁴³ Ratosh's influence on Stern is readily observable here, as well as on Eldad, though it seems to be limited to his pre-'Canaanite' stage, as the following words by Eldad, published in 1943, testify:

The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate are unlawful documents, both legally and morally, but above all because we, the sole owners of this land, reject the legitimacy of these documents ... This is the legal, moral, just situation. The factual situation is that the Land of Israel is being forcibly ruled by a foreign occupant ... We do not acknowledge their declarations and their mandates, neither do we look for better mandators nor do we inquire into the implementation of particular paragraphs.⁴⁴

Until now Zionism has acknowledged England's right to rule here, 'consecrated' either by the 'Declaration' or the 'Mandate' ... He who restricts himself to a war against the 'White Paper' admits England's general right to be the lord here. He who opposes a particular law acknowledges the lawgiver's principal right to legislate, asking only for a better law. We reject this right ... He who thinks that he can defeat the occupant by new settlements – let him build new settlements. He who thinks that he will manage by congress resolutions – let him do so. We

fighters" [LEHI] cherish the names of the excellent fathers in the lauded ghetto and put out leaflets strumming on Jewish strings ... yet after all of this, and with all of this, following our first publication, they will make sure to put in their brochures *Hebrew* where they mean *Jew* and title their leaflets *Hebrews in the homeland*, as if there can be Hebrews elsewhere, - we shall know then and shall announce that these people are lying to themselves, to us, and to the whole Hebrew youth' (ibid., 170 [emphases in the original]).

⁴¹ LEHI co-chief Nathan Yalin-Mor relates that when he asked Ratosh what will happen when the Hebrew youth internalizes his worldview, Ratosh declared with a smile that all other problems will then be solved easily, as if by themselves. Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 147. Israeli author Amos Keinan, who joined the LEHI under the influence of 'Canaanite' ideas, recalled that he was told that the Hebrew youth shall be consolidated in the liberation war (implying that Ratosh's 'Committee for the consolidation of the Hebrew youth' was a band of good-for-nothing prattlers). Amos Keinan, 'Vehaknaani az baaretz', *Proza* 17-18 August-September 1977, 4; Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 363. Israel Eldad also treated Ratosh's activity scornfully: 'It is possible that the youngsters who used to sit with Ratosh in coffee-houses behaved among themselves to the British in strong terms ...'. Yonatan Ratosh, *Sifrut Yehudit balashon haivrit: Pitkhot bevikoret uviv'ayot halashon* (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1982), 178.

⁴² Ratosh, 'Hakdama', 8, 30.

⁴³ Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 76. Similarly, Yalin-Mor stated in a LEHI underground publication that the 'Hebrew freedom movement' was *not* identical to Zionism, which was 'an ambiguous creature – between the occupant and a liberation movement ... [including] both Weitzman and Jabotinsky' (ibid., 126).

⁴⁴ Israel Eldad, 'Avnei Yesod', in *Tziyoniut: Pubmis ben Zmanenu – Gishot Mekhikariyot veideologiyot*, eds. Avi Bareli and Pinchas Ginossar (Sde Boker: Ben-Gurion University, 1996), 458.

do not believe in this. We believe that settlements and congresses can be helpful for the war, but the war is essentially different ... to demonstrate that the ruler here *is the occupant and treat him as an occupant*.⁴⁵

We can see in this passage that Eldad moves quite smoothly from anti-British rhetoric to an attack on the Zionist establishment. Although he accepted in an interview given late in life the assessment of the LEHI as a non-Zionist movement,⁴⁶ Eldad hastened to refine it according to his own particular conception of Zionism. Unlike Ratosh after 1939, Eldad did not question the fundamentals of Zionism; rather, he conceptualized them according to his own particular philosophy of history, which differed enough from the customary Zionist interpretation of Jewish history to warrant him the title of 'anti-Zionist', as long as the Zionist movement was dominated by its mainstream, whether of the Labour or the Revisionist kind.

Eldad saw Zionism as primarily a *messianic* movement, of which the historical purpose was to bring redemption to the Jewish people by gathering all the exiles in a 'Kingdom of Israel' located within the biblical borders of the Promised Land. Eldad's political messianism employs mundane tools to achieve political ends that are then bestowed with a metaphysical and metahistorical quality. His Messiah is not a personal agent of redemption but a historically determined teleology: 'if we speak here of a Jewish messianic vision, we do not refer to its ... Jewish *distortion* as a vision of universal redemption but to its plain meaning as the Nation's Redemption in the Kingdom of the House of David ... the vision of redemption is a realistic process with the help of heavens'.⁴⁷ Eldad therefore redefines Judaism to suit his perception of its 'actual' essence⁴⁸ and subscribes to a deterministic philosophy of history which represents what he believes to be the 'stable' laws of Jewish history:

The law of the Jewish history is ... *the law of stately greatness which will accompany the redemption*. The justification for this stately greatness is the spiritual power and the internal spiritual religious and moral purpose which will require [the establishment of] the material Kingdom of Israel ... that will stretch from the Euphrates to the Nile spelling awe all over the peoples around and being materially rich ... This is the law of our history, being *the only alternative for the dispersion which is punishment and disaster*.⁴⁹

With respect to the Diaspora, Eldad has merely the following to say: '*Jew-hatred is the law*, the desire to obliterate the Jewish people is the ever-standing desire in all countries, faiths, peoples and regimes ... any golden age of Jewish equality in any of the Diaspora countries

⁴⁵ Ibid., 461 (emphasis in the original).

⁴⁶ An interview with Israel Eldad (hereinafter: Eldad interview), in Bareli and Ginossar, *Tziyionut: Pulmus ben Zmanenu*, 438.

⁴⁷ Israel Eldad, 'Medinat Israel kerosh-gesher lemalkhut Israel', *Sulam* 10:1 (1958): 12 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁸ Despite the central role Judaism played in his worldview and the religious education he received in his youth, Eldad was never a strictly observant person. See Israel Eldad, "'Yemin" u'smol" batziyonut', interview by Michael Sashar, *Kivunim* 1:38, new series (March 1990), 115-6. He preferred to treat Judaism as custody of what he perceived to be the Jewish national values, distinguishing between its so-called 'internal' essence and the 'external' shell (by which he meant the Halakhic legal code). A similar view of Judaism was espoused by Zeev Jabotinsky. See Raphaella Bilski Ben-Hur, *Kol Yakhid Hu Melekh: hamakhshava hakhevratit vehamdinit shel Zeev Jabotinsky* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1988), 162-3, 174-7, 198-201; Jan Zouplna, 'The Evolution of a Concept: The Relationship between State and Religion in the Thought of Vladimir Jabotinsky, 1919-1940', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 4:1 (2005), 13-31.

⁴⁹ Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 13 (emphases in the original).

is but ... the exception confirming the rule'.⁵⁰ Zionism according to Eldad is a movement springing from these two complementary laws of Jewish history, whose dialectic will result in the Absolute, the messianic Kingdom of Israel:

The dynamic combination of the three following revolutions: a) the evacuation of the *entire* Diaspora and the return to the Land of Israel of the *entire* Jewish people, which is *one* people by will or by force, by consciousness or by compulsion, by own decision or by the decision of the Gentiles; b) the liberation of the *entire* Land of Israel in the borders of the godly promise which are its geopolitical boundaries, from the Euphrates to the Nile; c) the return by renewal and renaissance to the basic values of Judaism ... these three we call the *Kingdom of Israel*.⁵¹

Eldad's Zionism belongs therefore to the 'fundamentalist' variety. By this he reminds us again of pre-1939 Ratosh, with one significant difference: the latter, though also a firm believer in historical determinism, viewed it through strictly secular-materialist lenses. Moreover, Eldad is not content with a mere return to the 'original' Zionism: as we shall see, he wants to *transgress* Zionism in order to realize what can only be described as an *ultra-Zionist theo-political* vision.

Understandably, any aspect of Jewish politics which does not conform to Eldad's deterministic philosophy of history is denounced by him as a treachery of the Jewish purpose (in Eldad's words: 'Satan dresses up in many ways. Sometimes he even pretends to be a Zionist or a Zionist leader or an Israeli minister'⁵²). Eldad basically wishes to defend his image of Herzlian Zionism from Herzl's 'unworthy' successors, thus excluding from 'true' Zionism the entire institutional Zionist movement, leaving only the LEHI as the single power striving to realize the Zionist-Messianic vision of Gathering the Exiles in the Kingdom of Israel. In his series of articles 'Foundation stones', published in 1943, while still in the underground, Eldad mounts a fierce attack not only on the *policy* of the Labour and Revisionist Zionism, but also on their *basic principles*, calling for a creation of a 'liberation movement on new foundations'.⁵³ He writes off the preceding four decades of Zionism, accusing it of philanthropic inclinations to solve the universal 'Jewish problem' instead of serving the positive-internal impulse of the Jews to regain their homeland and establish a kingdom there, which would usher in the messianic age. 'Zionism turned from messianic yearnings for a Davidic kingdom to a refugee question',⁵⁴ which, as Eldad notes, can be solved more effectively elsewhere than in the Land of Israel (though only temporarily due to the 'iron law of the Diaspora' cited above). By making Zionist secular-political aims a purpose in itself rather than using them as tools supporting the drive towards the Eldadian concept of redemption, that is, choosing the 'negative' motivation over the 'positive' one, the Zionist movement, Eldad continues, committed two fatal errors: it looked constantly to excuse itself as a servant of humanitarian ends, thus reneging on its national-sovereign nature;⁵⁵ by treating the Land of Israel as simply the best place to solve

⁵⁰ Ibid., 14 (emphasis in the original).

⁵¹ Ibid., 22 (emphases in the original).

⁵² Israel Eldad, 'Musaf velo Sof Davar', in Bareli and Ginossar, *Tziyonut: Pulmus ben Zmanenu*, 470.

⁵³ Eldad, 'Avnei Yesod', 453.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 454.

⁵⁵ Eldad openly ridiculed mainstream Zionism's dilemmas regarding its treatment of the Palestinian Arabs, since for him it was obvious that the realization of Zionism necessitated the Arabs' dispossession. Eldad, "'Yemin" u"smol"', 109.

the global 'Jewish problem', Zionism broke its commitment to it as the Jews' homeland and domain of their kingdom. In effect, Eldad argues, the Zionist movement adopted a 'colonizing' approach to the Land, which pushed it into an unholy alliance with the British (and when the moment came to confront Britain in the 1930s, Eldad adds, the Zionist leadership refused to fulfil its historical role and fatally delayed the emergence of Israel, allowing the destruction of the European Jewry by Hitler).⁵⁶ Contravening the Hegelian logic of Jewish history formulated by Eldad, the Zionist movement made itself illegitimate; hence his call for a new liberation movement, of which the LEHI, it must be assumed, will be the core. This is how Eldad sums up his alternative view of Zionism:

The formulation of the aim of Zionism should have expressed the nation's plain and positive wish: *the renewal of the Kingdom of Israel*. Any other argumentation weakens the matter and lays it to rest. This is the nation's will. A solution to a problem, anti-Semitism, emigration, etc., all these are side-questions which may be *helpful tactically*, but the initial declaration from the very first moment should have been clear, like the Frenchman who does not need to base his demand for France on a 'French problem', but on the sovereign will of the French nation. Our dispersal argument was turned upside down. The truth is: not because we are dispersed we want the state but in spite of our dispersal we desire it ... We wish and we fight for a *Kingdom* whether there is anti-Semitism or not, whether there is a problem or not, whether there are refugees or not.⁵⁷

What do the Poles, the French, the Greeks fight for? To solve the Polish, Greek, French problem? No! They fight for the liberation of their homeland and its independence as a self-sufficient cultural aim and not because it would solve any problem. Thus, and not otherwise, we ought to have presented the question. Not an establishment of a safe haven, but the liberation of the homeland. Not a solution to the problem of the people, but to the problem of the land.⁵⁸

The principles which 'political Zionism' and 'practical Zionism' subscribed to were two: the Hebrew people as an *object*, an international problem. The Land of Israel as a country to be *colonized*, and these two were behind Zionism's failure.⁵⁹

We are convinced that a major cause for the lack of Zionist success must be attributed to the fact that it touched only the shell. [It did not touch] the deepest string in the Jewish soul, the messianic string ... Therefore it became a movement of colonization, of funds and statistics.⁶⁰

Consequently, Eldad argues, the Zionist movement adopted values at odds with the Jewish messianic imperative, like 'normalization' and 'productivization', which for him are an expression of the Diasporic desire to assimilate, that is, to 'become a people like all peoples'. Likewise, Zionists accepted the international community's diplomatic rules instead of forcing upon it rules of their own, and adopted liberal-parliamentarian methods of managing their politics (which Eldad ridicules as 'mathematical Zionism'), as if the core values of Judaism could be put to vote. His conclusion is that secular Zionism sowed the seeds of its own destruction by turning away from Jewish religious values. This legitimized

⁵⁶ Eldad, 'Avnei Yesod', 453-8; Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 12-3; Eldad interview, 438-43; Eldad, 'Musaf', 469-71.

⁵⁷ Eldad, 'Avnei Yesod', 455 (emphases in the original).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 456.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 459 (emphases in the original).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 464.

possible de-Zionisation (once a contradiction between democratic values and Jewish nationalism is apprehended) leading to the eventual disestablishment of the state of Israel.⁶¹ Eldad accordingly declares that

There are values which can never be measured mathematically; ... We shall not go to elections, shall not conduct voting, shall not ask the majority. We deal not with atoms. We represent the most vital power of the people, we represent the loftiest cultural and national urge, which is to create a kingdom worthy of a nation like our own ... We express the best national yearnings, the desire for the Messiah which is a redemption from exile, but much more than that, more positive, more cultural. And we do not ask the assimilated rabbi in America and the 'progressive' from Hashomer Hatzair [a youth socialist-Zionist movement] here in the land whether he wants the Kingdom of Israel or not, like Spartacus who did not ask the slaves, like Piłsudski who did not ask, like De-Gaulle who does not ask.⁶²

We can discern in Eldad's rhetoric the cult of the chosen few, who 'drag' the nation to the fulfilment of its historic purpose, despite the indifference or the hostility of the many. The national avant-garde, though numerically a minority is in fact a majority in the eyes of history, Eldad explains, since it is conscious of history's immanent rules. Moreover, unwillingness to 'push' the majority to redemption due to democratic considerations is condemned by Eldad as a crime against nation and history.⁶³

After 1948 Eldad transferred his anti-democratic principles to the state of Israel. Regarding the state as an incomplete fulfilment of the redemptory purpose, he could not agree to parliamentary democracy which, at least potentially, could vote away the finite Zionist goal of establishing the Kingdom of Israel in biblical borders. And indeed Eldad stated openly that 'democracy must be limited by Zionism'⁶⁴ and expressed his ire with Israeli leaders who refused to speak 'the truth' about Israeli desire for territorial expansion (which was paradoxically left to be 'unmasked' by Israel's Arab enemies) and accepted the legitimacy of the existing neighbouring Arab states.⁶⁵

Eldad stressed that the existence of Israel in its 1948 borders is acceptable only inasmuch as it serves as a tool or a 'beachhead' for the establishment of the Jewish messianic Kingdom; therefore, if Israeli policy is concentrated on maintaining the state for its own purpose, it will be illegitimate and the state will become unviable. As long as the Kingdom has not come into existence the purpose of Zionism according to Eldad has not been accomplished, hence the post-1948 and even post-1967 boundaries can be only temporary, since to accede to them would violate the determinist laws of Jewish history. For Eldad the state of Israel is *not* synonymous with the Land of Israel, thus, the aspiration to make the two one by stretching the State all over the Land is the long-term goal of Eldad's ultra-Zionism, which transgresses the 'limited' and therefore unsustainable ends of non-messianic Zionism: 'If there is a place for disappointment ... it is from Zionism ... which did not realize its responsibility for what is due to happen in the Diaspora on the

⁶¹ Ibid., 458-63; Eldad interview, 451; Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 12, 19-21; Eldad, 'Musaf', 469-70.

⁶² Eldad, 'Avnei Yesod', 463, 464.

⁶³ Ibid., 462-5; Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 10, 12-13, 16.

⁶⁴ Eldad, "'Yemin" u"smol", 108.

⁶⁵ Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 17-19.

one hand and the power stored in the people on the other hand. And I do not refer here to the past only, *but to the present and the future as well*.⁶⁶

In considering Zionism a kind of 'never-ending story' Eldad showed himself to be largely still a disciple of Zeev Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky promulgated the idea of 'monism', whereby the period leading up to the establishment of the Jewish state must not suffer from any ideological and political ambivalence or duality (condemning the mixture of socialism and Zionism practiced by the Labour Zionist camp); rather, all efforts, intellectual, political and diplomatic, must be bent on the attainment of a Jewish majority in Palestine as a precondition for the establishment of a Jewish state by democratic means. Once the state is established, Jabotinsky continued, there will be room for various experiments to forge the best social system for the sovereign Jewish people.⁶⁷

Eldad raised Jabotinsky's principle of monism to a higher level by asserting that as long as the Kingdom of Israel is not established, the monist discipline must be strictly observed, *despite* the existence of a sovereign Israel. Therefore, Israel's socio-political structure is conditioned upon its adherence to Jewish historical determinism, making 'secondary ideas such as issues of regime ... democracy or acknowledgment of the Arabs' equality (and each of them is a value per se and *I do not negate them*)⁶⁸ shifting values. Eldad explains further: 'inasmuch as this regime and this state create the conditions, or the springing board, or the beachhead for the realization of the vision, which is a historical and national necessity, they shall be deemed good; ... [A true Jewish leadership] must declare as the highest priority of the state of Israel the Redemption and the Messianic Vision ... A state of Israel which does not succumb to this law as its supreme law and shall not subordinate all other interests to this supreme aim will be an illegal state both religiously and historically'.⁶⁹ For this purpose a revolution must take place, which would sweep away the leadership unfaithful to the laws of Jewish historical dialectics and bring to power a new *ultra-Zionist* leadership with an articulated consciousness of its historical role and duty.

Conclusion

We have reviewed two cases of gradual radicalization within the Zionist movement motivated by the growing tension between the Zionist leadership and the British Mandate authorities in the 1930s-1940s. The path chosen by Yonatan Ratosh and Israel Eldad led from 'fundamentalist' Zionism to an opposition to the British presence in Palestine and the demand for its termination, to a dissatisfaction with the Zionist leadership which did not accede to this demand, and finally, to a rejection of Zionism once the Zionist *policy* at the time was redefined as inherent to Zionist *ideology*. With a new adversary identified, the British became a secondary element for Ratosh and Eldad.

Despite their shared background and line of thought, there remained a significant difference between the two, which resulted in the emergence of two hostile camps on the margins of Israeli political life: the staunchly nationalist-secular 'Canaanism' which

⁶⁶ Eldad, 'Musaf', 467 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁷ Bilski Ben-Hur, *Kol Yakhid Hu Melekh*, 227-334.

⁶⁸ Eldad, "Yemin" u"smol", 107 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁹ Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 15, 22. See also *ibid.*, 11, 16-19, 22; Eldad, 'Musaf', 465-72.

adopted many leftist elements on the one hand, and the religious-messianic Zionism on the other hand, represented by the right-wing Bloc of the Faithful ('Gush Emunim') movement since the 1970s. While Ratosh derided Eldad's post-1948 periodic *Sulam* as a 'Jewish study-house',⁷⁰ Eldad called his ideology a 'futile chatter of assimilated Canaanites and "Israelis" ... who create an "Israeli" ideology of separation from the Jewish people',⁷¹ insisting that 'a "Diasporic" Jew living in the Land and obeying all his religious duties is much more Israeli than a "Sabra" imitating a Parisian drawing, an American actress or a Russian poem'.⁷²

It is this article's contention that this difference originates in the intellectually distinct paths of Ratosh's and Eldad's development. Ratosh broke with Zionism when he adopted Horon's historiography which contradicted the Jewish one (transposed to Zionism nearly unscathed, only that the mythical figure of the Messiah was substituted by a human agent), and used it to construct a national-liberal ideology which opposed Zionism due to what it perceived as its primordial and illiberal characteristics. Having denied the Jews the right for national self-determination, the 'Canaanites' declared themselves to be speaking in the name of an entirely different Hebrew nation, which was conceived in a liberal-secular framework with no racial undertones. The 'Canaanites' were not busy with rethinking Zionism; they rejected it out of hand as an 'impostor' of a 'true' nationalism (though not denying their own Zionist past⁷³).

Contrariwise, Israel Eldad, who did not doubt Jewish-Zionist historiography, remained essentially a Zionist. His novelty lay elsewhere: in a radical re-conceptualization of Zionism in messianic Hegelian terms. As a result, he denied the validity of the entire Zionist movement, except for the LEHI and the Bloc of the Faithful, since only these were 'obedient' to his deterministic laws of Jewish history.⁷⁴ Hence, Eldad's fierce opposition to what he titled 'Zionism' was not directed at the ideology in total (in the fashion of Ratosh), but only at the guiding principles of *secular* Zionism. This is why Eldad's transformation is a transition from 'fundamentalist' Zionism to 'ultra-Zionism'. Ultimately, it would seem that Ratosh pursued a longer and much bolder way than Eldad, paying a higher price, politically as well as personally, remaining an outcast in Israeli literature and politics almost till the end of his life.

The difference between the two thinkers is evident even when they use similar arguments against Zionism. We have seen above that both identified Zionism with Judaism; however, whereas for Ratosh this was Zionism's source of *weakness*, for Eldad it was the potential source of its *strength*. And whereas Ratosh accused Zionism of *upholding* 'anti-national' Jewish values, Eldad accused it of the opposite – of *abandoning* the 'eternal' and 'essential' Jewish national aim of working for messianic redemption. Finally, using the 'Hebrew' denominator, Ratosh and Eldad invested in it different meanings: when Ratosh spoke of a 'Hebrew nation' he meant an autochthonous territorial-linguistic nation whose

⁷⁰ Yonatan Ratosh, 'Naara shenishbeta', in Ratosh, *Sifrut Yehudit*, 73.

⁷¹ Eldad, 'Medinat Israel', 16, 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷³ Ratosh, *Reshit hayamin*, 169-70.

⁷⁴ For the debate within the Zionist ranks regarding Zionism's relation to various manifestations of the Jewish messianic idea, see Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York, Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press & Magnes Press, 1987), 58-66.

bonds to the Jews were to be exclusively genetic, but *not* social or cultural;⁷⁵ Eldad, conversely, wrote of the 'Hebrew revolution' as of the creation of a 'new Jew', that is, in an essentially Zionist way.

We must not, however, identify indiscriminately the views expressed by Ratosh and Eldad with the platforms of the movements they led. Both the 'Canaanites' and the LEHI were complex phenomena which contained manifold strands of thought, and their ideology and politics converged at several points. Ratosh's 1938 booklet *We Aspire to Power* was one of the impulses for the emergence of the LEHI in 1940,⁷⁶ though its founder Avraham Stern rejected Ratosh's views regarding Judaism and Jewish heritage and framed his struggle in Jewish-messianic terms.⁷⁷ When Ratosh adopted 'Canaanism', the breach between him and the LEHI grew deeper, as is evidenced by Ratosh's derisive references to the LEHI in 'The Opening Discourse'. However, Joseph Heller reminds us that after 1944 a pro-Soviet wing grew in significance within the LEHI, which resulted in a marginalization of the messianic Stern-Eldad tendency and a renewed growth in the pro-'Canaanite' tendencies.⁷⁸ Besides this principal affinity, the two groups also mixed personally, since some prominent 'Canaanites' joined the LEHI, attracted by its anti-British radicalism, opposition to Zionist mainstream and subscription to the idea of cultural and political primacy of Palestinian Hebrews over the Diaspora Jews (that is, the 'positive' aspect of Zionism). One of the LEHI 'Canaanites' was Eliyahu Beth-Tzuri, who was hanged in Cairo in 1945 for his part in the assassination of the British minister of state in the Near East, Lord Moyne. He delivered at his process a fiery 'Canaanite' speech, declaring that 'my ideas are not Zionist ideas. We don't fight to uphold the Balfour Declaration. We don't fight for the sake of the National Home. We fight for our freedom. In our country a foreign power rules'.⁷⁹ Beth-Tzuri, however, was dissatisfied with Ratosh's intellectualism and his reluctance to face the British as long as the Hebrew youth

⁷⁵ It is important to realize that the 'Canaanites' did not deny that they hailed from the Jews, whom they considered a mixed array of communities of various ethnic origins united only by religious tradition (for the 'Canaanite' version of the emergence of Judaism and Jews, see Horon, *Kedem va'ever*, 329-45), but refused to accede for the application of pre-modern criteria of identity to the modern Hebrew nation, which in their opinion Zionism aimed at. Hence the declaration by Ratosh's youngest brother Uzzi Ornan (a professor of linguistics at the Technion) that 'my father was a Jew, but I am not; there is no contradiction here'. 'Anakhnu Knaanim: Sikhot im Prof. Uzzi Ornan', *Svivot* (December 1994), 66. For more on Ratosh's concept of nation-formation, see Yonatan Ratosh, 'Huledet haumma', in Ratosh, *Reshit hayamim*, 38-41.

⁷⁶ This is confirmed also by LEHI co-leaders Nathan Yalin-Mor (Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 56, 60) and Yitzhak Shamir (Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 104-5).

⁷⁷ For more on Ratosh-Stern relations, see Heller, 'The Zionist Right and National Liberation', 93; Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 204-23.

⁷⁸ Heller, 'The Zionist Right and National Liberation', 88, 104-5. On the 'leftist' tendency in the LEHI that advocated relying on the USSR in an anti-imperialist struggle in which the Arabs of Palestine and the entire Middle East could partake (and which went as far as incorporating some Marxist principles into the LEHI ideology), see Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, 'A Cold War Casualty in Jerusalem, 1948: The Assassination of Witold Hulanicki', *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4:3 (2010): 135-56; Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 170, 180-1, 344-55, 381-95, 407-8, 412-3, 419-33, 438-9, 457-61. We must keep in mind, however, that there is no principal parallel between 'Canaanism' and a pro-Soviet stance. The pro-Soviet LEHI members were attracted to 'Canaanism' due to its national-liberation tones, and not due to its (nonexistent) socialist inclinations. Yalin-Mor, who came to head the pro-Soviet LEHI wing, had severe reservations regarding the 'Canaanite' ideology, though he admits that in many respects he could not but agree with it (*ibid.*, 146-7).

⁷⁹ Cited in Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?*, 150, n. 77. See also Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 222; Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 147, 191, 210-26, 248-59; and the booklet *Hahitnakshut ba'Lord Moyne* (Tel Aviv: Hamidrasha haleumit, 1975), which was published on the occasion of Beth-Tzuri's (and his fellow assassin, Eliyahu Hakim's) reburial in Israel by the heirs of the rightist LEHI wing, who were apparently troubled by Beth-Tzuri's anti-Zionism and atheism and tried to play it down.

was held 'captive' by the Zionist ideology, stating 'I am with you in all respects, but bombs should be thrown as well'.⁸⁰

To sum up, 'Canaanism' and Eldad's messianism ultimately represented *entirely different*, and even contradictory, *national visions*: one Hebrew anti-Zionist, the other Jewish ultra-Zionist. One might argue that 'Canaanism's' liberal nationalism combined with opposition to Zionism gave rise to the post-Zionist standpoint which became popular in Israel since the late 1980s⁸¹ and which Eldad wholeheartedly despised.⁸² His own ideology was illiberal to the core, mixing perennialist conceptions of national identity (the Jewish people as eternal and unchangeable), religious radicalism and a cult of the soil.⁸³ This latter characteristic, curiously, brought some observers of the Israeli public life to term the Bloc of the Faithful ideology 'Messianic neo-Canaanism',⁸⁴ assuming (somewhat short-sightedly) that at the core of 'Canaanism' lay the *land* and not the *nation*. However, what the comparative analysis of 'Ratoshism' and 'Eldadism' shows above all is that Israeli anti-Zionism can assume at times an extreme nationalist shape.

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⁸⁰ Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 218. Other LEHI 'Canaanites' were Ratosh's brother Gamliel Heilperin who trained Beth-Tzuri in the underground (later a professor of Semitic philology at the University of Pennsylvania, who signed his works as Svi Rin [Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 190, 255]) and Boas Evron and Amos Keinan (later prominent public intellectuals of the Israeli radical left [ibid., 361-5]).

⁸¹ On post-Zionism, see Ephraim Nimni, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2003); Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 1999). These books are sympathetic to post-Zionism. A critical treatment is offered in Tuvia Friling, ed., *Tshuva leamit post-tziyoni* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 2003). A balanced collection, bringing under the same covers both supporters and opponents of post-Zionism, is Anita Shapira and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003).

⁸² Eldad interview, 451.

⁸³ Notably, Yalin-Mor portrayed Eldad in his memoirs as somewhat less dogmatic: he affirms democratic principles (Yalin-Mor, *Lohamey Herut Israel*, 433), opposes the idea of the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs (ibid., 359) and is indignant over the Deir-Yassin massacre (on 9th of April 1948 a joint battalion of ETZEL and LEHI attacked the Palestinian village of Deir-Yassin on the western outskirts of Jerusalem and massacred its inhabitants. See ibid., 469-73). It is not clear whether Eldad himself chose afterwards to obfuscate his earlier beliefs or whether it was Yalin-Mor's attempt at a hindsight polemic with his fellow LEHI co-leader (a deeper analysis of LEHI's ideological intricacies is outside the scope of this article, but it is beyond doubt that there was a strong political and personal disagreement between Eldad and Yalin-Mor. See ibid., 139-40, 264, 358-60). Yalin-Mor asserted furthermore that Avraham Stern actually rejected Eldad's messianic radicalism and attributes the idea popular in some LEHI circles that the former became a religious fanatic under the latter's influence to a 'misunderstanding' (ibid., 140). This argument is supported by Boas Evron, who wrote that by the time he joined the LEHI the movement's founding manifesto (co-authored by Stern and Eldad) had been all but forgotten due to LEHI's more recent pro-Soviet turn. Boas Evron, 'Hama'ase – uvavuto ha'akademit', *Yedi'ot Aharonot* 2.3.1984: 20. However, as an ironic characteristic of the LEHI by another 'Canaanite' (a cocktail of Rabbi Kook [the founder of religious Zionism] and Karl Marx'. Porat, *Shelah veet beyado*, 221) shows, LEHI's original principles were never entirely abandoned.

⁸⁴ David Ohana, *Lo knaanim, lo tzalbanim: Mekorot hamitologia haisraelit* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2008), 31, 210-11, 228, 285.

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BREAKING TABOOS IN ISRAELI HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the phenomenon of second-generation Israeli Holocaust literature, also known as 'bearing witness' fiction, that appeared with great resonance on the Hebrew literary scene in the 1980s. It argues that this new band of writers overcame the dual moral obstacles of describing a reality that they did not directly experience and making art of a subject that defies human comprehension. The article focuses on one particularly important novel, *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim*¹ (*The Legend of the Sad Lakes*) by Itamar Levy, which tested the limits of representation of the Holocaust and provoked intense debate about its graphic and violent scenes of Jews tortured by the Nazis as well as about its postmodern techniques in portraying the Holocaust experience. The article maintains that despite the fact that *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* broke taboos in Israeli Holocaust literature with its disturbing, and perhaps sensational sequences, that at heart Levy's narrative presents a profound confrontation with the anguished past that affords young readers the necessary gateway to engage with the Holocaust on an individual, rather than a public level. The article makes the case that novels such as *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* represent deeply veined journeys into the heart of the Nazi beast, by Israeli writers who are propelled by a wish to unshackle the Shoah from the fetters of the collective and reclaim it as a personal experience.

Despite the critical and testimonial surfeit available about the Shoah, and the relentless sword thrusting by historians, a sensitive and intelligent novel of the Holocaust can offer a band of golden rays for those numbed by the nature of historical documentation. No doubt, novels and short stories can grant an open space for independent and meaningful thought about the Holocaust in a way that history books cannot. This inevitably raises the question of how does one write after Auschwitz?, how do those who mercifully were spared the catastrophe imaginatively fill in the blanks?, and how do they translate the trauma that has been transmitted with empathy and affinity?

Indeed, an often discussed aspect of the act of writing after Auschwitz is the way in which it tests the limits of representation. Second generation Holocaust stories encompass multivalent forms. They often depict the life crises of the children of survivors, who delve into their consciousness to recover their personal identity, yet sometimes adopt fantasy, blurring the boundaries dividing truth and fiction. This brings up the question of the authenticity and the legitimacy of such writing, especially when it engages in flights of fantasy – usually associated with postmodernism – that may deform and twist the burning horror.

Thus, an obvious question is: why are second generation prose writers shifting to the fantastic over the mimetic? Hanna Yaoz takes up this point:

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¹ Itamar Levy, *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* (Tel Aviv: Keter, 1989).

The tendency toward the fantastic in second generation writing can be explained by the fact that what the Nazis did deviated from any former reality and pushed the imagination to the absurd, so that when we speak of the Holocaust the fantastic is real. The joining together of real and familiar facts acquires a reality of its own in the minds of the writer and reader precisely when it comes to the Holocaust, whose reality was so abnormal. Those who were not there – who write out of attraction and repulsion, who need to fill the blanks with the creative imagination – resort to fantastic realism much more than do Holocaust survivors in order to close the gap between what is known and what is guessed, often on the thinnest factual grounds.²

Second-generation novels represent an attempt to undermine and deconstruct predominant Israeli assumptions about post-Shoah identity. Hence, the works question the adequacy of the official and sacrosanct frameworks produced by the state to portray the Holocaust as well as offer alternate ways to depict the legacy of the Holocaust. In more ways than one, the works betray a gritty spirit of rebellion against the statist appropriation of the Shoah and a vigorous desire to de-nationalise Holocaust narrative and reclaim its personal and intimate dimension. In other words, what is at play here is an effort to privatise the traumatic memories of individuals that had been collectivised by the state. Above all, these texts serve as testament to the fact that within Israeli culture, literary representations of the Holocaust have transcended generational, tribal, or national limitations. Ideology has ceded authority to literature. If, before, the state was the repository of collective memory, enlisting its institutions in service of a mono-ideology that dictated the terms for local memory of a specific experience, the Holocaust, this oppressive coherence no longer exists. To be sure, the notion of an indisputable canon has now been completely dismantled.

Looming large are questions of how secondary Holocaust Israeli fiction helps those reading it edge closer to identification with the victims, despite being separated from the event by several decades. Given the imminent passing of the survivors, the torch has been passed to this generation, in particular the sons and daughters of the survivors, who suffered vicariously from the syndrome of silence. In other words, the second and third generation are the new eyewitnesses to the dying group of victims. They form a bridge to allow those future generations who feel impelled to cross over, to enter the world of devastation, which, while not inflicting a physical wound upon them, has left an emotional scar. Thus, the medium of fiction acts as a mode of articulation, liberating both parents and children from living with an untold past, and allowing them to burst the membrane of a proscribing amnesia.

In the wake of the rise and rise of postmodernism, both in prose and literary hermeneutics, it is not unreasonable to ponder the role this aesthetic has played in expanding the cohabitation of art and the Shoah. A central pillar of postmodern posture is the absolute denial of one narrative, truth, or reality, within the whirlpool of ideas, constructs, histories, and references. It is a modality that moves towards the concept of an ungraspable reality, and liberates the writer from the need to depict a precise and fixed reality of the Shoah universe. As such, postmodernism rejects the tendency towards accurate coordination of words or terms comparable with any accepted image history

² Hanna Yazo, 'Inherited Fear: Second Generation Poets and Novelists in Israel', in *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Auschwitz*, ed. Efraim Sicher (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1998), 164.

might render. It empowers the author to sketch his or her own plastically ambiguous and evanescent map. 'It is precisely the Final Solution,' Friedlander avers, 'which allows postmodernist thinking to question the validity of any totalising view of history, or any reference to a definable metadiscourse, thus opening the way for a multiplicity of equally valid approaches'.³ Such jettisoning of mimetic vestiges notwithstanding, Friedlander warns of the dangers lurking within such a theory: 'This very multiplicity... may lead to any aesthetic fantasy and once again runs counter to the need for establishing a stable truth as far as this past is concerned ...'⁴

Any author who chooses to write about the Holocaust will inevitably consider the adequacy of the literary frameworks and criteria that were available before, but now may seem to transgress and violate the truth of the historical event. Perhaps, if we are to employ Lyotard's metaphor of the Holocaust as an earthquake that has obliterated all tools of measurement, we must admit that the event has shattered humanity's common sense and foundations and along with it its conventional instruments of figuration.⁵ Since this recalcitrant reality is at the heart of our situation, the principal questions before us are these: How can an author appropriate the Holocaust for his or her aesthetic aims? And what modes of description can be generated to fit this design?

Salient to this discussion is Hayden White's formula of historical interpretation. White insistently questions the headlong pursuit of a single version and the demand that Holocaust narratives represent reality as it was. According to White's re-alignment of the historical compass and re-defining of the traditional frames of reference, the very nature of narrative requires the writer to make a choice among the abundance of fictional forms available, including and excluding certain technical emplotting devices, language and ideological markers. White argues that there is no one objective standard superior to another, that any critical faculty engaged with assessing the reality of any given instance is a frail vessel that can be kept or glossed over. Unlike previous commentators, White's discourse does away with the requirements of an authentic representation of the Holocaust. He discards the constraints on imaginative storytelling that were embraced by those Holocaust writers who felt obliged to remain utterly faithful to the factual record.

In asking whether the Final Solution and its evils impose absolute limits on writers of fiction, White argues that:

... unless a historical story is presented as a literal presentation of real events, we cannot criticize it as being true or untrue to the facts of the matter. If it were presented as a figurative representation of real events, then the question of its truthfulness cannot be criticised as being either true or untrue to the facts of the matter ... The kind of anomalies, enigmas and dead ends that met with discussion of the representation of the Holocaust are the result of a conception of a discourse that owes too much to realism that is inadequate to the representation of events, such as the Holocaust'.⁶

³ Saul Friedlander, 'Trauma, Memory and Transference', in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'*, ed. Saul Friedlander (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 56-58.

⁶ Hayden White, 'Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth', in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'*, ed. Saul Friedlander (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 40, 50.

Put differently, White allows for the train of literary expression to pass through many stations on its journey of exploration and negates an overall account of the Shoah. In summa, he states:

Our notion of what constitutes realistic representation must be revised to take account of experiences that are unique to our century and for older modes of representation that have proved inadequate ... the best way to represent the Holocaust and the experience of it may well be by a kind of 'intransitive writing' which lays no claim to the kind of realism aspired to by the nineteenth-century historians and writers.⁷

In this regard, it is noteworthy that Aharon Megged, the author of the 1955 short story *Yad Vashem*, now a classic in Israel's Holocaust literary canon, answers the question of whether those who were not there can imaginatively and creatively describe the event's bestiality with an unequivocal affirmation, 'Writing fiction in general does not necessarily imply first hand cognisance of the subject matter ... The possibility of dealing with such material stems from the faculty a writer possesses that enables him to identify himself with different, various characters and states of mind ...'.⁸

Postmodern and fantastic novels of the Shoah are often seen as subversive. The vertiginous points of view and realities contained in such fictions serve to stress once more the dangers of such aesthetical gymnastics. The problem is that due to the always shifting, fluid and negotiable forms with which postmodernism is obsessed, as well as the contrapuntal perspectives that accord even the murderers a voice (albeit in some cases sotto voce), the spectator may be engrossed by the pervasive fusion of allegory and anti-realism in a similarly digressive plot. The paradoxical result may be that the original intent of the author – descending into the belly of the horror and painfully conveying the suffering and terror wrought on the victims – is diluted.

In response to this side effect, several writers who seek a documentary link between their imaginative creations and the undisputed facts of the Holocaust, have deepened the element of verisimilitude. The desire to avoid undermining the foundation of historical accuracy has provoked a repeated assertion of real episodes that emphasises the realistic authority of the novel. Perhaps, as James Young puts it, the writer's motives for proceeding in this way derive from the fear that, 'the rhetoricity of their literary medium inadvertently confers a fictiveness onto the events themselves'.⁹

In the same way, second generation novelists must contend with the central paradox of crafting their stories from material that not only exists outside their own tactile experience, but also challenges them to transcend their own reserves of imaginative re-creation. Finding the proper modes of rewriting the unthinkable in modern literary terms and techniques remains an arduous challenge to the artist. As Lawrence Langer observes, 'Holocaust reality limits rather than liberates the vision of the writer ... who ventures to represent it. It abnormalizes the normal'.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., 52.

⁸ Aharon Megged, 'I was Not There', in *Comprehending the Holocaust: Historical and Literary Research*, eds. Asher Cohen, Yoav Gelber and Charlotte Wardi (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 100.

⁹ James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 51.

¹⁰ Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), xvii-xix.

Primarily, by confecting a story composed of authentic aspects and aesthetic inventions, and by plunging backwards to a time beyond their own to imagine events, authors risk the charge of tilting the genocidal reality to manipulate a reader's emotions. Indeed, the fictional constructs of a second-hand cartographer, mapping out his or her own renderings (as the 'bearing-witness' generation does) can transgress the sanctity of real events by rupturing his or her factual integrity – especially since they depend on the partaking of transmitted memory and mediated imagination. A related moral concern asks whether wordsmiths who spin tales for their audience with the intended aim of moving and exciting the reader are benefiting from the victim's anguish. A literary record of the Holocaust set forth in heightened prose and with intense emotionalism may indeed depend on the sensational and dramatic for its success.

In different ways, Itamar Levy's controversial book *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* (translated into English as *Legend of the Sad Lakes*) pushed beyond the comfortable parameters of post-Auschwitz aesthetic representations, in essence re-defining and resisting generic boundaries. To be sure, Levy utilised a novelist's license in his strategies of narration to create a complex chamber for reflections about the nature of Nazism that sometimes pressed aside narratological constraints and conventional categories of exactitude and faithfulness to the historical record. The author's choice of a revised palette of approaches, of refuting the mimetic trend and of choosing the fantastic as a thematic and structural element may be driven by the realisation that, 'to establish an order of reality in which the unimaginable becomes imaginatively acceptable exceeds the capacities of an art devoted entirely to verisimilitude; some quality of the fantastic, whether stylistic or descriptive, becomes an essential ingredient ...'¹¹

Interestingly, Levy, is not the son of Holocaust survivors. This fact indicates that the consuming passion to relate to the Holocaust affects the generation born after the war in toto, and not only those whose lives were directly marked by their survivor parents. As Yosefa Loshitzky remarks, 'If we expand the narrow psychological definition of who is entitled to inclusion within the category of the second-generation, then we may as well talk about a second-generation "sensibility" that transcends the empirical status of the "real" children of Holocaust survivors and refugees'.¹²

Levy offers his readers an intellectual game, tacitly acknowledging that his narrative is a fairy-tale. On the one hand, as we know, the thematic premise of fairy tales, more often than not, is smoothed over with a happy texture and ending. Yet on the other hand, the primary narrative of *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* is very sad and its plot antithetical to the normal dynamics of traditional fairy tales.

The author's point may be that it is incumbent upon the spectator to choose whether on the whole this is a fable, to suspend his or her disbelief of the fantastic style and to see the fantastic as real since the literary material is based on actual events.¹³ In content, style and structure, the book presents a reality in which the constituent ingredients of the real world have been reversed, with a fastening line to the ground or a kinship to the realistic scarcely

¹¹ Ibid., 43.

¹² Yosefa Loshitzky 'Hybrid Victims: Second-Generation Israelis Screen the Holocaust', in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (London: Athlone Press, 2001), 154-155.

¹³ In this context, Batya Gur observes, that the entire novel is written as if on the verge of a dream. Batya Gur, Review of *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim*, *Haaretz*, November 3, 1989, 8B.

in sight. It is a stage where nothing is stable or indisputable, where the expressionistic plot is stripped of real time or space.

Formally, the novel consists of a swirl of shifting styles, braiding idiomatic Hebrew with Agonesque speech, as well as a myriad of erotic and violent situations mounted unremittingly one on top of the other. Amplifying its amalgam of jerky styles, techniques and tones, is the novel's truly polyphonic makeup, with six narrators who tell the story of the Nazi regime and the inferno of the camps. The blurring of identities makes it at times difficult to determine the identity of the speakers, adding to the novel's jarring distortion of plot and narration. At the peak of the book's colourful innovation, which intermingles the trivial and the terrible, we encounter a talking parrot who discourses on Nazi historiography along with the central protagonist, Nazi pets who night after night frequent a lake to talk among themselves, and a cow whose milk tells horrific accounts of the treatment of the Jews in Europe.

The story opens in Tel Aviv in February 1988, with the arrest of Yochanan Greenberg, accused of being SS officer Obersturmführer Joachim Kronn. Not only did the Nazi criminal of Dachau choose to hide in the land of his victims, it is claimed, but he also had a son, Arnon, with a Jewish camp inmate whom he married after the war. The devastating chain of events begins when Baruch Fein, a Holocaust survivor who in the camps served as the 'Jewish plaything' to the alleged Nazi officer, recognises Greenberg's neck while travelling on a bus. Having to watch the beastly criminal rape of his family and friends in the camps, Baruch, in revulsion, had turned and focused on Kronn's neck, perfectly memorising it. Yochanan Greenberg is secretly arrested and placed in complete isolation in Acre prison. During the legal proceedings his wife dies, although her voice is not muffled – she freely narrates her experiences and the Jewish community's living hell throughout the book.

Faced with the mounting evidence and a personal crisis, Arnon sets out to prove his father's innocence. He travels to Munich where he hopes he can discover exculpatory evidence. The trip to Germany, however, backfires, as he uncovers conclusive proof that his father is indeed the Nazi officer. Visiting a cemetery where Obersturmführer Joachim Kronn is alleged to be buried, he discovers the grave to be empty, placed there by aging members of the International Nazi Network Odessa (of which his father was an active participant) to serve as a convenient alibi. Although Arnon does not present his father with the inculpatory facts he unearthed, the father confesses to the charges through a letter he sends to his dead wife and to his son (a letter he signs 'Heil Hitler') and commits suicide in his cell. The possibility that he is the offspring to a Nazi monster brings about a simultaneous outburst of fury and doubt in Arnon as well as a desire to reclaim the foundations of his previous identity that have disintegrated. At first, he leaves his pregnant wife Einav and moves to a run-down hotel, since he cannot stand the thought that he will sire a Nazi offspring. Then, understandably, he feels bound to trace his family's history in an attempt to recover his crushed sense of being. The fantastic, irrational nature of the discovery forces the author to resort to stylistic pyrotechnics mirroring the agony and anguish Arnon feels, which partly enable him to configure some emotional constancy into his shattered existence. The young man is forced to confront Nazism head on, as he considers the possibility that he, as the son of a Nazi officer, took in the evil poison injected into his soul by his father. His pregnant wife Einav believes that this toxic legacy will be passed on to the third generation, to her unborn child (whom she thinks of as the heir to

the survivors and to the destroyers). On her way to meet Kronn's lawyer, Einav recites a poem for her baby, firmly placing it in the whirlwind of an imminent Shoah: 'My Child / Hide in my belly / Do not lift your eyes to the danger / Your mother/ Is warning you / My Child / Hide in my cellars / Learn your height so you can adjust to the low walls / Prepare your eyes for the darkness / My Child ...'¹⁴

Struggling with the psychological reality that his heritage has been defiled, the alienated Arnon sets out to learn about his and his family's origins. At one point, he asks himself, 'Am I the hunted or the hunter ... Am I a Jew or a Nazi?'¹⁵ The pervasive analogy between Jew and Nazi promoted in the book is reinforced when, after being set on by Odessa members in a graveyard in Germany, Arnon, bloodied and bruised, decides to accept his fate – he decides to become the same dark animal that attacked him. This motif is heightened by Lana, a German woman who sleeps with Arnon because he smells of Aryan blood like her father – she calls him 'My Little Nazi' – and Arnon's dead mother who affirms the son's divided self, in a paragraph in which she assumes the duties of narration:

In his outward appearance my son is split between the good and the bad. His right eye is quiet, his left is raging. One ear is flat, the other stands out. My son's face is divided. Half is like me, half is like his father. His actions too, are divided. Because despite the accusations, the threats and the charges, he cares for his father, but on the other hand he leaves his wife Einav and avoids her temptations ...¹⁶

Towards the end, his father underlines both the deep connection his son has with Nazism and how his German roots are an integral component of his psychic identity. We learn that at home, Arnon was brought up on the Nazi code and ethos. Raised in a household devoid of love, he would leaf through newspaper cuttings dedicated to the Führer and would listen at night to German stories that his father secretly read to him. The following passage reflects the loss of identity that is central in the book, 'You are not a Jew, Arnon, because the Jews are not a race, but fragments of a nation. Whereas you are a German, member of the purest race. Your name, too, is not Jewish. Your real name is Rudolph Kronn. I saw you growing up strong and noble ... When the verdict is given it will be your verdict too ... You are the son of a Nazi ...'¹⁷ In the end, the boundary between victim and killer is crossed, as the fury that rages within leads Arnon to kidnap and murder an old Nazi SS officer.

In the novel's most stirring monologue, Arnon conveys the internal cry of pain shared by all children of survivors:

Why don't I write about my feelings one to one? Why don't I listen to my heart like I have been told to do? Why do I evade, close gates, build walls, forget and remember and suppress and ask and erase the blue numbers that float and appear on my left skin? Why do I ignore the smells, and the sounds, and the colours? Why do I insist on listing you by your names and professions but never tell about the sorrow, the suffering and the pain? ... How do I tell about the fear of trains I inherited? Why don't I mention my childhood battles against the Nazis? I only browse

¹⁴ Itamar Levy, *Agadat ha'agamim ha'atsuvim* [The Legend of the Sad Lakes] (Tel Aviv: Keter, 1989), 72.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 144-146.

the truth? ... What do I blame myself for? What haven't I done yet? Against whom haven't I taken vengeance yet? Why don't I tell about my work? Why don't I write poems about the Holocaust? Why don't I record my dreams? Why do I pray? Why, night after night, do I close the shutters around me? Why do I leave the light on in my porch? Who am I afraid of? Am I a 'second generation'? Why do I travel around the world seeking meetings with other survivor children? ... Don't know how to feel. Don't know how to cry. Don't know how to scream. Don't know how to explain ... Do I store food? Do I throw away bread? Am I in dream therapy? Nightmare therapy? How am I affected by knocks on the door? Or by the sharp ring of the phone? Am I sad on Holocaust Day? ... Does everyone have a mother with a number on her arm? Who's asking? Who's crying? Who's lonely? Who hates? Who eats white meat? Who's afraid of dogs? Who am I named after? Is it after my grandfather who was murdered by the Nazis? Is it after my uncle who was murdered by the Nazis? Is it after my grandmother who was murdered by the Nazis?¹⁸

Levy's book was the subject of intense debate following its publication. One could argue that the accusation that in some way the novel borders on the sensational and voyeuristic is partly validated in two detailed, elongated, generatively imagined passages of torture and humiliation. The first deals with the Nazis' response to the refusal by Arnon's grandfather to cooperate in the construction of a death camp:

Because Grandfather Greenshpan refused to build their city of death, and insisted on charging them two Zlotys as a passage tax, the Nazis began torturing him. They whipped his back and hands. They forced him to clean the street's pavements with sulphuric acid that burned his wounds. They threatened his life if he wouldn't sing 'Heil Hitler' for them as he cleaned. Afterwards, they shaved his beard with their knives, tearing pieces of flesh together with the hair. They ordered him to lay Tefillin, and in the end they covered him with gasoline and threw him into the burning synagogue of Plotzk. Since he came out unharmed, and since he had no smell of ashes on his skin, they accused him of separatism, i.e. Communism, and they continued to torture him. They forced him to bend his knees again and again, for six straight hours under the blazing sun and under a shower of blows. They shoved needles under his fingers, hit him with an electrical shock, gave him a postcard and forced him to scribble a message to his loved ones: 'I have arrived safely. I am healthy. I am happy and feeling well.' They crushed his testicles and welded his fingers together. They ordered him to carry stones from here to there for no reason, to dig holes and cover them up again. They competed against each other taking aim and practised shooting at the tip of his nose and his earlobes. All the while his anguished eyes scanned the camp around him ... Since all of their deeds did not help and the Jew continued to refuse and mock, the Nazis adopted new tactics. They tied his limbs to a 'seesaw' device that stretched and dismembered his body. They put starved rats into his trousers and shot at bottles placed on his head. In the end, they dragged him to the forest and there, just for fun, for they had long forgotten what they wanted from him, they shot him in the neck, back, stomach, temples, mouth and heart. God had made a miracle for my grandfather, for although he was dead he did not allow blood to flow out of his body but created a miraculous blood that dripped only from the wounds of his pants and the cut in his shirt. His upper skin and lower skin remained smooth and clean¹⁹

In the second passage, Arnon wonders about the particulars and extent of his father's brutal deeds:

¹⁸ Ibid., 53-54.

¹⁹ Ibid., 20-21.

Did you send their organs for medical testing? Did you use Zyklon B against them? Did you hang them by their wrists with their arms tied behind their back? Did you inject gasoline into their blood? Did you pour frozen water over their skin? Did you enjoy seeing this and that one standing and watching their wife and sons walking to their death? Did you force them to wipe the streets with their Tallit, burn their holy books, and dance around the bonfires? Did you force them to stand in front of the hanged corpses of their families and sing, 'I will never forget my concentration camp, the Eden of the Jews'? Did you insert wooden beams under the fingers of the one standing in front of you and light them? ... Did you throw children off speeding carriage cars? Did you throw live, suffering kids into a burning fire? ... Did you kill people with your bare hands? Did you step over their bodies and shoot those still alive? Did you order the hanging of your naked prisoners on the camp's trees? Did you unleash your dogs onto their private parts? ... Did you strangle your victims with ten fingers? Is it true you drowned their heads in buckets of water? Is it true you forced them to bend and eat horse faeces? Why did you skin your victims and decorate the lamps in your office with it?²⁰

It should come as no surprise that the extensive and graphic passages of the torture and degradation of Jews provoked a heated debate among several commentators. Avner Holtzman's moral reservations, for example, rested on the overly descriptive dreadful humiliation and death of Jews sprinkled throughout the book. Of the horrific passages Holtzman wrote: 'Perhaps the tangible descriptions are part of the desire to shock and stun, but the result achieved is the opposite. The impression is of a simplistic, incautious use of materials, which wiser authors understood were not to be touched, realising that it is better to present the horror in small doses, indirectly and by allusion'.²¹ In a later essay, Holtzman added this caveat with Levy in mind: 'It is good that young and talented Israeli authors have the need to write about the Holocaust. However, this is a subject – perhaps the only one – that imposes restrictions on anyone who deals with it, since playing with explosives, with all their attendant attraction and adventure, carries within it great danger in insensitive hands'.²² Hanna Hertzog goes even further. She contends that what stands out in Levy's book is the pornographic element, closely associated with the 'kitsch and death' poetics coined by Saul Friedlander.²³

Yigal Schwartz, contra Holtzman, believes that Levy's text performs a reliably moral duty. Schwartz begins by stating that in *Agadat Ha-agamim Ha-atzuvim* Levy did not try to understand, imagine or concretise the Shoah. Rather, says Schwartz, Levy attempted to look at the catalogue of texts that have previously touched upon the Holocaust. According to Schwartz, this is a novel protesting the failures of Holocaust literature, an indictment against those works that instead of opening a window for the young generation, so as to allow it to connect with the world over there, have erected an impenetrable textual wall that prevents any cognitive or emotional engagement. Levy's objective thus was to rally against the failings of the earlier models, which Schwartz labels with the neologism of 'actualisation to the point of absurdity'.²⁴ This creative route, which Levy rejects, suggests

²⁰ Ibid., 23-24, 55.

²¹ Avner Holtzman, *Ahavot Tziyon* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2006), 119-120.

²² Ibid., 542.

²³ Hanna Hertzog, *Ha-kol ha-omer ani: megamot ba-siporet hayisraelit shel shnot hashmonim* (Tel Aviv: The Open University, 1988), 77.

²⁴ Yigal Schwartz, 'Mesima musarit be-echlet', *Efes Shtaim* 1 (1992): 123.

that the Holocaust can be understood only through synecdoche, that focusing on the story of one person in a specific situation, will explicate the fate of an entire community.

Levy rebuts this method through his description of Grandfather Greenshpan's torture, cited earlier. It is abundantly evident, Schwartz observes, that Levy condenses the entire Holocaust experience into the figure of Grandfather Greenshpan. After all, no human being could withstand such tortures, especially one as frail and old as the victim. Levy employs this strategy to signal to the reader that there exists no one man, real or imagined, whose story can reflect the fate of the six million Jews. Schwartz concludes his vehement defence of Levy by stating that through his novel, the author remonstrated against the fossilised and decayed state of the Israeli literary and cultural consciousness as regards the Holocaust.²⁵ Balaban concurs: 'There are those who will say this is a postmodern work. However, beyond these labels, this is an extraordinary novel about the Holocaust, its past and present victims ... about the ways fiction can confront the Holocaust'.²⁶ In a similar vein, Leonard Orr argues that although there are those who fear any divergence from the customary, non-fictional genres (diaries, documentary films, memoirs) in the teaching of the Holocaust, he feels that '... after the more traditional texts, it is valuable to use some of the experimental or oblique works of fiction that have been published recently, especially since 1980 ... other things are accomplished and new directions open up for discussion and analysis in exposing students to works that are oblique, written by people who were not themselves survivors ...'.²⁷

One of the chief tasks of books such as *Legend of the Sad Lakes* is to inscribe, externalise, and assimilate the Holocaust into Israel's and the Jewish peoples' shared national identity. At the epicentre of Levy's narrative is an overwhelming confrontation with the painful past that denies closure of the 20th century's darkest moment, declaiming explicitly that memory and its preservation have not dimmed. The novel provides the uninitiated reader with the emotional and the intellectual textual space to enter this horrific realm, which they may have suppressed in order to achieve psychological distance. In not avoiding the pain of the past or participating in the process of collective repression, Levy, through his literary creations, reminds Israeli society of the function of memory and remembering.

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²⁵ Ibid., 125

²⁶ Avraham Balaban, 'Ledaber agnonit otentit', *Haaretz*, March 23, 1990, 9B.

²⁷ Leonard Orr, 'Post Memory and Postmodern: The Value of Teaching Experimental Holocaust Fiction', Workshop at the conference on Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations (2009), 2.

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‘THE SIMPLE JEW’: THE ‘PRICE TAG’ PHENOMENON, VIGILANTISM, AND RABBI YITZCHAK GINSBURGH’S POLITICAL KABBALAH

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the Kabbalistic theosophy of Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, and allegations of links between his yeshiva and violent political activism and vigilantism. Ginsburgh is head of the yeshiva *Od Yosef Chai* (Joseph Still Lives) in Samaria/the northern West Bank. His students and colleagues have been accused by the authorities of violence and vandalism against Arabs in the context of ‘price tag’ actions and vigilante attacks, while publications by Ginsburgh and his yeshiva colleagues such as *Barukh HaGever* (Barukh the Man/Blessed is the Man) and *Torat HaMelekh* (The King’s Torah) have been accused of inciting racist violence. This paper sketches the yeshiva’s history in the public spotlight and describes the esoteric, Kabbalistic framework behind Ginsburgh’s politics, focusing on his political readings of Zoharic Kabbalah and teachings about the mystical value of spontaneous revenge attacks by ‘the simple Jew’, who acts upon his feelings of righteous indignation without prior reflection. The conclusion explores and attempts to delimit the explanatory power of such mystical teachings in light of the sociological characteristics of the Hilltop Youth most often implicated as price tag ‘operatives’ and existing scholarly models of vigilantism. It also points to aspects of the mystical teachings with potential for special potency in this context.

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh (1944-) is a Chabad rabbi and head of the *Od Yosef Chai* (Joseph Still Lives) yeshiva in the Yitzhar settlement, near the major Palestinian population centre of Nablus (biblical Shechem). The yeshiva occupies an unusual discursive space – neither mainstream religious Zionist (though some of its teaching staff were educated in this tradition) nor formally affiliated with the Hasidic movement, despite Ginsburgh’s own affiliation with Chabad and despite his teachings being steeped in its Kabbalistic inheritance. *Od Yosef Chai* is no stranger to negative publicity: its rabbis have drawn flak from all quarters for allegedly inciting racist and/or vigilante violence. The police and Shin Bet claim yeshiva students have directly participated in such violence and have imposed both administrative detentions and travel bans, backed by unpublished confidential intelligence.

This paper presents an analysis of the political Kabbalah of the yeshiva’s president and spiritual father (Ginsburgh) and explores the nature of its connections to a brand of settler activism led by Hilltop Youth that has polarized the Israeli public: the so-called ‘price tag’ acts. It commences by situating price tagging in the context of extant studies of settler vigilantism. It then presents a historical overview of public controversies around the yeshiva and the claimed links with price tagging specifically and vigilante violence

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generally. This is followed by text-based analysis of the Kabbalistic framework used by Ginsburgh to articulate his teachings on Gentile inferiority, the illegitimacy of Gentile presence in *Eretz Yisrael*,¹ and the positive nature of revenge – especially the virtue of hot-blooded revenge by ‘the simple Jew’ who is not overburdened by Halakhic reflection. By exploring the Kabbalistic underpinnings of Ginsburgh’s political and Halakhic opinions, the analysis hopes to build on the excellent work by Don Seeman² and Motti Inbari³ on this subject. The conclusion critiques and delimits the usefulness of the textual-analytic approach for understanding price tagging, but simultaneously identifies concerning synergies between Ginsburgh’s political Kabbalah (especially his spiritualization of impulsive revenge), the sociological profile of price taggers, and extant patterns of vigilantism.

Price Tagging, Vigilantism, and the Hilltop Youth

In the years since the 10-month settlement construction freeze announced in late 2009, price tag attacks have become a signature tactic of anti-bourgeois, counter-cultural fringes of settler youth opposed to territorial concessions. Activists try to deter the Israeli government from construction freezes in the settlements and/or demolitions of unauthorized outposts by retaliating with vandalism and sometimes violence against various targets: most often Palestinians or their property, but also the homes of Jewish public figures who advocate or implement such policies, and even Israel Defence Force (IDF) facilities. Though rare, the latter has raised exceptional ire in Israel. Even mainstream settler leaders have been threatened, if they are viewed as complicit in policies to ‘uproot’ Jews from *Eretz Yisrael* (e.g., by enforcing the construction freeze locally). The graffiti *tag mechir* (תג מכיר), ‘price tag’, is commonly left as a signature and warning at vandalized sites, to indicate that the act is the price to be paid for the government’s transgressions; hence the appellation.

Demographically and organizationally, price taggers stand on ‘the fringe of the fringe’ of the settler world. Estimates suggest they number in the mere hundreds. The coordination (if any) of attacks is informal and spontaneous. Passionate, angry teenagers with mobile phones can quickly and quietly organize a response to perceived provocations; there need not be a central architect, and no operational ‘hub’ has been persuasively identified – no ‘Price Tag Regional Council’, as remarked sarcastically by one right-wing

¹ The relationship between Ginsburgh’s ideas and mainstream Hasidism is a fascinating question in its own right. However, a detailed treatment is beyond the scope of the present paper. The genealogy of Ginsburgh’s ideas is explored at more length in other work under preparation.

² Don Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics, and Divine Honor in Modern Jewish Thought’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73:4 (2005): 1015-1048. The paper presents an analysis of Ginsburgh’s use of the concepts of ‘divine honour’ and ‘sanctification of the divine name’ in justifying the 1994 massacre in Hebron (and compares their interpretation with those of Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook and Emmanuel Levinas).

³ Motti Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount: Who Will Build the Third Temple?*, trans. Shaul Vardi (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2009). The chapter on Ginsburgh focuses on his teachings calling for restoration of the Sanhedrin and building of the Third Temple. It also includes discussion of Ginsburgh’s thought on the Halakhic status of zealotry in contemporary times. In contrast to both Seeman and Inbari, the textual analysis in this article grounds Ginsburgh’s permissive approach to anti-Arab violence in an analysis of his elaborate Kabbalistic theosophy, which is articulated through Zoharic and Lurianic concepts.

activist⁴ – although the researches of the security agencies have concentrated heavily on Samarian Hilltop Youth and *Od Yosef Chai*.

Despite the fringe status of the phenomenon, it has sparked firestorms in both the Israeli and Palestinian media arenas; the price taggers' impact on Israeli-Palestinian intercommunal relations and public discourse has been disproportionate to their demographic and ideological marginality. They have been lambasted by the mainstream settler rabbinical and lay leadership⁵ – though the condemnations flow more freely when the price taggers target fellow Jews⁶ – not least because of concern that the price taggers' alienation of mainstream Israelis threatens public support for settlers *per se*, as transpired after Rabin's assassination by the religious Zionist law student Yigal Amir.⁷ An attack on an IDF base in 2011 stunned the nation, and the Hilltop Youth behind it were publically shamed by defence minister Ehud Barak in the harshest language Israeli discourse could offer: 'there is no doubt that we're talking about terrorists'.⁸

Though the price tag slogan and targeting of the IDF are novel features, there is substantial continuity between price tagging as a mode of vigilante-style intimidation and prior vigilante acts in a similar vein, dating to periods well before such 'obvious' political triggers as the Gaza Disengagement and 2009 building freeze.⁹ Likewise, it is difficult to draw a clean line between, on the one hand, price tag attacks against Arabs as a 'performance' of violence whose intended 'audience' is nominally the Jewish authorities and, on the other, historical patterns of vigilante revenge attacks and collective punishment by settlers.¹⁰

⁴ Itamar Ben-Gvir, quoted by Maayana Miskin, 'Attorney: Price Tag "Terror" Label a Joke', *Arutz Sheva*, May 26, 2013. Ben-Gvir is a right-wing activist, parliamentary consultant, and public relations expert affiliated with the Kahanist movement. He is respected as a highly professional and effective spin doctor. See, e.g., Amichai Atali, 'Omedim LiYeminam: Kach Nitzach HaYamin BeParshat Perlman' [Standing by their right hand: Thus the Right prevailed in the Perlman episode], *Maariv*, August 17, 2010.

⁵ E.g., 'Yesha Leadership Condemns Price Tag Extremists', *The Yeshiva World*, June 25, 2012; Ali Waked, 'Rabbis Visit Torched Mosque, Condemn Attack', *Yedioth Achronoth*, October 5, 2010; '[Yesha Council Head] Danny Dayan Condemns "Price Tag" Attack', *Yedioth Achronoth*, September 7, 2011; Kobi Nachshoni, 'HaRav Ronsky Al Tag Mechir: BeDerech Le-"Milchemet Achim"' [Rabbi Ronsky on Price Tag: On the way to 'fraternal war'], *Yedioth Achronoth*, December 13, 2011. In the same article, published shortly after an attack on IDF representatives by about 300 youths on Route 55, the chief military rabbi Rafi Peretz declared that price tagging was against Halakhah, and Rabbi Eliyakim Levanon called the youths involved 'extremists', though also criticizing government 'aggression' against peaceful settlers.

⁶ '[Yesha Council head Danny] Dayan admits that when attacks were perpetrated against Arabs, motions put before his council to release a statement condemning such attacks were defeated, with a policy position set in place that the council would remain silent in the face of price tag attacks against Arabs', quoted in 'Yesha Leadership Condemns Price Tag Extremists.'

⁷ See e.g. Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 102-130.

⁸ 'Barak: Consider "Hilltop Youth" a Terror Group', *Jerusalem Post*, December 14, 2011. With regard to the legal utility of applying the label 'terrorism' to characterize these acts, see Daniel Byman and Natan Sachs, 'The Rise of Settler Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs*, August 14, 2012; and theoretical frameworks can plausibly be drawn from Ehud Sprinzak, 'Right-wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 17-43. However, establishing this case is not the goal of the present exploration.

⁹ See e.g. the section 'The Strong Stony Land' in Chapter 8 of Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land: The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007*, trans. Vivian Eden (New York: Nation Books, 2007), which describes (among other events) how Adi Mintz, secretary general of the Yesha Council, had his tires slashed in 2002 for criticizing Hilltop Youth as 'criminals'.

¹⁰ The phenomenon of vigilantism beyond the green line has a long history – as testified by the 1983 Karp Commission Report. See, e.g., chapters 2 and 3 of Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*; Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, 'The Causes of Vigilante Political Violence: The Case of Jewish Settlers', *Civil Wars* 6, no. 3 (2003): 9-30; David Weisburd, 'Vigilantism as Community Social Control: Developing a Quantitative Criminological Model', *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 4, no. 2 (1988): 137-53; and David Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence: Deviance as Social Reaction* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989). See too the various works by Ehud Sprinzak: *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin*

Vigilante acts against Arabs were a ubiquitous feature of life in the territories during the 1970s and 1980s, enjoying broad support among the Gush Emunim settlers. David Weisburd's pioneering criminological study of settler vigilantism identified it as 'a community-supported strategy of control in which a large number of settlers participated'; he found the vast majority of settlers supported vigilantism, and about one third of males participated in it.¹¹ Supporters framed the settlers' extra- but not anti-legal 'independent action' (there is no Hebrew word for vigilantism) as a simple necessity to ensure deterrence and security, because the IDF and police could not protect settlers fully from Palestinian terrorism; it was also a means to cement Jewish control of *Eretz Yisrael*.¹² Unofficial road blocks were the mildest (and most common) form of vigilante retaliation for Arab violence, but participants also reported revenge raids on Arab villages, in which windows and cars were smashed.

As the major settlement blocs have become institutionalized and suburbanized, the mantle has passed to the Hilltop Youth residing in relatively remote outposts, and acts in this classic vigilante mould have adopted the 'price tag' signature. The triple goals of revenge/deterrence against Arabs, cementing Jewish control and Arab obedience in the territories, and persuading the ruling regime to change its policies are seen as complimentary.¹³ It is therefore possible to situate price tagging within the typology of vigilante political violence outlined by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger¹⁴ in their 2003 overview of settler vigilantism, which in turn was based on the scholarship of Joseph Rosenbaum and Peter Sederberg¹⁵ and of Ted Gurr¹⁶ in the American context, and Ehud Sprinzak¹⁷ in the Israeli context. Vigilante violence is defined in this tradition as action beyond the formal rule of law that is nonetheless aimed at preventing the subversion of the normative socio-political regime underpinning the law. This distinguishes vigilantes from revolutionaries, who aim to destroy rather than rectify the ruling regime. To borrow Sprinzak's lucid explanation: 'what characterizes the vigilante state of mind is the profound conviction that the government or some of its agencies have failed to enforce their own order in an area under their jurisdiction. Backed by the fundamental norm of self-defence and speaking in the name of what they believe to be the valid law of the land, vigilantes, in effect, enforce the law and execute justice.'¹⁸

Pedahzur and Perliger follow Rosenbaum and Sederberg in applying a three-way typology of vigilantism.¹⁹ The first type, 'crime control vigilantism', characterizes revenge

Assassination (New York: Free Press, 1999), 145-285; *The Ascendancy of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); 'From Messianic Pioneering to Vigilante Terrorism – The Case of the Gush Emunim Underground', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 10, no. 4 (1987): 194-216.

¹¹ Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence*, 72.

¹² See e.g. *ibid.*, 68-76.

¹³ This thinking is elucidated below, where I discuss the newsletter article by Rabbi Elitzur (one of Ginsburgh's students and a teacher at *Od Yosef Chai*) that appears to lay out a manifesto for the price tag campaign.

¹⁴ Pedahzur and Perliger, 'Causes of Vigilante Political Violence'.

¹⁵ Joseph Rosenbaum and Peter Sederberg, 'Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence', *Comparative Politics* 6, no. 4 (1974): 54-70; Joseph Rosenbaum and Peter Sederberg, eds., *Vigilante Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

¹⁶ Ted R. Gurr, *Violence in America* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989).

¹⁷ See the citations in note 10.

¹⁸ Sprinzak, 'From Messianic Pioneering', 211n9. Weisburd's analysis identified similar coordinates, characterizing vigilantism as 'behavior defined as unacceptable in the general society, yet which is organized and developed by a subcommunity to control and sanction behavior that the subcommunity has defined as deviant' with respect to the normative order (i.e., the norms the subcommunity projects onto the regime); see Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence*, 6.

¹⁹ Pedahzur and Perliger, 'Causes of Vigilante Political Violence', 11-13.

attacks aimed at deterring Arab violence (e.g., stone throwing and terrorism). The second, 'social group control vigilantism', reflects the additional benefit of such acts in demonstrating Jewish control over the land.²⁰ Price tag attacks on government targets can be described by the third type, 'regime control vigilantism', in which violence is directed against Israeli officials in order to alter regime functioning. A similar idea is conveyed by Weisburd's characterization of settler violations of government rulings (e.g., constructing outpost settlements against government orders) as socially co-ordinated efforts to control state conduct perceived by the settlers as deviant with respect to norms drawn from national-religious ideology; e.g., the norm of 'unyielding commitment to the territories'.²¹ These ideas seem at least superficially compatible with the intimidation mode of price tagging, which punishes 'wrongful' government policies by intimidating the leaders involved, in order to frighten them from repeating the exercise.

The demographic most saliently involved in price tag acts, including attacks on IDF bases in September and December 2011, has been the 'Hilltop Youth'²² – a grass-roots movement (with no formal membership) of 'tweenage' Israelis, mostly second-generation settlers, who found outpost communities outside the major settlement blocs. They are generally independent of the settler establishment (the Yesha Council and Amana) and founded without permits.²³ The lifestyle is frugal, but their guiding hope is that the rough-and-ready outposts will eventually become permanent settlements that can never be handed over to a future Palestinian state.²⁴ Hilltop Youth often see their activities as a revival of the tradition of Gush Emunim in its heyday of pioneering *chutzpah* (the late 1960s and 1970s).²⁵ However, unlike Gush Emunim, no formal organizational structure coordinates or directs the Hilltop movement.²⁶

The youth are idealists and seekers, after their own fashion, sacrificing affluence and security for meaning. Further, many come to the outposts seeking belonging after failing to 'fit in' at formal educational institutions.²⁷ Socio-psychological investigations identify a

²⁰ Pedahzur and Perliger point to two main motivations for settler violence: crime control vigilantism, and the 'need to maintain their superior civilian status in the territories', i.e., social group control vigilantism (ibid., 28). This assertion is in agreement with Weisburd, 'Vigilantism as Community Social Control', 141.

²¹ Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence*, 8.

²² The following brief sociological portrait of the Hilltop Youth is drawn from: Michael Feige, *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories* (Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 234-46; Shlomo Kaniel, *Heibetim Psychologi'im Shel Mityashvei Hagiva'ot* [Psychological aspects of the hilltop settlers] (Ariel: Ariel College, 2003); Kaniel's contribution to the panel discussion 'Religious and Ideological Dimensions of the Israeli Settlements Issue: Reframing the Narrative?', *Negotiation Journal* 21, no. 2 (2005): 177-91; Hadas Weiss, 'Volatile Investments and Unruly Youth in a West Bank Settlement', *Journal of Youth Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 17-33; Miriam Imesch, 'The Hilltop Settlers: The Construction of Identity Among Radical Second-generation Settlers in the West Bank' (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, 2009). This group is also treated briefly in Lilly Weissbrod, 'Coping with the Failure of a Prophecy', *Journal of Religion & Society* 10 (2008).

²³ On the distinction between Hilltop Youth and the settlers of outposts founded in cooperation with the settler establishment, see Kaniel, *Heibetim Psychologi'im*, 9-10.

²⁴ See e.g. Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*, 234-5.

²⁵ For historical overviews, see e.g. Gershon Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977* (New York: Times Books, 2006); Gadi Taub, *The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*. For the ideological history, see e.g. Gideon Aran, *Kookism: Shoreshei Gush Emunim, Tarbut HaMitnachlim, Teologia Tzionit, Meshichiut BiZmanenu* [Kookism: The roots of Gush Emunim, settler culture, Zionist theology, and contemporary messianism] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2013).

²⁶ Eti Borstein, 'Noar HaGeva'ot Bein Hemshekiut LeMered' [The Hilltop Youth between continuity and rebellion], August 30, 2006, www.reader.co.il/article/481/למרחב בין המשכיות למרד (accessed September 9, 2013).

²⁷ See Borstein, 'Noar HaGeva'ot'; and Weiss, 'Volatile Investments'. For instance, those struggling with the extremely demanding schedule of an elite yeshiva education can be attracted to the outposts as an earthier and less cerebral mode of religious service, and a respected alternative to ongoing educational disengagement and failure.

perpetual sense of friction and insecurity with respect to death and terrorism (ubiquitous during the formative experience of the Second Intifada), and in many cases a history of social and family problems.

These youth generally feel betrayed by the secular state. Even in the early 2000s, trust for Israeli law enforcement institutions was minimal,²⁸ and it was further eroded by the Gaza Disengagement.²⁹ In the hilltop outposts, 'Israeli law is considered little more than a courteous recommendation, and respect for state institutions is practically nonexistent'.³⁰ The uprooting of Gush Katif is remembered as a horrific 'betrayal' of Zionism and Judaism by the state and as a betrayal specifically of the country's most loyal citizens (in their view) – the settlers, who had risked their lives by serving in dangerous, elite combat units in disproportionate numbers and living on the wild frontier, bearing the brunt of Palestinian terrorism. Many express a profound sense of victimization vis-à-vis both the uprooting at the hands of the state and the routine loss of friends and family to Palestinian terrorist attacks.³¹ Whereas Kook's *Merkaz HaRav* circle (the core of Gush Emunim) deified the state and army as the vehicles of messianic redemption – even when its policies were temporarily loathsome and had to be fought by the faithful³² – many Hilltop Youth believe the secular state has exhausted this moral and spiritual capital.

They are also disenchanted with the 'bourgeois' leadership of the Yesha Council and Amana, calling to replace their materialism with a simple lifestyle in connection with the land,³³ and their political passivity with spirited resistance – indeed in evidence in clashes with the IDF during the 2006 evacuation of Amona.³⁴ The youths reject the restraint shown by the settler establishment during the Gaza Disengagement, allegedly for the sake of protecting the cash flow to the main settlement blocs at the price of betraying the core value of settling all of *Eretz Yisrael*.³⁵ Likewise, they reject the authority of the mainstream *mamlachti* rabbis who called for calm,³⁶ and are attracted instead to more militant voices.³⁷

See Kaniel, *Heibetim Psychologi'im*, 25 on the hilltop settlers' order of priorities, which place *avodah* (work, especially manual work) before *Torah* in the *Torah VeAvodah* scheme. Among Gush Emunim settlers, Torah study was considered more important, and yeshiva education was highly valued (though not to the extent of denigrating secular work). Furthermore, Gush settlers tended to be white-collar workers, commuting to office jobs in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, rather than farming the land. By contrast, agricultural work is regarded with great pride on the hilltop outposts.

²⁸ See Kaniel, *Heibetim Psychologi'im*, 21-22.

²⁹ See e.g. Weissbrod, 'Coping with the Failure.'

³⁰ Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*, 237; see further Imesch, 'The Hilltop Settlers', 17-21, on these youths' alienation from the state.

³¹ Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*, 7-9; see too Joyce Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127-8.

³² For an excellent discussion of the continuation of this *mamlachti/statist* thread in religious Zionist rabbinic thought (as well as its erosion), see Avinoam Rosenak, *Sedakim: Al Achdut HaHefechim, HaPoliti VeTalmidei HaRav Kook* [Cracks: On the unity of opposites, the political, and Rabbi Kook's disciples] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2013). Overviews of Tzvi Yehuda's statism can also be found in Aran, *Kookism*; Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and the works by Sprinzak cited in note 10.

³³ See note 27.

³⁴ Weissbrod, 'Coping with the Failure', 7.

³⁵ Feige, *Settling in the Hearts*, 239.

³⁶ In the words of one young settler, a hilltop youth is someone who experienced the Disengagement and learned not to trust the rabbis because of their contradictory pronouncements; he is someone who believed the rabbis' promises that a miracle would take place and the evacuation order would be cancelled – any minute now, just be patient – and saw this prophecy fail. See Ariel Shalem (a pseudonym), 'Mi Atah, Na'ar HaGeva'ot? Yedioth Achronoth, December 15, 2011. Also: Imesch, 'The Hilltop Settlers', 20; Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza*, 74-83; Weissbrod, 'Coping with the Failure.' On religious Zionist rabbis' responses to the Disengagement, see Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 68-73, 143-53.

Two religio-ideological streams began to fill this void among the Hilltop Youth after the Disengagement: i) the *Od Yosef Chai* yeshiva and Ginsburgh's brand of Hasidism, and ii) the community dedicated to the legacy of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane (leader of the Kach movement and Jewish Defense League, both of which are officially terrorist organizations).³⁸ Rabbis, yeshiva students, and right-wing activists attached to these two spheres have been the outposts' most constant sources of solidarity, religious legitimization, and practical assistance (e.g., arranging legal aid when youths are apprehended for attacking Arabs or damaging IDF property). According to Borstein's analysis, the rabbis and yeshiva students provided youths with 'a listening ear' for their inner doubts, and the youths took on their new mentors' world-view. They helped endow the youths with a sense of purpose, and inspired them towards active participation in the expansionist settlement programme as a positive outlet for their frustrations. Most of these mentors were themselves outpost dwellers, and they provided logistical continuity for the outposts and role modelling for the troubled youths from the main settlement blocks, who 'plugged in' to this source of welcome and pastoral care.

One example is the *Od Yosef Chai* graduate Ariel Groner,³⁹ a long-time resident of the hilltop outposts neighbouring Yitzhar.⁴⁰ Groner is a key player in Chonenu,⁴¹ a solidarity organization founded during the Second Intifada by (Kahanist) Shmuel Meidad, that coordinates legal aid for right-wing civilians accused of violence or damaging IDF property, including alleged price tag operatives, and assists both civilians and soldiers accused by security agencies of injuring or killing Arabs. Chonenu subsidizes the legal aid and provides intensive emotional and psychological support: Groner attends the court hearings, and Chonenu's team provides coaching on how to withstand police pressure during interviews.

It is unclear to what extent this supportive relationship confers authority upon the rabbis (and their students) among this milieu, or gives them a commanding sway over the content of the youths' ideology. Rabbi David Dudkovitz, former head of *Doreshei Yechudkha* (the yeshiva ketana attached to *Od Yosef Chai*) and the rabbi of Yitzhar, stated in an interview that some of the local Hilltop Youth accepted his Halakhic authority, but others

³⁷ This parallels a more general trend among second-generation settlers of the decentralization or 'privatization' of spiritual-ideological authority. Parents and educators have expressed their inability to impress upon their charges an authoritative ideological or religious framework through which to channel (and limit) their rambunctious political activities. If youths are frustrated with the pacifism of the leading *mamlachti* rabbis, they simply seek out someone more militant. See especially Weiss, 'Volatile Investments'; Imesh, 'The Hilltop Settlers.' Furthermore, Kaniel explains: 'The Gush Emunim generation accepted non-religious Zionist leaders, as well as the authority of both the Israeli government and of the chief rabbis. The Hilltop Settlers accept neither, deferring to local rabbis who are highly heterogeneous in their ideology'. See Shlomo Kaniel's contribution to the panel discussion 'Religious and Ideological Dimensions of the Israeli Settlements', 186.

³⁸ See Borstein, 'Noar HaGeva'ot.' The earlier work (2003) by Kaniel, *Heibetim Psychologi'im*, instead found that the religious world-view of the hilltop settlers had not yet crystallized (pp. 23-4). He described it as 'intuitive' rather than grounded firmly in a particular 'Mishnah', noting that settlers borrowed from different streams (one of which was Ginsburgh's Hasidism – p. 23). However, the rabbinical influences were not Kaniel's main analytic focus, and the pilot study was conducted more than a decade ago, before the upheavals of 2005 and 2006.

³⁹ On Groner, see 'Ha'Acheen Shel HaRav Groner, Oseh Ke'ev Rosh LeShabak' [The nephew of Rabbi Groner, giving the Shin Bet a headache], *Shtetlem.net*, August 16, 2010.

⁴⁰ He was convicted of obstructing an officer in the course of his duty during the clearing of the outpost Havat Gilad in 2002.

⁴¹ The organization is reported to have helped some 15,000 civilians and soldiers, including some 1,000 during the Gaza Disengagement alone; Atali, 'Omedim LiYeminam.' Chonenu also conducted an effective legal and media campaign to secure the release (to house arrest) of Haim Perlman, who was accused of involvement in a string of murders of Arabs.

did not. Even among those who tended to seek out his opinion, he asserted that it was not a formal arrangement of supervision and authority. (This milieu does not accord rabbis unconditional authority.)

On the other hand, Israel Ariel (one of Ginsburgh's close associates) claimed that 'After the Gaza disengagement ... Ginsburgh became an inspirational beacon for disaffected national-religious youth, particularly in the outposts'.⁴² There are indications of substantial religious and ideological influence. In contrast to their religious Zionist parents, Borstein's analysis noted that most youths identified as Hasids or 'Hardalim' (national Haredis) – a change she attributes to youths' attachment to Ginsburgh, Dudkovitz, and others. She found that this religious framework was typically twinned with a complementary nationalist ideology, articulated through an identification with Kahane's political thought.⁴³

She noted that the meaningful figures in the lives of Hilltop Youth were the local leaders of their outpost (i.e., their founders and logistical anchors, such as Avri Ran⁴⁴) and the rabbis who supported the outposts' endeavour. Where such leadership figures were present, she discerned an intensification and crystallization of the youths' religious-nationalist ideology around the mentors' world-view. She described a 'monolithic' ideological conformity within this milieu, which she attributed to this leadership influence, together with socialization processes in the small community context of the outposts and what might be termed a 'selection bias' (the choice to move to the hills entails a rebellion against government policies).

The Controversial History of Rabbi Ginsburgh and Od Yosef Chai

Prosecutions of Hilltop Youth involved in price tag operations – or the leadership figures who allegedly incite them – have been extremely rare, and most attempts either fail or are resolved by a plea bargain.⁴⁵ However, it is clear nonetheless that the Shin Bet's eye has been trained on *Od Yosef Chai* for many years. This section sketches a historical overview of the controversies surrounding Ginsburgh, *Od Yosef Chai*, and price tag-style vigilantism.

Ginsburgh was born in St Louis, Missouri, in 1944 and immigrated to Israel in 1965. After the Six Day War of 1967, he began serious study of Chabad (Lubavitcher)

⁴² International Crisis Group, *Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements*, Middle East Report No. 89 (Jerusalem and Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2009), 9n81.

⁴³ The textual analysis will point to some of the points of contact, although the focus here is on Ginsburgh. The research, however, suggests significant interfusion of the *Od Yosef Chai* and Kahanist communities and world-views, and this represents an important focus for further research.

⁴⁴ NB: Ran is not connected to the *Od Yosef Chai* sphere, to my knowledge. He stresses the need for firmness with regard to Arab provocations and seems to view himself as a peace-keeping Jewish patriarch who oversees security in the area, including with regard to internal Arab disputes. (See e.g. Haim Lewinson, 'LeToshavei HaMechazim Nim'as MiPlishot HaKarka Shel Avi Noar HaGeva'ot' [Outpost residents are sick of incursions onto the land of the father of the Hilltop Youth], *Haaretz*, January 31, 2013.)

⁴⁵ There have been very few successful indictments: see, e.g., Itamar Fleishman, "Price Tag" Vandals Consistently Escape Prosecution', *Yedioth Achronoth*, September 4, 2012; Don Futterman, 'Israel's Apathetic Hunt for "Price Tag" Attackers', *Haaretz*, July 1, 2013; Nadav Shragai, 'The Rising Cost of Price-Tag Attacks', *Israel Hayom*, October 14, 2011. Price tagging is a loosely organized and semi-spontaneous activity. Groups of friends typically co-ordinate price tag attacks discretely, e.g., by sms and word of mouth, with little advance planning, which complicates prevention and prosecution. As noted, Chonenu also provides coaching on how to remain silent under police questioning, to avoid incriminating oneself or others.

Hasidism,⁴⁶ and studied briefly with the venerable late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (the ‘Lubavitcher Rebbe’). In 1982, Ginsburgh established a yeshiva at the site of Joseph’s Tomb in the West Bank city of Nablus, or biblical Shechem. The yeshiva was relocated to its current site in the nearby settlement of Yitzhar after the IDF withdrew from Joseph’s Tomb in October 2000 under Oslo Accord provisions – to Ginsburgh’s chagrin.

Early controversies included Ginsburgh’s defence of one of the yeshiva’s students, who had fired indiscriminately on Palestinian labourers by a Tel Aviv highway in 1993.⁴⁷ His proposed defence was that Jewish and Gentile blood were inherently unequal. It was not the first time. Ginsburgh had testified previously in an Israeli court after 30 of his yeshiva students went on a rampage in Nablus in July 1989 and shot a 13-year-old Palestinian girl, declaring: ‘It should be recognized that Jewish blood and a *goy*’s blood are not the same ... Any trial that assumes that Jews and *goyim* are equal is a travesty of justice’.⁴⁸

In 1994, Ginsburgh authored the now-infamous *Barukh HaGever* (Barukh the Man/Blessed is the Man), a pamphlet praising the perpetrator of the Hebron massacre, the settler and former Jewish Defense League activist Dr Barukh Goldstein, who murdered 29 and wounded 125 Muslim worshipers in the Cave of the Patriarchs on February 25, 1994.⁴⁹ Therein, Ginsburgh explored the possible Halakhic, moral, and mystical virtues of the massacre and its ‘blessed’ perpetrator. He was detained by police over this publication and was warned but never indicted.⁵⁰ Such events prompted Rabbi Joel Bin-Nun – a dovish voice within the religious Zionist leadership⁵¹ – to warn the Yesha Council in early 1996 of the ‘potential for murder in the yeshiva in Shechem. Do not accord it your protection. ... I have no doubt that Rabbi Ginzburg and his doctrine are a threat to our entire enterprise: to settlement activity, yeshivas, society, the state as a whole’.⁵²

The media firestorms continued into the new millennium. The IDF’s withdrawal from Joseph’s Tomb in 2000 prompted Ginsburgh to call publicly, not for the last time, for ‘a revolution’ to replace the Israeli government with a Halakhic theocracy ruled by a Sanhedrin: ‘The secular basis of Israel must be changed, he emphasized, calling for a “new Jewish country” under which halacha (Jewish religious law) and specifically the Hoshen Mishpat of the Shulchan Arukh would replace Israeli civil law.’⁵³

⁴⁶ Note that while Ginsburgh is affiliated with Chabad, *Od Yosef Chai* is not. For a brief and accessible overview of Chabad Hasidism see, e.g., Adam J. Szubin, ‘Why Lubavitch Wants the Messiah Now: Religious Immigration as a Cause of Millenarianism’, in *Apocalyptic Time*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten (Leiden; Boston; and Cologne: Brill. 2000), 216-7.

⁴⁷ Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 11.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Robert Friedman, *Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel’s West Bank Settlement Movement* (New York: Random House, 1992), xxvii.

⁴⁹ The pamphlet was later incorporated as a chapter in the book of the same name memorializing Goldstein. Regarding dissociation from and criticism of Goldstein’s act (to varying degrees) by most of the religious right, see e.g. Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 66n11.

⁵⁰ Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 136-9.

⁵¹ See, e.g., Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 104-6.

⁵² Quoted in *ibid.*, 11. Rabbi Bin-Nun was sensitized to the dangers of hyper- and antinomian interpretations of mystical Judaism (tied to political praxis) by the revelation in the 1980s that one of his own students had become a leader of the terrorist cell, nicknamed the Jewish Underground by the press, that carried out revenge attacks against Arab civilians and plotted to blow up the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount; the revelation was painful and confronting. (This plan was grounded in a messianist, Kabbalistic approach that has some obvious parallels with Ginsburgh’s thought, though I make no attempt here to probe the extent of the affinity.)

⁵³ Gil Zohar, ‘Noted Kabbalist and Dean of Destroyed Nablus Yeshiva Calls for “Revolution” in Israel’, *Jewish Tribune*, May 9, 2002. The IDF had deemed the yeshiva a security liability; most troops had withdrawn from Nablus under Oslo provisions in 1996, and the isolated yeshiva now required special provisions. After the 2000 withdrawal,

In 2003, Israeli attorney-general Elyakim Rubinstein indicted Ginsburgh for incitement to racism in his 2001 book *Tzav HaSha'ah: Tipul Shoresheh*, which stated that Arab citizens of Israel had no right to live there, shared the 'licentious and unbridled character' of Ishmael, and were a 'cancer' within the Jewish state.⁵⁴ The matter was settled by a plea bargain requiring Ginsburgh to issue a written apology.⁵⁵

A fresh controversy⁵⁶ erupted after the publication of *Torat HaMelekh* ('The King's Torah')⁵⁷ in 2009 by two of Ginsburgh's students, rabbis Yitzchak Shapira⁵⁸ and Yosef Elitzur, both senior teachers at *Od Yosef Chai*. It discussed circumstances under which the Halakhah may permit or even mandate the pre-emptive killing of Gentiles, including women and children. As paraphrased by one disgusted reporter, "The prohibition 'Thou Shalt Not Murder' applies only 'to a Jew who kills a Jew'. ... Non-Jews are 'uncompassionate by nature' and attacks on them 'curb their evil inclination' while babies and children of Israel's enemies may be killed since 'it is clear that they will grow to harm us.'"⁵⁹ Shapira later explained this stance in an interview on Haredi radio station Kol Hai: 'Let's assume that to win a war I have to kill children, otherwise my soldiers will die, then surely killing the enemies' children is more correct than having my soldiers killed.'⁶⁰ This relates to an objection to the IDF protocol of 'purity of arms' (forbidding pre-emptive use of live fire), which is seen by Ginsburgh and his disciples as being based on 'perverse ideas and would-be ethical doctrines' imported from the (Gentile) West rather than on the Torah,⁶¹ and as criminally endangering Jewish soldiers' lives.⁶²

In connection to this book, police raided Shapira's home and arrested him in July 2010 'on suspicion of incitement to racial violence, possession of racist text, and and [sic] possession of material that incites to violence'.⁶³ He was released within hours.⁶⁴ They also

the Tomb site was vandalized by a Palestinian mob (though the sarcophagus itself was left untouched), which Ginsburgh saw as an addition to a long list of the sins of the 'Ishmaelites', warranting their expulsion from the Land of Life 'quickly in our days, amen!' Yitzchak Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 3: Sha'ar Revi'i, Milchemot haShem; Sha'ar Chamishi, Mikdash haShem* [Dominion of Israel, volume 3: Gate 4, the wars of God; gate 5, the temple of God] (Kfar Chabad, Israel: Gal Eini, 2005), v.

⁵⁴ Baruch Kra, 'Rabbi Charged with Racist Incitement', *Ha'aretz*, July 4, 2003.

⁵⁵ Yuval Yoaz, 'Judge Proposes Rabbi Ginsburgh Retract Inciteful Statements', *Haaretz*, November 5, 2003. Ginsburgh's lawyer – and the religious right generally – cried foul, claiming a conspiracy by the prime minister and justice ministry to 'crush any sign of resistance' ('Suspicious Incitement Charges', *Arutz Sheva*, June 3, 2003).

⁵⁶ E.g., *Jerusalem Post*, June 27 and July 4, 2011; *Ha'aretz*, November 17, 2009, and January 22 and July 29, 2010; *Arutz Sheva*, July 26, 2010, and June 30 and July 4, 2011; and *Yedioth Achronoth*, July 26 and August 1, 2010.

⁵⁷ It is now quite difficult for those outside the community to access copies of the book; however, a substantial summary and collection of related essays and analyses can be downloaded from the *Od Yosef Chai* website: <http://www.odosefchai.org.il/TextHome/TextInfo/389> (accessed February 6, 2012).

⁵⁸ In contrast to Ginsburgh's background in Hasidism, Shapira's education is classic religious Zionism of the Kook school: he studied at the *Merkaz HaRav* yeshiva ketana and gedola.

⁵⁹ *The Forward* and Daniel Estrin, 'The King's Torah: A Rabbinic Text or a Call to Terror?' *Haaretz*, January 22, 2010. Similarly harsh Halakhic opinions can be found on the militant fringe of the religious Zionist fold: see, e.g., Haim Lewinson, 'HaRav HaTzeva'i LeSheAvar: Lirot Et Hashudim BeTerror BeMitoteihem' [The former military rabbi: Shoot terror suspects in their beds], *Haaretz*, October 17, 2011 (referring to Rabbi Avichai Ronsky's opinion); Efrat Weiss, 'HaRav Dov Lior: Mutar Lirot BeChafim MePasha' [Rabbi Dov Lior: It is permitted to shoot innocents], *Yedioth Achronoth*, May 19, 2004. However, this paper does not explore the details of the ongoing Halakhic debate about limits to the appropriate use of force. See note 167.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Jonah Mandel, 'Author of "Torat Hamelech" Speaks Out', *Jerusalem Post*, July 4, 2011.

⁶¹ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying the State of Israel: A Political Platform Based on Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, New York, and Los Angeles: Gal Eini, 2003), 91.

⁶² Ginsburgh's Halakhic opinion on the matter is as follows: 'If [Jewish] soldiers and civilians are ordered not to shoot [Arabs] first in self-defence, the order must be disobeyed'. Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 53.

⁶³ Eli Senyor, 'Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira suspected of incitement against non-Jews', *Yedioth Achronoth*, July 26, 2010.

⁶⁴ Chaim Levinson, 'Police Release Rabbi Arrested for Inciting to Kill Non-Jews', *Haaretz*, July 27, 2010.

raided *Od Yosef Chai*, confiscating about 30 copies of the book. Days later, Ginsburgh was detained by the Unit of International Crime Investigation and questioned over his *haskamah*⁶⁵ for the book, but was released promptly.⁶⁶

Leading religious Zionist rabbis denounced the book’s conclusions as Halakhically fallacious and morally blind.⁶⁷ Head of the *Har Etzion* yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Meidan, said that although it did not *incite* murder, it should still ‘be burned ... from a fear that someone will read the book and do something’; he also worried that Shapira’s teachings would lead hilltop youths to spend their lives in gaol.⁶⁸ Rabbi Shlomo Aviner of Beit El, head of the *Ateret Yerushalayim* yeshiva (and a leading voice in the *mamlachti* tradition), claimed the cheapening of Gentile blood implied in the book had no basis in Halakhah.⁶⁹ There were many more such criticisms.⁷⁰

The yeshiva has more recently attracted controversy in connection to its alleged sponsorship of price tag activism. Rabbi Elitzur, in conjunction with Groner and other yeshiva graduates, has been credited by some with authoring the so-called ‘price tag manifesto’⁷¹ in the form of a newsletter article⁷² that outlines a programme of vigilante retaliation for policies curbing settlement expansion. The article was published on December 4, 2009, in response to the 10-month building freeze announced that November. He called the strategy ‘mutual guarantee’ or *arevut hadadit* (ערבות הדדית – the term also preferred by Groner to describe price tag operations⁷³), and its three prongs were as follows.⁷⁴

First, *indiscriminate attacks against Arabs in response to anti-settlement government policies*: if the Arabs are ‘winning’ the war for *Eretz Yisrael* by their aggression and violence, they’ll get the same treatment every time Jewish settlements are blocked. Elitzur boasted that Yitzhar was ‘safe’ from the officials enforcing the building freeze because no one dared to come near except with significant armed back-up, and because the IDF knew the visit would end with damage to army property – and even more damage to Arab property ‘and bodies’, in an ‘inflammation’ that would last for days.

Second, *focused attacks on Israeli political leaders who directly implemented the policies (including settler leaders)*: those who truly cared for Jews, *Eretz Yisrael*, and Torah had to disrupt the safe and comfortable lives of people like state prosecutor Shai Nitzan (who has been at the forefront of legal action against incitement and settler violence)⁷⁵ as well as

⁶⁵ An endorsement of its Halakhic coherence and accuracy, though not necessarily expressing agreement with the book’s conclusions.

⁶⁶ Chaim Levinson, ‘Book Condoning Murder Has Another Rabbi in Hot Water’, *Haaretz*, July 29, 2010.

⁶⁷ See Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 166–173. This provides an excellent précis of the Halakhic debate around the book within religious Zionist circles.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 170–2.

⁷¹ Yosef Elitzur, ‘Arevut Hadadit: Ha’Estrategia’ [Mutual guarantee: The strategy], *HaKol HaYehudi*, December 4, 2009; see too the criticism of Gadi Gvaryahu, ‘HaChazon Hitgashem: Mismakh haHora’ut le-“Tag Mechir”’ [The vision realized: The instruction manual for price tagging], *Yedioth Achronoth*, November 20, 2011.

⁷² It appeared in *HaKol HaYehudi*, a Yitzhar-based newsletter and website associated with *Od Yosef Chai* students and edited by Groner.

⁷³ See the interview in Aral Segel, ‘Mi Yachol Lehalot Al HaDa’at Yeri Al Chayyalim’ [Who could conceive of shooting soldiers], *Maariv*, July 27, 2011. The Hebrew term connotes mutual responsibility and accountability.

⁷⁴ I have tried to capture the tone of the article in the following English summary.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Aviad Glickman, ‘Deputy Prosecutor Fears Rightist Attacks: Law Enforcement Source says Shai Nitzan’s Family Living in Fear of Retaliation for Rabbi’s Arrest’, *Yedioth Achronoth*, June 28, 2011. Right-wing protestors who gathered outside his house raised the cry ‘Eichmann’; see Segel, ‘Mi Yachol Lehalot Al HaDa’at.’

their families behind the green line. Collaborators within the mainstream settler movement should also be targeted – *especially*, Elitzur underlined, those who were Torah observant but who still co-operated with vile policies to limit the settlements. He suggested targeting the Yesha Council offices in Beit El: if they bulldoze our homes, we'll bulldoze their office. That corrupt body, he said, must be revealed for what it is: an aggressive, conquering force.⁷⁶

The third tactic proposed was to encourage IDF soldiers to hurt Arabs, tip off settlers about planned army movements, and damage any army property used to damage settler property.

Beyond this ideological guidance, yeshiva staff have also been apprehended on suspicion – though, it must be stressed, not convicted – of personal involvement in revenge attacks. In 2008, Shapira 'was suspected of involvement in a crude rocket attack directed at a Palestinian village. Israeli police investigated but made no arrests'.⁷⁷ Claims have been made that he authorized and participated in revenge attacks on Palestinian villages by Yitzhar settlers, including one conducted on the Sabbath during which the participants are said to have set fire to a house and stabbed a child.⁷⁸ In January 2010, more than 100 Israeli security officials raided *Od Yosef Chai*, arresting 10 settlers, among them Shapira and his students, on suspicion of involvement in the December 2009 arson attack and vandalizing of the Yasuf mosque; he was released days later.⁷⁹

The wider yeshiva and Yitzhar community have also been associated with vigilante violence. Ariel Groner was among 19 settlers banned from the territories in late 2006, on the grounds of Shin Bet recommendations that they had the means and intention to perpetrate anti-Arab attacks. Among the other four *Od Yosef Chai* students in this group was Yehuda Meir, son-in-law of the Kahanist politician Baruch Marzel.⁸⁰ In October 2009, three Yitzhar residents (including Ariel Groner again) received a six-month ban from entering the territories on suspicion of involvement in illegal violence against Arabs.⁸¹ On Israel's Independence Day in April 2010, Yitzhar settlers rioted and threw stones at IDF soldiers blocking the route of their march to the neighbouring Palestinian village of Madama to 'protest' the 10-month building freeze.⁸² And later that month, police raided Yitzhar, arresting seven residents suspected of participating in price tag attacks on Palestinians. The arrests provoked residents to march on the neighbouring Palestinian village of Hawara and throw rocks at a private home.⁸³ In November 2010, two *Od Yosef Chai* students were caught in possession of a knife and a mask,⁸⁴ and in August 2011, police acted on a Shin Bet recommendation to issue restraining orders against 12 Yitzhar

⁷⁶ To avoid possible confusion: he means it is aggressive towards the outposts, not Palestinians.

⁷⁷ *The Forward* and Estrin, 'The King's Torah.'

⁷⁸ The National Religious Party organ *HaTzofeh* was deeply critical of Shapira, suggesting that he had forfeited his right to be considered a rabbi. See Shmuel Kopper, "'HaRav" Yitzik Shapira – McManhigei No'ar HaGeva'ot' [The 'rabbi' Yitzchak Shapira – a leader of the Hilltop Youth], *HaTzofeh*, July 26, 2010.

⁷⁹ Efrat Weiss, '10 Detained in Yitzhar Over Mosque Arson', *Yedioth Achronoth*, January 18, 2010; Chaim Levinson, 'Settler Rabbi Arrested over West Bank Mosque Arson', *Haaretz*, January 26, 2010.

⁸⁰ See Roie Sharon, 'Al HaKavenet Shel Sherut HaBitachon HaKlali' [In the cross-hairs of the General Security Service], *Maariv*, November 2, 2006. I will allude subsequently to connections between the Kahanist and *Od Yosef Chai* circles. Elucidating the relationship fully merits separate analysis.

⁸¹ Roie Sharon, 'LeRegel HaMasik: Pe'ilei Yemin Hurchaku McHaShetachim' [In honour of the harvest: Right-wing activists banned from the Territories], *Maariv*, October 12, 2009.

⁸² 'Yitzhar Settlers Clash with Soldiers', *Jerusalem Post*, April 20, 2010.

⁸³ Shmulik Grossman, 'Yitzhar Settlers Vandalize Palestinian Homes', *Yedioth Achronoth*, April 29, 2010.

⁸⁴ Yair Altman, 'Government Closes Down Yitzhar Yeshiva', *Yedioth Achronoth*, November 1, 2011.

(and nearby) settlers, one of whom was an *Od Yosef Chai* student, plus another student who was not himself a settler. They were barred from entering the Yitzhar area on suspicion of attacking Palestinians.⁸⁵ The latter student, Efi Haikin, had previously been arrested 'for allegedly torching the car of the [Israeli] Binyamin police chief during the evacuation of the outpost of Alei Ayin'.⁸⁶

Such tensions with the Israeli authorities passed a tipping point of sorts in late 2011, when the Shin Bet recommended that the education ministry should cut *Od Yosef Chai*'s state funding. It claimed to hold 'a lot of information about the involvement of students at *Od Yosef Hai* and *Dorshei Yehudcha* [the yeshiva high school] in illegal, subversive and violent activities against Arabs and the security forces. The information indicates that the yeshiva's rabbis and leaders are aware of some of these activities, but do not prevent them, and even enable students to take part in them.'⁸⁷ In November 2011, the director general of the education ministry, Dr Shimon Shoshani, axed *Od Yosef Chai*'s government funds and ordered that *Doreshei Yechudkha* be shut down. Such censure of a yeshiva was an exceptional step in the context of normal Israeli educational politics, in which yeshivas traditionally enjoy full government funding, autonomy in setting the curriculum, and minimal oversight.⁸⁸ Shoshani's rationale was that 'students are involved in many violent acts against Palestinian residents and security forces, including during yeshiva study hours. Prominent rabbis in the yeshiva support and/or are involved in this violent activity and go as far as to incite the students to this sort of activity.'⁸⁹ Furthermore, Shoshani held that '*Torat Hamelech* and other such publications cannot be consistent with educational principles and with the influence that an educator in general and specifically a rabbi has on his students.'⁹⁰ However, *Od Yosef Chai* continues to operate (without the yeshiva ketanah), thanks to private donors.

This track record of friction over texts and acts alike raises questions about the links between alleged violent practices and the religio-political thought of the yeshiva's spiritual father, Rabbi Ginsburgh, to which this paper now turns. The following sections present an

⁸⁵ Yaakov Lappin, "'Extreme Right-wing Activists' Banned from Yitzhar', *Jerusalem Post*, August 2, 2011.

⁸⁶ Chaim Levinson, '13 People Ordered Out of Yitzhar Settlement for Allegedly Attacking Palestinians', *Haaretz*, August 3, 2011. Note that spokesmen of the Israeli far right claim that the police, Shin Bet, and mainstream media misrepresent the nature of such events and engage in provocation and distortion. MK Michael Ben-Ari (affiliated with the Kahanist movement) described the eviction orders of October 2009 as evidence of 'discrimination' on the part of the Shin Bet; Itamar Ben-Gvir called it a 'witch hunt'; and others described it as a brutal violation of the settlers' democratic and human rights. See Roie Sharon, 'LeRegel HaMasik.' Others have claimed the authorities and media exaggerate their aggression in order to sway public opinion in favour of uprooting the settlement, and that some price tag incidents are staged by the security forces. See, e.g., the comments by Yehuda Liebman and Ariel Groner in Aral Segel, 'Mi Yachol Lehalot Al HaDa'at.'

⁸⁷ Quoted in Amos Harel, 'Shin Bet Urges Israeli Government to Halt Funding of West Bank Yeshiva', *Haaretz*, September 27, 2011.

⁸⁸ Past funding has been substantial. In an article titled 'Who is Funding the Rabbi who Endorses Killing Gentile Babies?' in *Haaretz*, November 17, 2009, Akiva Eldar reported a finding by the Yesh Din human rights organization that 'in 2006-2007, the Ministry of Education department of Torah institutions transferred over a million shekels to the *Od Yosef Hai* yeshiva'. Further, in 2009, 'the Education Ministry gave it NIS 468,000 for the yeshiva high school and NIS 847,000 for the yeshiva gedola. The yeshiva also got money from the Social Affairs Ministry for a project to rehabilitate ultra-Orthodox drop-outs (NIS 707,000 in 2009), plus NIS 156,000 to operate a dormitory' (Amos Harel, 'Shin Bet'). Funding had been suspended since early 2011, following complaints from progressive Jewish movements, but the permanence of this move had been ambiguous prior to Shoshani's decision (the yeshiva had received a letter saying funding would be restored). In any case, demolition orders had been hanging over the yeshiva since May 2010, based on claims it was built without a valid permit. See 'Yitzhar Yeshiva Demolition Planned', *Jerusalem Post*, July 28, 2010.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Altman, 'Government Closes Down.' See too Chaim Levinson, 'Israel Closes Down Yitzhar Yeshiva due to Violent Acts against Palestinians', *Haaretz*, November 1, 2011.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Elad Benari, 'Ministry of Education Stops Funding to Yitzhar Yeshiva', *Arutz Sheva*, Nov. 2, 2011.

analysis of Ginsburgh's Kabbalistic teachings on relations between Jews and Gentiles, the mystical meaning of settlement, and the positive character of revenge, with a view to elucidating in particular the yeshiva's sympathy and (arguably) advocacy for price tag-style vigilantism against Arabs.

Three caveats are in order. Firstly, I do not attempt to present a full and nuanced discussion of Ginsburgh's Halakhic opinions but rather to elucidate the broader Kabbalistic framework that underpins them, and to explore how it may operate to normalize and even sanctify indiscriminate anti-Arab violence. Secondly, the task of contextualizing Ginsburgh relative to mainstream Chabad Hasidism, the Kahanist movement, and the more militant voices on the edges of the religious Zionist camp is pointed to in the footnotes, but full analysis is deferred for more lengthy treatment elsewhere.⁹¹ Thirdly, Ginsburgh's calls for a theocratic revolution may challenge the conception of anti-state price tag attacks as an instance of vigilantism (i.e., as establishment violence), and this should also be explored in future work.⁹²

The Superior Nature and Spiritual Purpose of Jews

Ginsburgh's writings emphasize Jews' 'supernatural'⁹³ character vis-à-vis Gentiles – an essential, ontological superiority that stems from the anchoring of the Jewish soul in a higher Kabbalistic plane.⁹⁴ This metaphysical ontology underpins his Halakhic opinions, such as the permissibility of killing Gentiles: in his own words, the Halakhic definition of Jewishness (and, as we shall see, humanity) requires both Jews and Gentiles to *feel* the 'essential/innate difference' between Jew and *goy*,⁹⁵ which stems from Jews' status as God's chosen people.⁹⁶

To elaborate the content of this scheme: while Gentiles occupy the highest of four ranks of nature in Kabbalah (these being inanimate objects, plants, animals, and speaking creatures), Jews transcend this hierarchy entirely, as they contain a spark of true divinity

⁹¹ This is a subtle issue that merits its own dedicated analysis, as it cannot be assumed *a priori* that the diverse mystical speculations, political prescriptions, Halakhic opinions, and violent acts associated with each of these quite distinct ideological streams are part of a common thought system and have similar political consequences.

⁹² There is an excellent overview in Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*. Careful investigation of his case for theocracy and its relationship (if any) with actual militant conduct towards agents of state authority is needed to delineate whether symbolic violence and threats against politicians or the IDF depart from the framework of vigilantism outlined in the previous section (i.e., by targeting the regime's normative democratic foundations rather than merely its policies), or whether the two programmes are functionally and ideologically separate.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 133-5.

⁹⁴ Though this paper does not undertake a systematic comparison with rabbinical thought on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in religious Zionism (mainstream and fringe), it should be noted that similarly exclusivist pronouncements (although not articulated based on Kabbalistic 'truths') can be found in some religious Zionist teachings as well, as attested by the quotations scattered through Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 95-8, 100, 105, 113. Examples include calls for 'separation' from Gentiles not dissimilar to those made by Ginsburgh (discussed below). The points of commonality and difference require careful discussion, since the ideological genealogies are in many respects distinct (in particular, Rav Avraham Kook's own Kabbalistic ideas were profoundly monistic rather than dualistic); this task is left for a separate, focused analysis.

⁹⁵ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1: Sha'ar Rishon, Mitzvot haTzibur; Sha'ar Sheni, ha'Am v'ha'Aretz* [Dominion of Israel, volume 1: Gate 1, the public commandments; gate 2, the people and the land], second printing (amended) (Kfar Chabad, Israel: Gal Eini, 2005), נח.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, שפ.

that is completely above nature.⁹⁷ This divine aspect of the Jews stems from *Atzilut* (אצילות), he writes, the highest of four metaphysical ‘worlds’ or planes of reality according to Kabbalah.⁹⁸ In the realm of *Atzilut*, no separation from divinity is experienced. The metaphysical origin of Gentiles is only in *Beri’ah* (בריאה), the next-lowest of the four worlds, where separation of the divine and earthly begins. Strictly, he places only righteous Gentiles in the framework of *ger toshav* (גר תושב) – a resident alien who accepts the yoke of Jewish rule) at this rank; followers of the seven Noachide commandments correspond to a rank one step down, *Yetzirah* (יצירה); and all remaining Gentiles stem from *Asiyah* (עשייה) – the basest of the four worlds.⁹⁹ Thus, while Jews are identified with the refined plane of pure divinity, Gentiles are identified with increasingly dense and coarse layers of existence, associated with the material and animalistic.¹⁰⁰

This spiritual (and, for Ginsburgh, physical) hierarchy can be traced to Zoharic and Lurianic Kabbalah.¹⁰¹ The *Zohar* describes *Am Yisrael* (עם ישראל), the people of Israel, as occupying a higher metaphysical plane than Gentiles, often framing the purpose of creation itself as the making of the Chosen People, not of humanity as a whole.¹⁰² Some analysts argue that the *Zohar* restricts the functional definition of a ‘human being’ to Jews only.¹⁰³ For example, the *Zohar* states: ‘as it is written, “for you are *adam* [man]” (Ezekiel 34:31), you [Jews] are called men but not the rest of the nations, for they are idolaters. ... The spirit that emanates upon the rest of the idolatrous nations, which derives from the

⁹⁷ Yitzchak Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2: Sha’ar Shlishi, Malkhut Melekh uSanhedrin* [Dominion of Israel, volume 2: Dominion of the king and Sanhedrin], second printing (amended) (Kfar Chabad, Israel: Gal Eini, 2005), 76.

⁹⁸ In ascending order, the worlds are *Asiyah*, *Beri’ah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Atzilut*; see, e.g., Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, reprint of 3rd edition (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 272–3. First published 1941.

⁹⁹ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, שפא שפז.

¹⁰⁰ This conditions Ginsburgh’s opinion that Gentile culture is the source of sin and separation from divinity, and that it is therefore Halakhically forbidden for Jews to praise or even enjoy the smallest element thereof. *Ibid.*, שפז שסד. This is based on his Kabbalistic reading of *Deut.* 7:2 (‘לא תהוהו’) as ‘thou shalt not pronounce them [pagans] as graceful; see Moshe Halbertal, ‘Coexisting with the Enemy: Jews and Pagans in the Mishnah’, in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165. Ginsburgh allows some caveats pertaining to the messianic age, in which ‘Gentile wisdom’ (e.g., the natural sciences) will be purified and refined through the light of the Torah (see Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2*, מה; *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, שפז שפז; and *Rectifying*, 111–6). However, Jews must not be unduly influenced by Gentile ideas during this process: the Jew must strictly give insight and the Gentile receive it, in adherence to their respective creative and passive metaphysical natures. No reciprocal relationship of equals is envisaged (Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2*, מה). See too the discussion in Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 148.

¹⁰¹ See Moshe Hallamish, ‘HaYachas le’Umot ha’Olam be’Olamam shel haMekubbalim’ [The relationship to the nations of the world in the world of the Kabbalists], in *MeRomi leYerushalayim* [From Rome to Jerusalem], ed. Aviezer Ravitzky (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998), 289–311; and Scholem, *Major Trends*, 205–43, 244–86.

¹⁰² See Micah Goodman, ‘Al haYachas le’Umot ha’Olam be’Haguto shel Ramban’ [On the relation to the nations of the world in the Ramban’s thought], *Tarbitz* 73, no. 3 (2004): 459, 469–70; for a detailed exposition, see especially Elliot Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 17–185.

¹⁰³ See Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 5n15, 46–57. Note that ontological distinctions between Jew and Gentile are not an innovation of the Kabbalists. Antecedents can be found in Talmudic and Mishnaic, and indeed biblical, tradition (see generally Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 28–41). Various rabbinic texts claim that the term *adam* applies only to Jews (*ibid.*, 42–44). However, Zoharic Kabbalah ignores the parallel tradition in these texts that considers Gentiles equal as human beings, deserving of respect and legal rights; it neglects to appropriate the discursive context in which inclusivist positions balance the exclusivist ones. On the treatment of Gentiles in biblical and rabbinic literature (both inclusive and exclusionary) see, e.g., Carol Bakhtos, *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006); Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15–110; and Robert Goldenberg, *The Nations That Know Thee Not: Ancient Jewish Attitudes Towards Other Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 1998). For discussion of the inclusive tradition relating to Gentiles in Halakhic and Jewish philosophical frameworks, see especially David Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism: The Idea of Noachide Law*, 2nd ed., ed. Matthew Lagrone (Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011).

side that is not holy, is not considered *adam* [man].¹⁰⁴ The cheapening of Gentile blood implied by Ginsburgh's statements in court (and arguably *Torat HaMelekh*) can thus be clarified by the underlying (and unstated) Zoharic assumption that only Jews are fully human. Various Zoharic tracts also describe the exceptional quality of Jews as descendants of Abraham and Yitzchak, and conversely the impurity of Gentiles.¹⁰⁵ (The footnotes herein point to opposing rabbinic traditions emphasizing common humanity.)

The Arizal (Rabbi Isaac Luria) and his followers further developed and complexified these ideas of an ontological hierarchy, and Lurianic Kabbalah was in turn an influence on Schneur Zalman's opus, the *Tanya*, and thence on Chabad Hasidism.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, Ginsburgh's political teachings often refer to Lurianic ideas, including those establishing Jews' special status.

He also often poses and resolves political dilemmas in the language of the Lurianic doctrine *shevirat hakelim* (שבירת הכלים – the breaking of the vessels) and the need for *tikkun ha'olam* (תיקון העולם – repairing the world), as shown shortly.¹⁰⁷ In extremely brief (and simplified) format, this is a Kabbalistic narrative of cosmogeny and eschatology in which the existence of evil in the world is explained by a rupture in the original metaphysical order of creation, and in which ultimate messianic redemption will arise from the repair (*tikkun*) of this rupture. Zoharic and Lurianic Kabbalah understands creation as unfolding through progressive divine emanations and differentiations (*sefirot*) of the original, boundless source of pure divinity – a process that takes place, metaphysically, *within* the Godhead. But in Luria's thought, before the dawn of time, the light of the emanations shattered the immature vessels (*kelim*) that had been prepared to give them material form. The lost sparks (the *Shekhinah*, associated with the divine feminine, and which Kabbalah identifies with Ecclesia Israel – the metaphysical counterpart of the Jewish people) became trapped within the impure shards or 'shells' (*kelipot*) of the broken vessels. Repair or *tikkun* is understood as liberating the hidden sparks, to allow them to return to their root in the divine. Though some Kabbalistic interpretations posit a constructive role for the *kelipot*, Ginsburgh generally associates them with evil and with the Gentile world, and – as discussed below – uses this scheme to justify revenge attacks on Gentiles and the expulsion of Arabs from Israel as theurgic practices to separate the holy lights from the impure *kelipot*. This represents an inversion of normative Jewish understandings of *tikkun*,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Zohar I:20b, trans. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 53; see further Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 235.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., on Jews' essential superiority, see Zohar I:95a, 99b; II:6a, 78b, 88b, 124a, 125a; and III:152b, 237a; on Gentile impurity, see Zohar I:28b, 79b; II:25b, 86a, 131b, 120a, 275b; III:125a, 219a, 238b; Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers* (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1975), 24; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 27. The context of Christian persecution of Jews is relevant. Emphasis on Jewish metaphysical supremacy and polemics against the Gentile nations can be seen as largely reactionary; see, e.g., Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 45-6.

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., Yitzchak Kraus, *HaShevi'i: HaMeshichut beDor haShevi'i shel Chabad* [The seventh: Messianism in the last generation of Chabad] (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Achronoth, 2007); Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 231-9; Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 191; David Novak, 'The Man-made Messiah', *First Things* 209 (2011): 32-6.

¹⁰⁷ There is not scope here to do justice to these ideas. For an overview of some relevant aspects of Lurianic Kabbalah, see, e.g., Sanford L. Drob, *Symbols of the Kabbalah: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives* (Northvale NJ: J. Aronson, 2000), 294-328; Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Daphne Freedman, 'Lurianic Creation Myths', in *Imagining Creation*, Volume 5 in IJS Studies in Judaica, Conference Proceedings of the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, ed. Markham J. Geller and Mineke Schipper (Leiden, Belgium; and Boston: Brill, 2008), 389-415.

¹⁰⁸ See Gilbert S. Rosenthal, 'Tikkun ha-Olam: The Metamorphosis of a Concept,' *The Journal of Religion* 85, no. 2 (2005): 214-40. Also, Moshe Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, trans. Ruth Bar-Ilan and Ora Wiskind-Elper

according to which creation can be rectified through the performance of good deeds such as Torah study, following *mitzvot* (commandments), meditation, and prayer (certainly not by aggressive violence).

Kabbalah also supposes that the earthly conduct of Jews has metaphysical, *sefirotic* effects; in particular, by raising the lowest *sefirah*, *Malkhut* (identified with the *Shekhinah*), to unite with her male counterpart, the *sefirah* of *Tiferet*. This conjugal union on the metaphysical plane ensures the purity of the ongoing emanation of creation, and is a key component of *tikkun*.

As we shall see, Ginsburgh uses both these concepts to articulate his conception of Jewish settlement in *Eretz Yisrael* and correct relations between Jews and Gentiles therein.

Settlement in Ginsburgh's Metaphysics

The Hilltop Youth milieu in which Ginsburgh's ideas have taken root was already opposed to territorial concessions, as described in the first section. Ginsburgh embraces the extant normative basis for this stance in Gush Emunim tradition (the emphasis on the *mitzvah* of settlement as a supreme commandment) but articulates the redemptive, messianist dimension of settlement through explicit *sefirotic* concepts, in which settlement becomes a form of divine intercourse between male and female archetypes within the Godhead.

He thus attaches a two-pronged importance to Jewish settlement of the territories: Halakhic and metaphysical. The Halakhic dimension is shared with mainstream religious Zionism (of the *Merkaz HaRav* school),¹⁰⁹ which embraces Nachmanides'¹¹⁰ elevation of settlement of the Promised Land to a 'positive commandment' demanding everyday action¹¹¹ and, indeed, a *mitzvah* to supersede all others: 'living in *Eretz Yisrael* is equal in importance to all the commandments'.¹¹² He argued that the duty to settle *Eretz Yisrael* was a 'practical and unambiguous commandment' – for all Jews, and for all time.¹¹³

Kabbalistically, Ginsburgh writes that settling and developing the land on the material plane effects a cosmic union between divine archetypes of husband and wife on the metaphysical plane, and union of the upper *sefirot* with the earthly plane, *Malkhut*/the *Shekhinah*, thus promoting cosmic harmony and *tikkun*.¹¹⁴ Every point of Jewish settlement on the Land is a point of such conjugal love,¹¹⁵ in which the Jewish People are the groom and the Land of Israel is the bride.¹¹⁶ Similarly, all forms of working the land are, 'mystically, an act of marital union, of sowing seeds in the fertile soil of Israel for the sake of bearing fruit'.¹¹⁷ This, he claims, is the esoteric meaning of *Song*. 3:10,¹¹⁸ which he reads

(Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 234-41; Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 130-1; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 233.

¹⁰⁹ See Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 111-8.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Maimonides' Halakhic stance on the *mitzvah* of settling the land (Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael I*, נט).

¹¹¹ *Mitzvat asah*. See Nachmanides' *Mishneh Torah* on *Deut.* 1:8 and *Num.* 33:53.

¹¹² Trans. in Aryeh Newman, 'The Centrality of Eretz Yisrael in Nachmanides', *Tradition* 10, no. 1 (1968): 22.

¹¹³ Gedaliah Afterman, 'Understanding the Theology of Israel's Extreme Religious Right: "The Chosen People" and "the Land of Israel" from the Bible to the "Expulsion from Gush Katif"' (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2007), 71.

¹¹⁴ See generally Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael I*, רכו רמז.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ר דא, 'אהבה בתענוגים' (from the Shabbat song *מה יפית*).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, רנו, *Rectifying*, 78, 80.

¹¹⁷ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 81.

as a direct mandate ‘to populate the country with numerous contiguous points of settlement’.¹¹⁹

This exclusive marital – and, in a cosmic sense, conjugal – relationship delegitimizes existing Palestinian communities. Ginsburgh writes: ‘the taking of possession of any part of the Land of Israel by a foreigner is a betrayal of one’s beloved’.¹²⁰ He uses numerology in support of this claim, arguing that the numerical equivalence of *lo tin’af* (לֹא תִנְאַף), ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’, and *tziyonut* (צִיּוֹנוּת), ‘Zionism’, teaches that Torah-oriented Zionism cannot allow ‘adultery’ on the level of the land by ‘allowing foreign elements to breach our bond of love’.¹²¹ Ginsburgh argues that the sacred coupling between the Jewish people and the Land, via settlement, is akin to that between Jews and the Sabbath¹²²; just as a Gentile deserves death for Sabbath observance,¹²³ so too is it forbidden for Gentiles to settle the Land. Arab towns and villages in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), as well as those behind the green line, are thus an adulterous desecration of a cosmic marriage,¹²⁴ promoting chaos in the heavenly spheres.¹²⁵ He writes that ‘we must walk together with God, in total commitment to fulfil His will – that His chosen people inherit His chosen land and allow no adulterer to defile the holy marriage of the [Jewish] people to the land’.¹²⁶

Further, based on the Kabbalistic notion that earthly circumstances reflect and influence the state of the heavens, he argues that since the Land of Israel represents one indivisible, divine ‘whole’ on the metaphysical plane – being directly connected to God and suffused with His essence – its territories must likewise be united under Jewish rule on the earthly (political) plane to effect *tikkun*. True Jewish leaders, he writes, must rally the people to devote themselves to the truth of the supernal and physical wholeness of *Eretz Yisrael*, and to see that it is impossible to compromise such a unity by ceding any of the Land to Palestinians.¹²⁷

There is also a theurgic motivation for removing the Gentile presence. Redemption can arise, in Ginsburgh’s view, only with the ‘true’, full settlement of the Land, which he defines as contiguous Jewish settlement and the Land’s purification from all elements of *avodah zarah* (עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה), idolatry,¹²⁸ Gentile culture, sins, and defects; only then will Israel merit the expansion of the kingdom’s borders to those promised in the Torah – and

¹¹⁸ ‘His interior is inlaid with the love of the daughters of Jerusalem’.

¹¹⁹ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 80. Without humor, he adds in parentheses: ‘Just as marital relations must be conducted in privacy, so did the Rebbe advise the Israeli government, in the years following the Six-Day War, to settle all of the redeemed territories as soon as possible and as quietly as possible’. Ibid. The reference is to a letter that can be found in an unedited compendium of Schneerson’s communications regarding Israeli territorial concessions: Menachem M. Schneerson, *Kavati veEin Oneh* [I called and there is no answer], last ed. July 22, 2004, www.chabadtalk.com/SLASHUploadedFiles/SLASHbook.pdf (accessed February 15, 2012), 148.

¹²⁰ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 77; see too 83, 178–9ff.

¹²¹ Ibid., 175–6ff.

¹²² Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, שג שגא; *Rectifying*, 80. As Shabbat is sacred in time, he writes, *Eretz Yisrael* is sacred in space.

¹²³ Ginsburgh’s sources: *Sanh.* 28:2; *Deut. R.* 1:21.

¹²⁴ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, עזר.

¹²⁵ This of course parallels the classic metaphor of a spiritual marriage between God and Israel.

¹²⁶ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 188.

¹²⁷ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2*, זב, זל. Somewhat similar statements, also drawing on the image of the land as the *Shekhinah*, have been made by the notable Hardal rabbi Moshe Tzuril (n. Weiss); see Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 130–1.

¹²⁸ For an analysis of tractate *A. Zar.* sensitive to historical context, see Halbertal, ‘Coexisting with the Enemy’, 165. Here, the Mishnah is interpreted as encouraging ‘an introversion of aggression from waging an open war to avoiding benefit’.

beyond, to encompass the whole earth in a realization of global redemption.¹²⁹ As the Land of Israel is innately holy, it mandates an exceptional level of purity among its residents, thus excluding Gentiles. He writes (of Jews), 'if we do not live in our land in accordance with the precepts of the Torah, the land will vomit us out of it. ... How much more is this the case with regard to foreign, hostile elements; these are totally "indigestible" to the land'.¹³⁰

Ginsburgh thus decries the fact that 'strangers' dwell among Israeli Jews (referring to the Arab citizens of Israel) and are given welfare and civic rights by the state, based on Western (i.e., Gentile) notions of equality that 'injure and distort the truth'.¹³¹ He finds it particularly offensive that Gentiles are permitted to live in Jerusalem and even, 'God preserve us', on the Temple Mount,¹³² which he argues violates a commandment laid upon Jews when they entered the Land to refuse Gentiles residence therein,¹³³ and to refuse them grace, charity, and mercy.¹³⁴ He sees support for Jewish immigration and settlement and the expulsion of Gentiles as twin necessities: 'two legs, in walking, must function together. Just as the right leg encourages mass Jewish immigration to Israel, the left leg expels undesirable elements from the land'.¹³⁵

The above metaphysical picture, and the complementary Halakhic stance, together imply a programme of territorial maximalism. The eternal bond between Jews and the Land of Israel, Ginsburgh holds, imposes a duty on the State of Israel to cleave resolutely to any conquered territories and exercise all its might in their defence from Gentiles within and without. Similarly, it behoves Jews to disallow non-Jewish settlement in Israeli-held territory. This leads us to Ginsburgh's critique of the land-for-peace formula at the core of past and present Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Ginsburgh's Peace Process

Here too Ginsburgh's approach is built on twin Halakhic and Kabbalistic pillars. Speaking on the event of the evacuation of the Chavat Maon settlement in 2004, Ginsburgh stated that any peace agreement that compromised the territorial integrity of *Eretz Yisrael* by returning biblical lands to Arabs would be disallowed by the Torah, even if it were to be endorsed by a popular referendum (in which, he protested, the Arab citizens of Israel could also participate¹³⁶). Based on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's teachings, Ginsburgh states that 'God has given the chosen land to the chosen people as an eternal inheritance. ... [T]he Land of Israel belongs to all the Nation of Israel, to each and every Jew, ... and no one has the authority to give it away'¹³⁷ – including the Knesset and indeed Israel's citizens

¹²⁹ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, קלט, מט.

¹³⁰ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 107. He cites *Lev.* 8:28 and 20:22 in support; see too, e.g., *2 Kings* 17:24-41.

¹³¹ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, רסב; 2003, 107-8, 189ff; see too Schneerson, *Karati*, 30.

¹³² Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 173ff.

¹³³ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, רעב; see too Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 149. 'לא תכרת להם ברית ולא תנחם' (*Deut.* 7:2). Ginsburgh cites Rashi, among others, for a reading of 'לא תנחם' that includes not allowing the Gentile nations חניה ('camping' in this context, loosely) within the Land of Israel.

¹³⁴ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, רעג, שסג שסר. These four interpretations of 'לא תנחם' correspond to letters in the tetragrammaton.

¹³⁵ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 105.

¹³⁶ Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 147.

¹³⁷ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 67; see too Schneerson, *Karati*, 22.

themselves, via a referendum, tainted as they are by Arab MKs and Arab votes, respectively.

Ginsburgh therefore advocates civil disobedience and nonviolent protest by observant Jews when the government takes steps he considers in conflict with Halakhah, such as ceding territory to Arabs. He writes, 'it is the Torah itself that demands, in cases of conflict, that one disobey the law of the land in order to obey the law of God. If soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces are commanded to uproot Jewish settlements in the Land of Israel, the order must be disobeyed'.¹³⁸ The acceptable limits of such civil disobedience are discussed later.

He sees the Arab-Israeli peace process as a dangerous delusion: 'The very dream of living in peace and harmony in the Land of Israel with our Arab neighbours, not envisioned in the context of the coming of the Messiah, is in itself an illusion'.¹³⁹ He thus laments that the 'custodians of the state daily surrender the Jewish people's rights to the land, relinquishing vital, strategic areas to sworn enemies'.¹⁴⁰ He identifies the root of the peace process in Israeli leaders' and the secular public's 'inner darkness' of arrogance, atheism, ingratitude for God's repeated deliverance of Israel from its enemies, and prioritization of material greed over spiritual duty.¹⁴¹ He writes: 'Often, the inner darkness, seeking to attain public acclaim, will appear in the garb of some positive, universal value. The most significant example of this in our times is the so-called "peace process"'.¹⁴² Of this peace, Ginsburgh cites *Jer.* 6:14: 'They say "peace, peace," but there is no peace' – the peace process's outcome, he says, will merely be 'a peace that leads to war and bloodshed'.¹⁴³ Further, promoters of peace do an injustice to their fellow Jews: 'In expressing mercy to enemies and making peace treaties with them, believing them to be friends, they [Israeli leaders] become cruel to their own people [settlers], their true friends'.¹⁴⁴ The content of this criticism of the secular state and territorial compromises resonates powerfully with the complaints of the Hilltop Youth, as described in the first section.

Ginsburgh has an alternative conception of how 'true' peace can be achieved – one informed by his reading of Kabbalah and given Halakhic sanction under the rubric of a war to eradicate evil, as Ginsburgh defines it.

Ginsburgh's conception of metaphysical peace, or *tikkun*, rests on Gentile subjugation. He holds that the real *tikkun* for Gentiles is complete surrender to the yoke of the Torah's commandments, which will proceed in the following order: *hakhna'ah* (הכנעה), 'surrender' to Israel and their Torah (understood as a metaphysical conquest by which the Gentiles will discover the Torah's goodness and light); *havdalah* (הבדלה), 'differentiation/separation' between Israel and the Gentiles, including the removal of Gentiles from the Holy Land;

¹³⁸ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 53.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 139-40. (He cites in support the letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe of 13 Shevat 5741 (1981) to Mr. Pinchus M. Kalms, London.)

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*; see too 61.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 69; see too Schneerson, *Kavati*, 1-23. Detailed study of the common ground and distinctions between Ginsburgh's teachings and mainstream Chabad remains an important target for future work.

and only lastly *hamtakah* (המתקה),¹⁴⁵ ‘sweetening’, when the entire world will praise the one God in one language.¹⁴⁶ With arguments reminiscent of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane (who also ascribed positive values to Jewish violence against Gentiles over and above the issue of mere Halakhic legitimacy; e.g., demonstrating the power of God’s might on earth through the Jews, as His earthly proxy),¹⁴⁷ Ginsburgh reasons that the Gentiles will be inspired to submit to this not by *chesed* (חסד), the *sefirah* corresponding to loving kindness, but by *gevurah* (גבורה), which corresponds to stern divine judgment: ‘With affirmativeness and boldness, the Jew will win the respect of the non-Jew’,¹⁴⁸ he says, elucidating elsewhere that this boldness implies being ‘continuously on guard and ready to fight, physically, for our right to inherit our land’.¹⁴⁹ He argues that peace among the nations depends on Jewish rulership and Gentiles’ fear of Jewish strength. Through the crushing of Israel’s surrounding enemies the power of the ‘king of kings, the *kadosh barukh hu*’, is revealed, inspiring fear and awe among the nations; he states that through such a revelation of God’s name (via the martial prowess of His earthly proxy, the Jews), Israel will achieve true peace – as indeed ‘peace is God’s name’.¹⁵⁰

Accordingly, he reads *Eccles.* 3:8 (in which King Solomon says, ‘There is a time for war, and [then] a time for peace’ (the [‘then’] is Ginsburgh’s addition) as teaching a ‘general rule that war ... is a necessary prerequisite for peace. ... The war must be fought to the end, not ceased in the middle. Only with the total victory of good over evil can true peace ensue’.¹⁵¹ This is expanded in Ginsburgh’s Kabbalistic argument of the need for the separation of opposites (Jews and Gentiles) before messianic unification and harmony can reign, which is discussed further below.

In this religious ideology, all political discourse that admits the possibility of a two-state solution is misguided: ‘Implied in *gevurah* is the power to break evil at its source. In our context, this means to break the very hope in the psyche of our Arab neighbours that the Land of Israel belongs or will ever belong to them. It must be made clear to them (and to the nations of the earth) that “Palestine” is a fiction. By using words such as “autonomy,” we build their hopes instead of destroying them’.¹⁵²

Such views are buttressed by Ginsburgh’s adaptation of the Lurianic doctrine of *shevirat hakelim* to the contemporary political context, identifying Jews with the divine lights trapped among the broken shards or *kelipot*, which in turn are identified with the Gentiles. The lights can be liberated and purified – and global redemption achieved – only by the

¹⁴⁵ These terms are chosen to correspond to three steps in ‘God’s work’ (עבודת ה’) according to the Ba’al Shem Tov; see, e.g., Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 192ff. They are given different interpretations elsewhere (*passim* in Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, e.g., קב, רפה רפו, קא קב).

¹⁴⁶ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2*, דב; see too *Rectifying*, 66-7.

¹⁴⁷ E.g., Meir Kahane, *Uncomfortable Questions for Comfortable Jews* (Secaucus NJ: Lyle Stuart Inc., 1987) and *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land* (Radnor PA: Chilton Book Company, 1974). See too the analyses in Sprinzak, *The Ascendance*, 51-54, 211-45; *Brother Against Brother*, 180-216.

¹⁴⁸ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 3.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 167ff.

¹⁵⁰ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 2*, קמ קמא. This is based on a reading of *Job* 25:2, ‘המשל ופחד עמו עשה שלום במרומיו’; and *Esther* 8:17, ‘ורבים מעמי הארץ מתהוים כי נפל פחד היהודים עליהם’.

¹⁵¹ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 31; see too 109.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* With regard to the parallel context of religious Zionist conceptions of the status of Gentiles in *Eretz Yisrael* and the proper place of aggression/conquest, see the discussion in Rosenak, *Sedakim*, 156-62. For instance, Rabbi Aviner has published statements to the effect that the way to true peace is through war, since the Gentiles do not want and are not ready for peace (p. 160). However, Ginsburgh grounds this position in Kabbalistic discussions, whose language and logic are (on the surface of it) quite distinct from the approach underlying mainstream religious Zionist discourse on these issues, and the nature of common ground (if any) needs to be carefully assessed.

separation (*havdalah*) of the sacred and sinful, of Israel and the nations.¹⁵³ Ginsburgh does acknowledge that God ultimately intends the harmonious merging of light and dark to become one: 'His desire, in the creation of humanity, [is] that the non-Jewish world and the Jewish world ultimately join together to serve God in unison'¹⁵⁴; however, 'Just as with regard to light and darkness, union is predicated on separation,¹⁵⁵ so it is with regard to Jews and non-Jews', who must dwell apart until redemption.¹⁵⁶ Ginsburgh holds that the requisite metaphysical separation must also be implemented politically. For example, he claims that the building of the Third Temple depends on prior (literal) removal of Gentiles from Israel's borders as the physical reflection or embodiment of this spiritual *havdalah*.¹⁵⁷

These ideas explain why Ginsburgh's disciples would view conciliatory gestures towards Arabs – especially ceding the 'sacred' lands of *Eretz Yisrael* and uprooting Jewish settlements – not merely as gross affronts to Jewish law, but also a form of cosmic adultery that furthermore represents a deplorable set-back in the process of earthly and heavenly *tikkun*. They may also help to explain the readiness of Hilltop Youth to target neighbouring Palestinians, even when the Israeli government is the ultimate address for the *tag mechir* message. The next section shows how these suggestive links continue in Ginsburgh's teachings on vengeance, which drape a Kabbalistic mantle over impulsive revenge attacks against Gentiles – *especially* when perpetrated by an ill-educated and frustrated youth, or 'simple Jew'.

Vengeance as Virtue

Ginsburgh claims that Jews need to be reconciled with the concept of vengeance against Gentiles, which the Talmud¹⁵⁸ – so he says – teaches is a meritorious practice 'in its proper context'.¹⁵⁹

Vengeance, in contrast to violence intended to save Jewish life under the Halakhic framework of *pikuach nefesh* (פיקוח נפש), is considered by Ginsburgh to be an assertion of one's self-identity and uprightness and that of one's family,¹⁶⁰ without giving much thought to the enemy or his or her motivations. Allowing an insult or injury to stand undermines the basis of one's inner confidence and strength, leading to a collapse inwards into the 'abyss'.¹⁶¹ The motive for vengeance is the uprightness of the 'I/I am'; it stems not from the criticism or punishment of evil¹⁶² or the enemy's active hatred of Israel, but

¹⁵³ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 2, 71.

¹⁵⁴ Based on *Zeph.* 3:9.

¹⁵⁵ This is an elaboration of Lurianic creation mythology: 'The act of creation consists in [sic] the separation and reunification of the opposed polarities'. Freedman, 'Lurianic Creation Myths', 393.

¹⁵⁶ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 143ff. Based on *Num.* 23:9.

¹⁵⁷ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 1, שטו שטז.

¹⁵⁸ He cites *Ber.* 33a.

¹⁵⁹ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 92.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 85. There are strong resonances here with Kahane's thought on vengeance, which saw active retaliation as a form of therapy for the national Jewish psyche, needed to repair millennia of psycho-spiritual damage caused by Jewish passivity and helplessness in the Diaspora; see e.g. Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 183.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 23.

rather from a need to redress the cheapening of Israel’s blood in his or her eyes.¹⁶³ He also sees revenge as raising morale.¹⁶⁴

Thus, Ginsburgh praises the actions of Shimon and Levi in murdering every male in the town in which their sister Dinah was raped. They acted, he says, from an urge of the heart to restore family honour, a natural impulse of ‘blessed wrath’.¹⁶⁵ The biblical passage in question makes no reference to God, nor is it suggested that the entire town was guilty. The focus is the honour of, and devotion to, the Jewish family.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, in *Barukh HaGever*, Goldstein’s Palestinian victims are somewhat incidental to the main drama of arousing within the extended *Jewish* audience of the massacre (via media) a ‘remembrance’ of the honour of the Jewish people and of God.¹⁶⁷ The motive of redressing some prior injury, which is associated with typical conceptions of vengeance, need not be salient.¹⁶⁸

Ginsburgh’s thought on vengeance has several Kabbalistic dimensions. For instance, he cites Rashi’s teaching concerning the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ aspects of vengeance, which he interprets as follows. While the lower is crudely physical, the upper aspect is the liberation of the sparks of divinity trapped in the *kelipot* represented by the Gentile nations, and liberation of the natural vital force from their corpses, both of which can then return to the divine source;¹⁶⁹ i.e., he posits a positive function served by vengeance in metaphysical *tikkun* as understood by the Lurianic doctrine of *shevirat hakelim*. He therefore describes the inner, Kabbalistic character of Jewish vengeance against Gentiles as sweetness and happiness.¹⁷⁰

Ginsburgh also utilizes Kabbalah’s framework of the *sefirot* to justify metaphysically a free license for violent revenge that may cross into antinomianism. The Kabbalistic source of the revenge urge, Ginsburgh writes in one place, lies in the *sefirah* of *Binah* (בינה – understanding)¹⁷¹ – an innate understanding of the heart that is above ordinary rational understanding, a sort of supra-conscious holy impulse outside and above measured assessment.¹⁷² Elsewhere, he describes a direct connection between vengeance, which

¹⁶³ Ibid., צו.

¹⁶⁴ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 93.

¹⁶⁵ See, e.g., ibid., פט צו; see further Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 138.

¹⁶⁶ See further Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, קלט קכח. It is possible to discern the echoes of this thought in Ginsburgh’s call for collective punishment of Palestinian villages in response to terrorism: after the brutal murder of the Fogel family in Itamar, he called for houses in the nearby Palestinian village to be demolished every half hour until the town handed over the murderers, who should then be killed on the spot; Yehoshua Briner, ‘Rabanim Kor’im: Laharos Beitim Ad SheHaRotzechim Yusgeru’ [Rabbis call: Demolish houses until the murderers are handed over], *Wallat!*, March 13, 2011. For a very brief introduction to Halakhic interpretations of the Shimon and Levi episode (e.g., by the Maharal, Rambam, and Ramban and contemporary Halakhic commentators on Israeli military conduct) see e.g. Rabbi Haim Jachter, *Gray Matter: Discourses in Contemporary Halakhah. Volume 3* (Teaneck: H. Jachter, 2008), 212-15. However, the aspect of Ginsburgh’s interpretation discussed here is not anchored in the mainstream Halakhic discourse, which frames the issue around questions of legitimate retaliation in the context of wars between nations (rather than individual crimes); rather, he emphasizes the virtue of Shimon and Levi’s willingness to allow an unconstrained outpouring of indignation and rage – an unstudied and instinctive reaction that arises from an intact sense of family pride.

¹⁶⁷ Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics’, 1023.

¹⁶⁸ See Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 44-5; Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 217-43. This has been analysed by scholars such as Sprinzak in the framework of theories concerning millenarian groups’ reactions to failed prophecies – especially that of Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

¹⁶⁹ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, קכו קכח.

¹⁷⁰ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, קקל; *Malkhut Yisrael* 1, רטב.

¹⁷¹ See too ibid., צו. Also under the framework of this *sefirotic* connotation, vengeance is further associated with the beginning of the ‘world to come’ (העולם הבא).

¹⁷² Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, פ, עט.

explodes without reflection upon its future consequences, and *Keter* (כתר – crown), the highest *sefirah* and the most proximate to the divine source, whose divine light can emanate without the ‘permission’ of the lower *sefirah* of *Chokhmah* (חוכמה – wisdom).¹⁷³

He also describes how this mystical process is experienced in the psyche. The divine revenge urge, he writes, arises from the deepest place in the psyche¹⁷⁴ and represents a ‘fluttering of holiness’ in the hearts of Jews,¹⁷⁵ rousing them from slumbering passivity into action. Seeman describes this psycho-mysticism as ‘terror as a mystical technique ... a tool for the attainment and expression of divine intimacy’.¹⁷⁶ In this conception, the ‘essential goal [of vengeance] is to arouse an ecstasy of holiness [התפעלות קודש] in Israelite hearts’.¹⁷⁷

Ginsburgh delegitimizes the self-restraint associated with the intellect and of the moral revulsion aroused generally in a healthy psyche by perpetration of violence;¹⁷⁸ these reservations must be overcome in order to achieve true divine service. Whereas traditional Jewish thought views violent impulses as a base, animal instinct that one should learn to transcend – a canonical example of *yetzer hara* (יצר הרע), the evil inclination – Ginsburgh casts it instead as a means of channelling the divine, and casts moral self-restraint vis-à-vis Gentiles as an obstacle.¹⁷⁹

These notions are buttressed by a novel interpretation of *kevod shamayim* (כבוד שמים), divine honour, and in particular *kiddush hashem* (קידוש השם), sanctification of God’s name, which *Barukh HaGever* describes as ‘the crown that sits atop the deed’ of the Goldstein massacre.¹⁸⁰ Echoing the late Kahane,¹⁸¹ Ginsburgh argues that the spilling of Jewish blood desecrates God’s name (‘which abides in His people Israel’), and that Jews have a ‘duty to sanctify His Name by taking vengeance’.¹⁸² Somewhat paradoxically, acts of vengeance that sanctify God’s name need not explicitly call upon or even mention God;¹⁸³ the sanctification part of the equation is satisfied automatically through Jews’ status as God’s earthly proxies. As Jews alone possess a spark of pure divinity, as outlined previously, Israel’s honour is God’s honour, and Israel’s vengeance takes on a deeper meaning as

¹⁷³ One can infer from this and other inconsistencies that Ginsburgh’s utilization of the *sefirot* to articulate his views on violence is not a scheme derived coherently and unambiguously from first principles of Kabbalah. Many of his applications of Kabbalistic concepts to contemporary issues appear opportunistic; some are severely strained. This assessment similarly applies to the style of his ‘political platform based on Kabbalah’ (*Rectifying*).

¹⁷⁴ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 2, רפז.

¹⁷⁵ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, סב.

¹⁷⁶ Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics’, 1017.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1022.

¹⁷⁹ Ginsburgh is aware of how jarring this must sound to many (probably most) religious thinkers, since the observance of *mitzvot* is traditionally held to assist in training people to the *shake off* of one’s ‘natural’ evil inclinations, not to give in to them (Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, ספ). However, Ginsburgh sees his doctrine of vengeance as the imposition of a supreme authority on humans that *stops* them from following the evil inclination. This paradox is one of many examples of the delicate line between hyper- and antinomianism in Ginsburgh’s thought.

¹⁸⁰ Page 4 of the 1994 pamphlet, trans. Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics’, 1018.

¹⁸¹ E.g., in a private essay circulated among Kach activists in 1976, he wrote: ‘Do you want to know how the Name of God is desecrated in the eyes of the mocking and sneering nations? It is when the Jew, His people, His chosen, is desecrated! When the Jew is beaten, God is profaned! When the Jew is humiliated God is shamed! When the Jew is attacked it is an assault upon the Name of God!’ (trans. Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 182).

¹⁸² Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 92.

¹⁸³ See Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics’, 1024-5.

God’s vengeance.¹⁸⁴ All of Israel, he writes, are kings and the sons of kings, and vengeance reveals the true majesty of Israel and thus of God to the world.¹⁸⁵

Inbari and Seeman present excellent analyses of Ginsburgh’s unusual projection of the concept of *kiddush hashem*, traditionally applied to Jewish martyrs (e.g., those who chose execution rather than conversion to another faith), onto acts of vengeance against Gentiles that burst forth from the innermost recesses of the Jewish soul. Seeman explains that the major danger lies in their decoupling from the objective criterion of Halakhic obedience, because ‘it is precisely the “spontaneity” of emotional arousal that sanctifies God’s name through violence’.¹⁸⁶ While Ginsburgh also proffered justifications for the Hebron massacre on the basis of Halakhah, in Seeman’s view, these were tangential to the ‘real weight and depth of his argument’, which was founded on a conception of sanctification of divine honour as a matter of ‘extreme innerness’.¹⁸⁷ He correctly identifies the danger in this ‘subtle transformation, from objective and socially defined to subjective and introspective criteria ... [which] means that sanctification and honouring God no longer rely on the fulfilment of Jewish legal or ethical demands but may actually be aided by the disjuncture between quotidian religious or ethical obligations and the ecstatic perception of divinity that lifts a person ecstatically beyond normative boundaries’.¹⁸⁸

Inbari concurs that these ideas amount to a *de facto* blanket endorsement of zealotry that can ‘lead individuals to commit acts of terror in the name of “Divine truth” on the basis of personal considerations’.¹⁸⁹ He places Ginsburgh’s approach ‘on the seam between hypernomism and antinomianism’, observing that although Jewish conduct must nominally still be constrained by Halakhah,¹⁹⁰ nonetheless ‘actions ... contrary to Halacha may be considered the sublime manifestation of religious faith’.¹⁹¹

Ginsburgh’s teachings about ‘the simple Jew’ greatly compound such concerns, in my view. When Seeman described an ‘unacknowledged devaluation of Jewish legal authority’,¹⁹² he was writing about *Barukh HaGever*; I submit that the devaluation is explicit in Ginsburgh’s later publication, *Malkhut Yisrael*.¹⁹³ A great many passages therein laud the ‘simple Jew’ and his aggressive ‘natural reaction’ to insult or threat.¹⁹⁴ Such passages also privilege impulsive physical action over Torah study or obedience to rabbinical authority as Jewish virtues: when the name of God has been ‘desecrated’ (e.g., by a Gentile insulting

¹⁸⁴ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, פב. This element is shared in Kahane’s thought (though the latter presents it in a less theosophically complicated format): e.g., ‘victory over the defeated Gentile on the battlefield ... is Kiddush Hashem. It is the reassertion, the proof, the testimony for the existence of God and his government’ (private letter to Kach activists, 1976; trans. Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 181). Sprinzak notes that for Kahane, ‘the vengeance the Jews are expected to take is, according to him, not simply a personal act but God’s revenge’ (p. 182). The quotation from Kahane’s essay continues: ‘A Jewish fist in the face of an astonished Gentile world that had not seen it for two millennia, this is Kiddush Hashem’ (ibid.).

¹⁸⁵ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, קכח; Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 1, רסב.

¹⁸⁶ Seeman, ‘Violence, Ethics’, 1021.

¹⁸⁷ Page 4 of the 1994 pamphlet, trans. ibid., 1021.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1021.

¹⁸⁹ Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 145.

¹⁹⁰ However, Ginsburgh allows that there may be exceptions even to this rule in the form of ‘temporary provisions’ (*Rectifying*, 156); see the lengthy analysis in Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 140–5.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 140.

¹⁹² Ibid., 1026–7.

¹⁹³ However, as much of the content of *Barukh HaGever* appears to be repeated in the later publication (and thus my sources and Seeman’s overlap considerably), it is possible that I simply read a greater weight into Ginsburgh’s devaluation of rabbinical authority than does Seeman when analyzing related passages.

¹⁹⁴ E.g., Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, רס, פא עט.

a Jew), it must be redeemed, and the emotional urge to sanctify God's name through vengeance supersedes the duty to honour and obey one's rabbi or to study Torah.¹⁹⁵ Studying Torah, Ginsburgh opines, is not synonymous with *honouring* Torah, and a learned student of Halakhah could be selfish relative to the ignorant but spirited activist or the *ba'al teshuvah* (בעל תשובה), one who returns to his faith after being 'lost'. Learning is a form of personal enrichment, he says, and honours Torah less than does the physical self-sacrifice of 'the simple Jew' willing to act on his spontaneous, God-given revenge impulses to uphold Jewish honour in Gentile eyes (through violence), rather than scurrying to his bookshelf to check whether the Halakhah permits him to act.¹⁹⁶

Elsewhere, Ginsburgh discusses a similar distinction between the *tzadik* (צדיק), i.e., the righteous Jew, and the *ba'al teshuvah*. The *tzadik* progresses towards redemption in an orderly way, while the *ba'al teshuvah* does so in 'fits and starts, impetuously alternating between symmetric order and asymmetric divergences from logical order' and so is able to contribute to redemption in the following special way: 'Before the beginning of a rectification [*tikkun*] process, an explosive, asymmetric phenomenon is often necessary in order to set things in motion'.¹⁹⁷ The chaotic, impulsive trajectory followed by the simple Jew who follows his instincts can serve the redemptive process by providing these explosive disruptions, because he is unencumbered by crippling misgivings about his acts' legal implications or future consequences.

Such thinking is hauntingly reminiscent of the Kabbalistic mysticism that informed the plot of the Jewish Underground to detonate a bomb under the Dome of the Rock, in just such a spectacular 'jolt' to spur on messianic redemption (believed to have stalled because of the return of Sinai to the Egyptians under the Camp David Accords).¹⁹⁸ The possibility of a copy-cat attempt has been an ongoing concern of the Shin Bet and Israeli police.¹⁹⁹ Naftali Werzberger is an Israeli lawyer who has for many years represented hilltop activists, Kach figures, and members of the Jewish Underground. He has said that the idea of striking at the Temple Mount 'has been floating in the air, with ups and downs, for decades. ... These are not people whom you look for under the street lamp. ... The potential for this activity is lurking in the less political religious extreme: *newly religious people, kabbalists, the hilltop eccentrics, or someone who will be exposed for the first time to prophecies and books of apocalyptic writings*' (my emphasis).²⁰⁰ Ginsburgh and his colleagues are 'a magnet for "born-again" Jews (non-practicing Jews who have returned to religion and become radically pious)',²⁰¹ and his teachings could be interpreted as sanctioning the independent pursuit of such plans, without rabbinical consultation.

With respect to members of the Hilltop Youth, already heavily involved in vigilante acts and highly sceptical of authority figures, including rabbis, sanctioning and sanctifying impulsiveness has clear incendiary potential. Werzberger told the newspaper *Israel Hayom* that 'many of them [price tag operatives] were either kicked out of school or disowned by

¹⁹⁵ There is a discernible continuity here (albeit twisted) with the original project of Hasidism to revitalize what the early Hasids saw as an excessively intellectual Orthodox Judaism that lacked in heart, e.g., by its focus on the minutiae of mitzvot to the neglect of one's spiritual intentions while performing them.

¹⁹⁶ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael* 3, טז; see further Seeman, 'Violence, Ethics', 1026-8.

¹⁹⁷ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 24.

¹⁹⁸ See, e.g., Sprinzak, 'From Messianic Pioneering', 197-8; Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 155-79.

¹⁹⁹ Nadav Shagrir, 'Mounting an Extremist Action', *Haaretz*, April 5, 2004.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 11.

their families ... They have never learned in an organized setting, and if I describe some of them as thugs, I would not be off the mark.'²⁰² Ginsburgh's praise of revenge attacks by the 'simple Jew' is a dangerous ingredient in this mix. As noted by a pre-eminent scholar of the settler movement, Gideon Aran, 'Past confrontations have already highlighted the gray areas in which ideological delinquency partially overlaps with criminal delinquency or sheer hooliganism.'²⁰³ The matrix of ideological and criminological characteristics in which price tagging has arisen should thus give us pause.

Lastly, even if one concludes that Ginsburgh does not endorse outright violations of Halakhah, it is clear that deeds arising from antinomian reasoning, or even naked anger, can quite easily be given a Halakhic fig leaf. *Barukh HaGever* lauded the massacre of unarmed civilians during worship as an example of *mesirut nefesh* (מסירות נפש), devotion, and self-sacrifice born out of love and concern for the Jewish nation. Ginsburgh also argued the massacre was a case of *pikuach nefesh*, based on claims that Hebron Arabs were in fact planning a pogrom, making Goldstein's act defensive.²⁰⁴ In sum, Ginsburgh sees anti-Gentile violence as permissible based on an exceptionally generous application of the Halakhah, which demands no hard evidence that people targeted have committed or planned some actual crime against Jews. Somewhat similar thought processes are in evidence in justifications of contemporary settler vigilantism: for example, a spokesman for the Kida outpost (near Shiloh) justified violent clashes with Palestinian olive harvesters and left-wing activists on the grounds that the former were really Hamas terrorists, and the latter, knowing collaborators.²⁰⁵

Ginsburgh's position on violence against fellow Jews, however, is harder to pin down. His extremely negative views of the secular Israeli administration may be counterbalanced by a positive theme: love and mutual responsibility for all Jews.²⁰⁶ This doctrine of unconditional love for all Jews²⁰⁷ – allegedly 'the principle of principles' for Ginsburgh²⁰⁸ – is inherited from Hasidism, in which it is a core teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov.²⁰⁹ Ginsburgh writes that notwithstanding the many defects of the current secular establishment, believers in Torah *must* identify with the national community that elected this establishment: one cannot divorce oneself from the Jewish Israeli public, even in thought. He quotes: 'although Israel sins, he is still Israel' – God's chosen, and thus holy.²¹⁰ The English version of *Rectifying the State of Israel* states explicitly in the publisher's preface: 'however critical the author [Ginsburgh] is of secular Zionism ... he should in no way be misconstrued as advocating the pitting of Jews against Jews (God forbid). The very opposite is true. It is the love for *all* Jews ... that has motivated him'.²¹¹ Furthermore, his

²⁰² Quoted in Shragai, 'The Rising Cost.' (His description of Groner, could not be more different: Groner, he says, is studious and spiritual, attached to the land but also to 'spiritual literature' – quoted in 'Ha'Acheen Shel HaRav Groner.') See too Gideon Aran's contribution to the panel discussion 'Religious and Ideological Dimensions of the Israeli Settlements Issue', 181-4.

²⁰³ Ibid., 183.

²⁰⁴ Elaborated upon in a limited translation of the book *Barukh HaGever* available at www.angelfire.com/anime5/danilin/PodeUmatzil.htm (accessed February 15, 2012).

²⁰⁵ See Sharon, 'LeRegel HaMasik.'

²⁰⁶ See, e.g., Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, קמה, קכב.

²⁰⁷ Ginsburgh adds the caveat: after Halakhic clarification of who is a Jew.

²⁰⁸ Ginsburgh, *Malkhut Yisrael 1*, קלא, קלז.

²⁰⁹ As discussed in *ibid.*, קצז קצח.

²¹⁰ 'הוא ישראל אף על פי שחטא, ישראל הוא' (*Sanh.* 44:1).

²¹¹ Ginsburgh, *Rectifying*, 3.

Kabbalistic world-view frames Jews as divine. Killing fellow Jews would thus likely be a red line for Ginsburgh – even if the IDF were ordered to evacuate outlying West Bank settlements such as Yitzhar. A Yesha Council security officer interviewed in 2009 concurred: ‘We’ll protest all we can, and maybe not every soldier will accept orders, but we won’t shoot. Even Ginsburgh will not give the order to open fire.’²¹²

However, it is prudent to recall the lessons of the Rabin assassination. While the same rabbis who had accused Rabin of being a *rodef* (רודף) or *moser* (מוסר)²¹³ subsequently condemned the assassination and claimed their views had been misconstrued, Yigal Amir (the assassin) nonetheless inferred from the public airing of those views that murdering Rabin was a Halakhic imperative. Terrorism analyst Jessica Stern has claimed Amir was also an enthusiastic reader of *Barukh HaGever*, and that he extrapolated from it a license to attack Rabin, even though Ginsburgh’s chapter only discussed violence against non-Jews.²¹⁴ The memorial volume was one of three books found in Amir’s room after the assassination.²¹⁵ Ginsburgh may not intend to endorse Jews killing Jews; however, his teachings are sufficiently abstruse that followers – particularly once unshackled from the need to consult their rabbis before following their private impulses – may reach their own conclusions. Furthermore, the rabbinic accusations that Rabin was a *rodef* or *moser* generally lacked the added gunpowder of Ginsburgh’s borderline antinomian praise of impulsive violence or the profound mystical framework. Thus, there are some grounds for speculation that Ginsburgh’s doctrines could facilitate intra-Jewish violence at least by suitably ‘primed’ individuals. Disgruntled Hilltop Youth dabbling in Ginsburgh’s works but without formal Halakhic training may fit this mould.

Arab targets, by contrast, do not appear to enjoy any substantive theosophical or moral shield in this ideology that could serve as a counterbalance to vigilante tendencies. Given the existence of an explicit programme of vigilantism (authored by a rabbi, no less) that legitimizes targeting Arabs in order to disrupt Israeli policies – i.e., Elitzur’s ‘mutual guarantee’ strategy – there may be more cause to fear spectacular anti-Arab violence than intra-Jewish bloodshed if this subcommunity of the religious right is ever confronted by a peace deal with the Palestinian Authority or a unilateral withdrawal from most of Judea and Samaria. This path would entail substantially less cognitive dissonance than directing violence against Jewish leaders themselves.

Conclusions

On the face of it, the preceding analysis considerably aids in understanding the theosophical world of *Od Yosef Chai* and how it may normalize and sanctify vigilante practices like price tagging. However, while this research elucidates the intellectual context

²¹² International Crisis Group, *Israel’s Religious Right*, 26n245.

²¹³ Halakhic categories of treachery against one’s fellow Jews, demanding the accused’s death preemptively in order to protect Jewish life and property. See e.g. Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 103-130; Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother*, 244-86.

²¹⁴ Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 91. First published 2003.

²¹⁵ In another interesting link, one of Amir’s professed role models was an ideologue attached to *Od Yosef Chai*, Noam Livnat, who was in turn an associate of Yehudah Etzion (of the Jewish Underground) in the messianic group *Chai veKayam* (Alive and Enduring). See Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name*, 10-15.

of the *Od Yosef Chai* circle, one should be cautious in extending the findings herein to all price tag incidents and their perpetrators. Werzberger has claimed, ‘These are people that have no god, ... [a]nd they certainly have no rabbis. ... The people that give them support are other guys who may have studied a bit more, but it doesn’t get to the rabbis. Even Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira, who is always the subject of rumours and is surrounded by agent provocateurs and undercover operatives, does not justify harming innocents, to the best of my knowledge.’²¹⁶ Further, as noted, the price tagger milieu is not especially marked by bookishness or scholastic interest, whereas much of Ginsburgh’s theosophy is woven from and expressed in the language of the Talmudic sages, the great Halakhists of the Middle Ages, and Kabbalah. It is not light reading.

On the other hand, not all his texts are so erudite; some target a popular audience and are written in accessible prose. Further, the yeshiva’s extensive pastoral outreach among Hilltop Youth is unlikely to be conducted in the abstract and citation-heavy style of the essays in *Malkhut Yisrael*. Finally, reading Ginsburgh’s writings on ‘the simple Jew’ leaves one with a disquieting impression that every disaffected young settler in his trailer could (quite reasonably) declare himself a ‘Pinchas’ based on these texts, without ever opening the Gemara. The youth need not grasp the Halakhic nuances nominally constraining the virtue of impulsive revenge in order to be impressed by the overall positive picture painted in Ginsburgh’s (and Kahane’s) works. These ideas could encourage inappropriate action without any endorsement from Ginsburgh himself of the ‘harming of innocents’ (to quote Werzberger), since his own teachings praise impulsive action taken without prior consultation with a rabbi. Ginsburgh’s teachings may therefore function as a catalyst that lowers the threshold of youths’ self-restraint – already regularly strained by tense and unpleasant contacts with Arabs and the security forces.

However, this is not to depict a unidirectional causal thread running from the yeshiva’s teachings to the reported violence. Unravelling the exact nature of the relationship is confounded by the old statistician’s adage: correlation does not imply causation. Spokesmen of the religious right laugh off the media trope of ‘the rabbinic butterfly effect’ – i.e., the notion that every time a rabbi flaps his hands, he automatically becomes responsible for the independent actions of anyone watching.²¹⁷ There is a suggestive *correlation* between the content of Ginsburgh’s teachings and phenomena like indiscriminate revenge attacks against Arab civilians; however, it is important to delimit the extent to which a textual and historical analysis alone can yield sound inferences about causal mechanisms, without further contributions from quantitative and ethnographic approaches. Some possible reservations are as follows.

None of the media comments by price tag sympathizers (including those associated with *Od Yosef Chai*) surveyed for this research framed either anti-Arab revenge attacks or symbolic violence against Israeli institutions in mystical terms. The proffered legitimations were drawn straight from a classic vigilante vocabulary: self-defence, failure of the

²¹⁶ Quoted in Shragai, ‘The Rising Cost.’

²¹⁷ E.g., Racheli Melek-Bodeh, ‘HaRabanim Lo Achrai’im LeNoar HaGeva’ot’ [The rabbis are not responsible for the Hilltop Youth], *Yedioth Achronoth*, 15 December 2011. The article criticized politicians’ calls in the immediate wake of the attack on the IDF base for settler rabbis and the Yesha Council to censure the youths. She rejects the ‘automatic’ projection of links between the hand-flapping of a rabbi in his *beit midrash* and the acts of outpost youngsters who have never completed formal yeshiva study and are often considered delinquents.

state/army/police to protect Jews, weakness and confusion of the ruling regime, etc.²¹⁸ For instance, Groner decried the military response to the murder of the Fogel family in Itamar in March 2011 as laughable, and said it is no coincidence that people call ‘us’ for help when Arabs attack any outpost in the area. ‘If the army stands to the side and doesn’t know what to do, we’ll help Jews whom Arabs attack.’²¹⁹ Statements about how Arabs only understand force were also ubiquitous, and while they especially resonate with Ginsburgh’s dualistic descriptions of Gentiles’ base and animalistic nature, they are not unique in the context of Israel’s (secular and religious) far right.

Similarly, the ‘manifesto’ penned by Elitzur does not posit any mystical reference frame for the ‘mutual guarantee’ strategy. He criticizes the ruling regime as hopelessly corrupted, affirms that Jews and Arabs are in a lethal war for the fate of *Eretz Yisrael*, and lays out the anticipated benefits of the model for discouraging settlement freezes, demolitions, etc. Nothing in the vocabulary or argumentation suggests a road map to metaphysical redemption. Furthermore, each of the individual components of Elitzur’s ‘mutual guarantee’ can be matched with coordinates in Rosenbaum and Sederberg’s typology of classic vigilantism and justified by reference to the standard Gush Emunim norm emphasizing the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* (albeit without the counterbalancing *mamlachti* norm of the sanctity of the state).

However, the conceptualization of revenge attacks against a *rival* ethno-national-religious group as a means of affecting decisions by leaders of one’s *own* ethno-national-religious group cannot be classified quite so simply. The strategy outlined by Elitzur ties ‘regime control vigilantism’ to ‘social group control vigilantism’ in an odd way. It must be admitted that the manoeuvre can be explained rationally: activists pay a much lower price for slashing tires and breaking windows in an Arab village or even inflicting bodily harm than they would for similarly vandalizing the Knesset and injuring ministers.²²⁰ However, this tactic may also emerge from the logic of Ginsburgh’s Kabbalistic world-view as the path of ‘least cognitive resistance’. In this world-view, every Jew is divine. This presents a basic problem when one wishes to intimidate or persuade fellow Jews. Simply attacking them violently would challenge the cognitive commitment to Jewish holiness, whereas *threatening* them or applying low-level symbolic violence, while attacking Arabs more severely (in order to cause trouble for policy-makers indirectly), achieves the same disruptive goal without compromising the fundamental tenet of the sanctity of Jewish life. Even if one concludes that price tagging has far more in common with classic vigilantism than mystically inspired religious violence – and on the present evidence, I believe this is generally the case – it is nonetheless possible to discern the subtle influence of the religious framework on the choice of tactics. The basic Halakhic and mystical norms of Ginsburgh’s religious ideology seem to operate to increase restraint with regard to Jewish targets, such that only ‘focused’ attacks and threats are encouraged (without explicitly planning to injure people), and to decrease restraint with regard to Arab targets, such that it is

²¹⁸ Cf., however, Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza*, 73–4: she notes that Gaza settlers articulated their case against the Disengagement using secular arguments (e.g., security and humanitarian concerns) as a form of ‘disciplined’ communication, since these arguments were expected to have the most traction with the general public. Similar self-disciplining is possibly occurring here.

²¹⁹ See Sharon, ‘LeRegel HaMasik.’

²²⁰ Indeed, during most of Gush Emunim’s history, the state turned a blind eye to settler vigilantism, although the Karp Report prompted a brief crack-down; see Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence*, 79–85, 91.

considered acceptable to launch indiscriminate attacks against civilians with no part in the government policy being protested (and with explicit approval for inflicting bodily harm).

Weisburd’s much earlier study hints at other problems with placing an analytical *mechitza* between the theosophical teachings and vigilante practices. His survey and statistical analysis identified ‘socialization to vigilante norms’ as the single highest predictor of settler participation in vigilante acts.²²¹ In conjunction, socio-psychological analyses of the Hilltop Youth have identified rabbis like Ginsburgh as key agents of the socialization process in the outposts, helping to crystallize the youths’ religious ideology – and as discussed, a key norm of this religious ideology is that revenge attacks against Arabs are spiritually healthy. On the hilltops, Ginsburgh’s world-view intimately co-exists with the complementary ideology of Kahanism, which also applauds revenge attacks. Together, they reinforce outpost youths’ socialization into vigilante norms, which are justified by a robust matrix of mystical, Halakhic, and political arguments.

Moreover, and finally, there is a powerful and concerning synergy between the devolution of moral authority to the private, individual Jew in Ginsburgh’s revenge teachings and the individualistic, spontaneous modes of religious and socio-political affiliation, organization, and action noted among the Hilltop Youth by sociologists. If Ginsburgh’s teachings praising the spontaneous revenge of the simple Jew are indeed being disseminated among this milieu, thus relaxing the moral-Halakhic ‘brakes’ on militant activism in an arena where respect for the rule of *secular* law has been eroded to near irrelevance, Chonenu will certainly have its hands full.

In conclusion, this paper has described the track record of associations between the *Od Yosef Chai* yeshiva and allegations of anti-Arab violence, and introduced Ginsburgh’s Kabbalistic teachings on Jewish superiority, the metaphysical importance of settling the whole of *Eretz Yisrael*, the need for Gentile subjugation as a condition for true peace, and positive aspects of vengeance. Finally, the paper considered the limitations of a textual-analytic approach for elucidating mechanisms behind price tag vigilante acts, and pointed to criminological and sociological aspects that warrant further attention. Clarifying the nature of the theosophy-violence nexus that appears to have arisen in the Samaritan hills remains an important and interesting task for scholars of the settler movement and criminologists.

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²²¹ Ibid., 89. He did, however, acknowledge the possibility that this factor was functioning as a proxy for unknown hidden variables that the survey instrument failed to capture (p. 91, 120). Community size also had an effect, with smaller communities (in which pressure to conform to group norms is usually greater) being more likely to participate in vigilantism (p. 92). This idea seems compatible with the sociological characteristics of the hilltop outpost communities. He also found that the existence of family and social ties beyond the green line reduced the probability of vigilantism (p. 126), which may also be significant in light of outpost settlers’ relative isolation and declining enthusiasm for army service (the shared socialization process of most of Jewish Israeli society).

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