

The Orthodox Jewish Camp

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Introduction:

It should be noted that I am speaking of the orthodox camp and not of the ultra orthodox who have never recognized the state of Israel as a fulfillment of G-od's prophetic promises to Israel. In the M.E. religion and politics have always been mixed and that is what makes our life so "interesting."

Before Rabin's murder on Nov. 4th 1996, most synagogues in Israel said a special prayer for the well-being of the government. They said: **"Bless the State of Israel, the beginning of the bloom of our salvation. Spread upon our state the tabernacle of your peace, and send your light and truth, to the leaders of our State, to it's ministers, advisers, and provide them with a good council from your presence."** The implication of this prayer was that the religious Jew believed in the religious value of the State of Israel and identified with the Zionist mission as an ultimate messianic mission. Prayer is the strongest and the most expressive of all Jewish forms of communication. What a Jew says in his prayers is what he wants to happen and wants to internalize as his belief. Prayer in Judaism is a replacement of the sacrificial system, and it is believed that **"life and death are in the hands of the tongue."**

After the Oslo agreement changes started to take place in this special prayer for the well-being of the State of Israel. Orthodox Jews started to change the prayer, and instead of praying for a blessing from G-od upon the leaders of the Country they prayed that G-od would, **"remove the evil government from the Land."** This change in the attitude of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Israel toward the State of Israel and it's democratically elected government is highly significant. It describes a loss of hope and vision by the Orthodox Establishment for the future of the State of Israel, and in fact for the incursion of the messianic advent through political and democratic means. In other words the Orthodox Jewish community in Israel stopped seeing the State of Israel as a divine instrument for the accomplishment of the messianic vision.

It is interesting to note that immediately after the election of 1996, when Bibi Netanyahu was elected, the majority of the synagogues in Israel returned to the traditional version of the prayer for the State. And, when the Netanyahu government accelerated the peace process they again flipped back to say: **"remove the evil government from the Land."** We see that something has been broken in the relationship between the Nation Religious factions in Israel and the State of Israel. In this lecture we are going to try and analyze this relationship and see it's significance for the Messianic Community and the State of Israel.

Body:

The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. according to the Midrash (Ancient Jewish homilies based on passages from the Torah.) took place because of three grave sins. We can learn from the second temple period that the people who survived the fall of Jerusalem and gave new life were the moderate Pharisees and the Christians who did not hold radical opinions of nationalism and could adjust and bend with the changing

political system of the Roman and local government of bloodshed, incest, and idolatry. The second temple in Jerusalem fell because of "hatred in vein." The Midrash says that "hatred in vein" is by itself equal to the three grave sins of bloodshed, incest, and idolatry. The killing of a King, according to the Midrash is even more serious than all of these sins put together. Rabin's death is without a doubt the single most traumatic event in the history of the Jewish people in the last 50 years. This event has changed the relationship of the Israeli population toward both the State of Israel, and toward the religious community.

The religious community reacted toward the murder of P.M. Rabin with great ambivalence. Rabbi Ovadia Yossef of the Sha"y's party called the population of Israel to read the Psalms. He was the only religious leader that expressed any religious significance to the murder of the Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Normally speaking the procedure of morning after the death of an important person is as follows:

For a non-jew who is a friend of Israel ö Jews say Mishna passages to elevate the deceased's soul.

For the death of a Rabbi his disciples are commanded to study Mishna for a whole year.

For P.M. Rabin the Rabbinical establishment did not order even one day of special morning, no fasting, no year, or month, or even a day, of remembrance. This fact does not only have political significance, but it has deep theological significance as well. It indicates that there is a break between the Zionist Orthodox factions in Israel and the goals and aspirations of the State of Israel.

This change of attitude is best expressed by Rabbi Menachem Felix from Alon More, near Nablus. Rabbi Menachem Felix lost his daughter in a terrorist attack near Ofra, in Samaria. After the death of Rabin Rabbi Menachem Felix said: ***"Yes! Today, when Rabin is lying dead before us, he is the Kingdom. But, before his death Rabin was the heresy (Minuth), and we live by the Rambam's rule that anyone who gives one foot of the Land of Israel, brings destruction and dispersion, and the verdict for such a person is nothing else but death and hell."***

The changes that have taken place in the relationship of the Orthodox Jewish Community toward the State of Israel are significant because they have returned the National Orthodox Jews to the camp of the Ultra Orthodox anti-Zionist camp. Habad and Satmar, have always looked at Zionism as a heresy, and they have never supported the Zionist movement, although Habad in it's pragmatic way was always willing to receive funds and support from the heretical government of Israel.

Five weeks after the murder of P.M. Rabin the leadership of the National Orthodox Party of Israel organized a special rally in the same city Square that Rabin was murdered. Rabbi Mordechai Alon, Rabbi Mordechai Elyahu (a former chief Rabbi of Israel) were the main speakers in this rally. Rabbi M. Alon, said that the Orthodox Religious Zionism is "Joseph" ö and that the nation of Israel will one day bow down and worship the Orthodox Religious Camp like the brothers of "Joseph" worshiped him in the end. Mordechai Elyahu spoke and said that there are no two sides to the issue of the State of Israel, there is only one side that is "righteous" and "pure" and the other side is "ignorant," "empty," and "low." For the Orthodox Jews Secular Zionism and the people who have built the State of Israel are nothing more than more than a "donkey" that will serve the ultimate takeover of the land and the people of Israel for G-od's cause. Rabbi Elyahu said in this speech: "What we need to do now is to put on a black Kipa and say Psalms with the hope that G-od will forgive us and heaven will have mercy upon us for our failure toward religious Zionism.

Since the time of Rabin's murder things have not improved in Israel. In fact the situation has become much more serious. The leadership of the Orthodox Jews in Israel has called the left wing of Israeli society such names, as "donkey" ö "dog" ö "Amalek" ö and phrases such as, "worse than the killer is the one who causes him to sin." All these epithets are nothing less than total breakdown of the very fiber of the Zionist vision.

We are truly witnessing the two different phenomena in our days. We see Christians falling in love with the Zionist idea and losing the desire and vision to proclaim Salvation to Israel in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. These Christians believe that the establishment of the State of Israel is a fulfillment of G-od's Prophetic Word. At the very same time we see a disillusionment from the Zionist dream by the National Orthodox Jewish establishment in the State of Israel. What is the significance of these changing attitudes in Israel and the relationship to your faith and to your love for the Jewish people?

In order to answer this question we must be as wise a Solomon, and as humble as Moses. At first glance Zionism and Orthodox Judaism might appear distant from the agenda and goals of Christianity. Zionism appears to most Christians as a "Jewish issue" that has little or nothing to do with Jesus the Christ, or with his Church. When we look a little closer at the history and relationship of Christianity to Judaism and to the Land of Israel it becomes evident that Christians and Jews have many common vested interests in the same Land and in the same scriptures. We are standing together in one ship, and even though we are, may be, on different decks, what ever happens to this ship will effect all of us.

The Classical "Zionist" wanted to form a new man, a new Jew, in the land of Israel. He wanted this Jew to be totally different than the Jew who grow up in the European Ghetto. The strongest group of "Zionists" today is the religious "Zionists." They are not the ultra-Orthodox, but they are the only group of Jews who still have an agenda, and their agenda is not limited to building a "homeland for the Jewish people." Their agenda is Messianic ö they believe that with every building that is built on the land, and with every tree that is planted on the land, they are bringing the Messiah. In this agenda there is much in common with the Messianic Jews who follow Yeshua. We also believe that as the Lord said: "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

We do have a common agenda with the Jewish nation and with the Land of Israel and here are some of the points of contact in this common agenda:

1. Expectation for the coming Messiah.
2. Respect and faith in the integrity of the Word of G-od.
3. Belief that there is such a thing as "absolute right and wrong" values and ethics that universal and ought to govern our lives.
4. Belief that when Messiah comes Jerusalem and the Land of Israel will serve as the center of His Kingdom. He will come to Jerusalem and sit in Jerusalem on David's throne.
5. We believe that G-od gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish people as an eternal possession.

6. We believe that Israel is still the elect people of G-od, and even though they have not yet embraced Yeshua as their Messiah the day will come when they will all accept him and believe.

This common agenda that we share in G-od's word and promises gives us a moral obligation to assist G-od and to assist the Jewish people in the achievement of these goals and expectations.

What is happening in Orthodox Judaism and the changes that are taking place in Israel and in the Israeli society is very serious, but it does not change the common agenda that we have as G-od's saved people. In fact it is my opinion that as serious as the events in Israel might seem, they are only a preparation of the stage or the ground-work for the better future that we are all waiting for in the land of Israel.

Let me share with you a few scriptures that might be of relevance to our understanding:

Rev. 14:1, "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth."

Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. 2 For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. 3 Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 4 Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. 6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall be acceptable on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house. 8 Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? 9 For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from far away, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your G-od, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you. 10 Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you down, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. 11 Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings led in procession. 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will glorify where my feet rest. 14 The descendants of those who oppressed you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 15 Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. 16 You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breasts of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will appoint Peace as your overseer and Righteousness as your taskmaster. 18 Violence shall no more be heard in your land,

devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. 19 The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your G-od will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. 21 Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified. 22 The least of them shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will accomplish it quickly.”

Analyze this text in light of the Zionist vision and the common agenda that we have and give a special emphasis on the work of Netivyah.

The moral of this lesson is that only the Messianic Jewish community can actually serve as a bridge between the secular and the orthodox camps in Israel. If we look at the work of Netivyah and see that we have absorbed and helped Russian immigrants not only to settle in the land, but also to become believers. We have done the same with Ethiopian believers, and American believers and South American believers, who have all come to Israel to live and settle and take part in what G-od is doing with the Jewish people. We at the same time produce teaching material, scholarly material, the radio program, counseling with believers from all over the land, and in fact even from all over the world. All this we are doing with constant contact with the orthodox community and with the opportunities that G-od has give us.

We need your support and interest in reaching out to the Orthodox Jewish Community. We can not write this very important community off because we believe that G-od is using this community. A person who is mediocre is like a piece of wet wood, it is hard to set him on fire. But, the Orthodox Jewish community is already full of zeal for the Lord and love for His Word. Netivyah is one of the few if not the only ministry in Israel who has and will continue to work with the Orthodox Jewish Community and bring the Good News to those who most hunger for it.