PEACE, SECULARISM, AND RELIGION[*]

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I

Introduction

In this article we outline the rise and fall of the vision of peace as a secular concept and consider its alternatives. Ultimately, these alternatives lie in a place where the post-modern critique of positivist secularism and religious mysticism overlap. Inherent in this place of overlap is a critique of the secularism of the nation-state as well as a critique of the fundamental notion of a universal humanism as grounds for co-existence. We shall trace the foundations of this critique in the reactions of twentieth century thinkers to the national violence of the world wars. However we shall focus in particular on the expressions of the religious alternative to secular peace found in Jewish thought. Specifically we shall examine the non-humanist notion of co-existence embedded in the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook (1865-1935) and consider the critique of the secular state provided by Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel (1946-1882).

Kant's Perpetual Peace

The notion of a secular peace between secular states is anchored in Kant's 1795 essay "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" ("*Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf*." Kant's essay describes the rational, legal and moral principles on which peace may be established within and among states. In this approach, religion is seen as a divisive force, one of the ways in which nature creates differences among men; and "these [differences] may certainly occasion mutual hatred and provide pretexts for wars."[1] Accordingly, it is not religion and its metaphysical principles that can bring about the peace awaited by all; rather, it is the rationalist-secular way of thinking, which makes possible the existence of liberal religion. Not that this vision of peace denies religion a place; it allows for religion but requires it to assume, in Ernst Simon's terminology, a "Protestant" form.[2] Religion of this sort is private religious matter, significant to its believers but confined to church and religious acts. Other areas of life become secularized, allowing for political and moral management guided by three liberal principles of the republican constitution: "firstly, the principle of *freedom* for all members of a society (as men); secondly, the principle of the *dependence* of everyone upon a single common legislation (as subjects); and thirdly, the principle of legal *equality* for everyone (as citizens)."[3] Peace thus becomes a subject of political rather than religious discourse, and religion – especially Catholicism, unique in its presuming to embrace all areas

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[*] Avinoam Rosenak's portion of this article was translated from the Hebrew by Joel Linsider. Except as noted, translations from Hebrew sources there contained are by the present translator.

[1]. I. Kant, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch," in H. Reiss (ed.), *Kant's Political Writings* (2nd ed.; trans. H. B. Nisbet), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 114.

[2]. A.E. Simon, "Are we still Jews?", in A.E. Simon (ed.) *Are We Still Jews?: Essays*, Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Ha-Poalim, Hebrew University School of Education and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983, pp. 9-46 (Hebrew).

[3]. Kant, "Perpetual Peace", p. 99.

of life – is considered to be a factor that generates conflict and helps justify war.[4] (Religion is not alone in that regard; Kant notes other, political factors that tend to promote war: preserving the capacity to wage future wars; regarding the state as property; maintaining standing armies; using economic power to exert pressure and to threaten; one nation forcefully intervening in the governance of another; and international deployment of various sorts of violence.)

Critiques of Kant and the impact of the First World War

Having briefly recounted the Kantian vision of peace we will now turn to the examination of the post-modern critique of that vision, and the religious alternatives – specifically Catholic-like – made possible by that critique within Jewish and Zionist thought. These alternatives sharply criticize the violence inherent in the model of the secular-liberal state and strive to outline visions of all-embracing peace grounded in religion.

Kant's conviction was that the secularization of the collective identity of peoples in the form of the national State would allow modern society to begin the work of putting an end to perpetual war.[5] Basing his critique upon the negative model typically supplied by the Crusades, it seemed obvious that unflinching religious conviction bred violence that believers pursued with holy fervor. While the association of politics with religion was destructive, Kant believed that the secularization of collective values and interests and their encapsulation in the form of the state would allow for peaceful co-existence amongst all enlightened peoples. Kant proposed that the common ground upon which human beings might co-exist was rational, universal and therefore natural.[6] Just as the state regulated the lives of its citizens, Kant believed that a super-state structure comprising a "league of sovereigns" was necessary for regulating the interactions between states. While this body may not interfere with the sovereignty of any individual state, it would function as an adjudicator between states, regulating appropriate or legal inter-state practices and providing a context for the perpetual negotiation of disagreement within a liberal and non-violent discourse. Ultimately, the power of this body would rest upon the rational appreciation of the civilians and leaders of each state who recognize its value and choose to maintain the peace in service of the nobler interests and indeed inbred traits of humanity. Kant believed that this kind of political refinement was possible.

Kant's best reader (and perhaps his most vehement critic), Hegel, was skeptical about this vision. He maintained that leagues and coalitions, whatever their size and nobility, must by necessity pursue their own individuation. In so doing they cannot but generate conglomerate enmities of their own. As such, they are likely to emerge as larger bodies of aligned forces in war now capable of larger acts of destruction. He writes,

> …Kant proposed a league of sovereigns to settle disputes between states, and the Holy Alliance was meant to be an institution more or less of this kind. But, the

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[4]. Simon, "Are we still Jews?".

[5]. This principle is exemplified by Kant's insistence on the notion of peace as one that must exist between states. As such the nature of the state and the legality of its interactions with others is the subject of this entire treatise on peace. Ultimately, Kant (*ibid.*, p. 135) argues, "There is no intelligible meaning in the rule of the law of nations as giving a right to make war."

[6]. Kant, *ibid.*, p. 143, insists that the guarantee of perpetual peace is given, "by no less a power than the great artist nature in whose mechanical course is clearly exhibited a predetermined design to make harmony spring from human discord, even against the will of man."

> state is an individual, and negation is an essential component of individuality. Thus, even if a number of states join together as a family, this league, in its individuality, must generate opposition and create an enemy… wars will nevertheless occur whenever they lie in the nature of the case [*sache*]; the seeds germinate once more, and talk falls silent in the face of the solemn recurrences of history.[7]

In Hegel's view it is an inevitable result of human individuality that human beings wage war against each other. Mechanisms that regulate power, whether they are secular or religious, are more likely to align in conflict than they are to remain protective – as Kant believed they must – of the peace.

The extraordinary and frightening experience of the First World War did more to validate Hegel's critique than the subsequent arguments of any theoretician might have without it. Without any sense of religious conviction or even moral outrage, soldiers in the war marched to their deaths in open celebration of their national pride. A good death was one died for the sake of one's country. The secularized nation state inspired a level of conviction that generated a self-sacrificial ritual that played out on the battle field on a scale never before witnessed in human history.[8] The numbers killed in the war were unprecedented in military history. The modus operandi of marching across "No Man's Land" towards the enemy trench in a hopeless and utterly purposeless movement of assault offered little hope of survival. Reports from the field describe how soldiers barely ran. They simply walked to their deaths en masse as the enemy mowed them down – quite literally – with machine-gun fire. Years of combat ensued while millions of soldiers marched pointlessly to their deaths with neither strategic objective nor military gain in mind. Indeed during the course of the trench battles, the front lines moved no more than a mile or two in either direction over a period of two years.[9]

The First World War seemed to exemplify (more than any philosophical or political idea, essay or hypothesis might) the destructive power of the modern state. It utilized the full scale and depth of the civilian population and its resources to fuel this carnage for four years. State resources provided a constantly replenishing supply of weapons and young men willing to die.[10] It enabled the perpetuation of pointless conflict for four entire years. While the Second World War is clearly understood more readily in terms of ethics, right and wrong, it seems that here too the mesmerizing and overwhelming power of the state mechanism made possible the self-destructive devotion that were the fate of the combat soldiers on both sides. It must be clear that these were wars fought by secular nations in the name of a secular nationalism that aroused more hate and devotion than any religion had mustered in all of European history. The assumption that secular nationalism might provide an answer to humankind's perpetual propensity for war ought soon after to have crumbled.

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[7]. G.W. Hegel, "Addition G" in: *Outlines of The Philosophy of Right* (trans. T. M. Knox), Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 307.

[8]. This point has been argued vigorously by Richard Koenigsberg in his somewhat controversial (though convincing) study, *Nations Have the Right to Kill,* New York: The Library of Social Science, 2009, pp.33-46.

[9]. M. Elksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, New York: Anchor Books, 1989, p. 144.

[10]. See J.J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

Conflict and the Post-Modern Critique

Recent scholarship has called into question the actual secularism of the nation state.[11] The notion that presumably secular wars might be described in terms of almost mystical national ideals for which combatants are prepared to martyr themselves draws attention to the failure of post-enlightenment culture to actually rid itself of metaphysics. Indeed, in the wake of the World Wars, the dominant thrust of European philosophy has been the debunking of modernist metaphysics.[12] Post-modernism is, at least in part, an attempt to expose the contingencies that attend upon the Western European notions of the objective and the universal while deconstruction and post-colonialism of the type espoused by Foucault, Derrida and Fanon have engaged in the challenge of exposing the failure of modern European thinkers to rid themselves of the violence of metaphysics.[13] While multiple intellectual and internal motivations were at play in this effort – not least of which was the desire to account for the meaning of language without resorting to an abstract and intellectually unsatisfying world of Platonic ideals – many thinkers such as Derrida, have called attention to the uncompromisingly violent characteristics of metaphysical thought. The shift that is often associated with the "linguistic turn" in Western philosophy is one of secularization; but it is one in which the notion of the secular itself is, once again, secularized.[14] The failure of the project of secularization itself is the object of this critique. Though secularism was successful in moving the structures of governance away from the sacred, modern political thought failed to move away from the unflinchingly certain and the universally absolute. Modernism bred a new form of certainty. Truth became a value in science while the scientific method which remained unexamined, blinded its adherents to its contingencies and choices, to its dependence upon convictions and belief systems none of which were subject to the scientific scrutiny readily applied to the presumably objective description of humanity and the physical world. The critique voiced by post-nationalists is that secular metaphysics is no less violent than religion and that the nation state is no less oppressive than the classical (or holy) Empire.[15]

Perhaps the most significant offshoot of this critique is the relativism – applied in post modern thought – to such values as truth and justice. Rather than understanding this as a disintegration of enlightenment values, we propose that this relativism is, in fact, a mode of co-existence that insists upon the necessity of competing views whose mutual role is to establish relationships between competing points of view on grounds that are not – and cannot be conceived as – "absolute". This approach is distinguished from pluralism or liberalism in that it does not simply allow for the coexistence of multiple truth claims. Rather, it demands a form of radical co-existence which – when absent – must be generated through the

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[11]. This argument has been made compellingly by W.T. Cavenaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the Nation State", in J. Milbank and S. Oliver (eds.), *The Radical Orthodox Reader*, London - New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 314-337.

[12]. See for example R. Rorty's description of this process in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 3.

[13]. See for example Jaques Derrida's classic essay, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emannuel Levinas" in: *Writing and Difference* (trans. A. Bass), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 97-192. See also J. Perl, "Postmodern Disarmament", in S. Zabala (ed.), *Weakening Philosophy*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006, pp. 326-347.

[14]. This claim is articulated by Zabala in S. Zabala (ed.), *The Future of Religion*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 39.

[15] Cavenaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House".

proliferation of multiple points of view through radical acts of interpretation. It is this proliferation that exposes the contingency of any single point of view and deconstructs it. The co-existence of voices, perceptions, and legitimately flawed hypotheses that this discourse requires culminates in the form of a complex network of contradictions and paradoxes that underline the mysterious or mystical dimension of human thought and insist upon the collaboration of contradictory elements in every attempt at positing a thesis, a vision or an ideal. It is within this context that the notion of the state with its absolute and idealized perceptions of its identity is softened and made sensitive to its inner moving parts. The state as a concept is deconstructed along with any other form of hegemonic narrative and is thus rendered less dangerous to its citizens and indeed to its enemies. Ultimately, one may argue that the post-modern insistence on multiple and contradictory narrative is designed to dismantle the dangers of metaphysics, undercut the constructions of certainty and expose inner weaknesses and contingencies in all their meekness. In this sense, post criticism is an attempt to issue a corrective to the belligerence of modernism and to reign in the passions that resulted in the most destructive wars in human history.

While most of the proponents of the post-modern critique can hardly be seen as "religious", it seems quite clear that the secularization of modern secularism – as the double negative implies – involves a return to the defiantly incomprehensible, the mystical and indeed the religious.[16] It is no coincidence that new-ageism entails a return to the life of questing and invites the journey on paths unlimited by vigorous convictions about the truth towards unknown ideals that can never be accomplished or contained. It is these phenomena that connect it to the traditional – perhaps pre-modern – visions of the religious life. This is one in which no firm truths are posited. They are perhaps assumed in good faith, but are also understood as belonging outside of the limits of human understanding.[17]

Our primary contention is that this notion of co-existence provides a model for a religious articulation of peace that is based upon the radical co-existence of mutually excluding points of view that must co-exist in a paradoxical unity. This unity is akin to the Jewish understanding of monotheism in which the complex and self-contradictory notion of God is united into a single being. Again, this paradoxical construction is akin to the biblical image of the co-existing wolf and lamb, which maintain their distinct natures and forms while still sharing an ultimate future of a rationale-defying peace between them.[18] It is this model that provides a meaningful alternative to the Kantian notion of humanistic rationalism as a foundation for shared and regulated living under the rule of law and it is this model that we wish to propose echoes as a central motif in the teaching of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen

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[16]. This is the thrust of John Caputo's analysis of Derrida's religion in *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 117-160. See also R. Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, p. 2.

[17]. Though this is a matter of some dispute, it seems more than tenable to align oneself with the conclusion (expressed vocally by Wittgenstein to Russell during the course of their post-war meeting in Vienna) that this is the ultimate and final "silence" implied in the finale of the *Tractatus*. See L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness; With an introduction by Bertrand Russell), London: Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1961, p.97.

[18]. See Isaiah 11, in which the prophetic notion of peace is most fully articulated. This chapter culminates in the celebrated account of wolves dwelling with lambs, leopards lying down with kids and the calf and the young lion fatling together. Isaiah's vision is not a manifesto that human power can set about concretizing in political reality. No policy can resolve the non-contemplative and non-conscious enmities that pervade nature. The effect of Isaiah's metaphor pushes peace outside the realm of the natural and beyond the aspirations of man.

Kook. Though Kook was not a relativist, his sense of the absolute belonged exclusively to the realm of the sacred and the divine and enforced upon the human experience a form of radical co-existence that acknowledges the defiant mystery of God's unity. Similarly, the deconstruction of the state as social ideal capable of providing a solid and peaceful foundation for co-existence that is rooted in humanistic law is called into question by this critique. It is this dimension of the notion of secular peace that we wish to exemplify through the teachings of Rabbi Moses Amiel.

II

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook

From among the wealth of intellectual models within religious Zionism, we can cite two different, if not opposing, approaches, each of which presents a penetrating critique of the liberal, secular-rationalist doctrine of the state and a far-reaching alternative to it. In addition, the two approaches offer different models of peace, each of which draws deeply on an all-embracing religious outlook. The first of these two approaches is that of Rabbi A. I. H. Kook, the founder of the modern Chief Rabbinate in Israel and the first occupant of the office of Chief Rabbi.

Immanence and "Unity of Opposites"

Notwithstanding his education in Lithuanian *yeshivot*,[19] Rabbi Kook's teachings are rooted in kabbalistic doctrine. His thinking grows out of the "Catholic" concept of the world described above, which contemplates an immanent divine presence in all areas of existence and infers from that universally applicable laws of conduct.[20] It follows, in his view, that the affinities and differences between Israel and the nations of the world are not merely a matter of consciousness and culture;[21] they are substantive and ontological.[22] Existence, in all its contradictions, is suffused with the divine presence[23] and those contradictions do not disturb the all-encompassing divine logic.[24] The divine presence instills vitality in the range of spiritual movements and historical processes. This dialectical logic forms the structure for

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[19]. Rabbi Naftali Zevi Yehudah Berlin (1816–1893; known by the acronym *Neziv*), the head of the Volozhin Yeshiva, was an important teacher of Rabbi Kook. See A. Rosenak, *Rabbi Kook*, Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2006, pp. 11–19 (Hebrew).

[20]. For discussion of this approach in contrast to normative sociological thinking, see A. Rosenak, "*Halakhah*, Thought, and the Idea of Holiness in the Writings of Rabbi Haim David Halevi," in R. Elior and P. Schafer (eds.), *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought: Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, pp. 309-338.

[21]. This is the approach found in normative sociological thought; Maimonides was its primary exponent in the Middle Ages.

[22]. See I. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* vol. 2, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1961, pp. 3-93 (Hebrew); Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari: An Argument for the Faith of Israel by Judah Halevi* (trans. H. Hirschfeld), New York: Schocken Books, 1964, part I, sections 26-48, 95.

[23] Menahem Mendel of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, Jerusalem: Me'or Einayim Yeshivah, 1975, p. 13.

[24] "The force of the contradiction is merely an illness that afflicts logic when limited by the special conditions of man's mind and attentiveness. As we assess the situation, we must sense the contradiction and use that sensation to arrive at a resolution. Above it, however, far above it, there is the supernal divine light, whose possibilities are unlimited and subject to no conditions whatever. It tolerates no impediment on account of the contradiction, and for it, there is no need to resolve it." (A.I.H. Kook, *Olat Re'ayah* vol. 1, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1989, p. 184).

"the doctrine of the unity of opposites" at the center of Rabbi Kook's thinking,[25] a doctrine based on the ideas of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (known as "Maharal")[26] and on kabbalistic and Hasidic literature overall.[27]

Israel and the Nations

In Rabbi Kook's construct, Israel is the center of humanity and all existence, the kernel that encompasses and sustains all. Jews differ substantively from members of other nations, though that difference creates an affinity in that the nations embody in their own lives, in various ways, the seed implicit in Israel. He writes:

> All of the varied spiritual streams within the human world have a root within the community of Israel, for that community, in the spiritual sense unique to the highest and purest forms of yearning, is the center of humanity. For that reason, it is impossible for us to disregard any stream when we examine the spiritual force of the community of Israel, "the bride," "encompassing all."[28]

In this view, Israel is the center of humanity and the root of all the varied forms of spirituality in the world. For that reason, Jews are obliged to pay careful attention both to their own various streams – for they are the seed of cultural and spiritual activities among the nations of the world – and to the various streams among the nations, which embody those within Israel.[29] Given that variety, Rabbi Kook agues that "the community of Israel is the epitome of all existence … in its physicality and spirituality, its history and its faith. Jewish history is the ideal epitome of general history, and there is no movement in the world that does not find its model within Israel."[30]

Negation of Negation

The premise of immanence, which sees divine providence in everything, negates negation. Rabbi Kook rejects ideologies whose narrow view of truth calls for rejection of other truths; he likewise rejects the compelled imposition of one truth. The whole embodies the divine infinite. "Every form of wisdom and every spiritual phenomenon in the world has a positive aspect and a negative aspect. The positive aspect is what gives the phenomenon its form and its extent, and the negative aspect is its blocking of other phenomena from extending into its

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[25]. On Rabbi Kook's doctrine of the unity of opposites, see Rosenak, *Rabbi Kook*, pp. 34-42; idem, *Prophetic Halakhah: The Philosophy of Halakhah in the Teachings of Rabbi Kook*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007, pp. 44-57 (Hebrew).

[26]. Maharal, *Gevurot ha-shem*, Benei-Berak: Yahadut Publication, 1980, ch. 5, p. 35; A. Neher, *The Teachings of Maharal*, Jerusalem: Reuben Mass, 2003 (Hebrew); A. Rosenak, "Unity of Opposites in the teachings of Maharal: A Study of his Writings and their Implications for Jewish Thought in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries" (Hebrew; in preparation).

[27]. See, for example, T. Kaufman, *Know Him in All Your Ways: The Concept of the Divine and Worship through Corporeality in early Hasidism*, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2009, pp. 250-395 (Hebrew).

[28]. A.I.H. Kook, *Eight Papers*, Hebron, Kiryat-Arba and Jerusalem: Pozner Publication, 1999, File 1 (1904–1914), par. 26, p. 9 (Hebrew - henceforth cited by its Hebrew acronym "*SQ*").

[29]. "Every nation will receive the element of truthfulness in accord with the extent of its preparation." Accordingly, "their morality will adopt many hues, for each nation will impress its own mark on the understanding drawn from the light of the Torah, in accord with its natural and historically-determined decisions" (Kook, *Olat Re'ayah* 1, p. 316).

[30]. A.I.H. Kook, *Orot Ha-Qodesh* Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1983, p. 129 (Hebrew).

space."[31] The positive is the ability of truth to be expressed in the world. The negative is the making of one position hostile to another as it attempts to conceal it. The ideal state is one in which a more expansive mode of thinking allows "the positive aspect" to become stronger while the "negative aspect grows weaker," to the point that "there is no negative aspect at all" and the "superior, pure wisdom" extends to everything and "augments everything with its positivity."[32] That, in Rabbi Kook's view, is the meaning of the heavenly voice calling out "These and those are the words of the living God,"[33] and "All of physical and spiritual existence, all its aspects, in its entirety, is it not the world of God?"[34]

The Complexity of the Dialectical Personality

This dialectical approach entails tension and difficulty, and one who adopts it must have a mindset able to oscillate between contradictory positions. On the one hand, he needs to take a particularist-subjective stance that clearly defines the bounds of its world. On the other hand, he must understand that this particularist stance is simply one facet of an objective truth that does not recognize the bounds of our familiar finite truths.[35] In Rabbi Kook's view, the *zaddiq* - a figure with which Rabbi Kook deeply identified[36] - is prepared to follow this path because "he unites within him all the opposites." He ascends to the higher worlds, in which there are no borders or fences, and he is equipped to embrace all the extremes with the power of kindness and mercy unconstrained by the attribute of judgment.[37] Rabbi Kook recognized the difficulty of living within dialectical tension and he was conscious of the duty to translate it into the realm of this-worldly subjective discourse (referred to in some mystical and Hasidic writing as the "garments").[38]

This dialectic is nicely conveyed in Rabbi Kook's explanation of how to manage a conflict that plays out simultaneously on multiple planes. It involves tension between change and tradition; between conflicting this-worldly opinions; between the concept of all-encompassing unity (suited to the *zaddiq* and the higher worlds) and the world as it exists, which includes mutually hostile opinions and positions. It requires one to live in way that is faithful to the objective-higher dimension but also to the lower, subjective dimension ("the garments"), for both embody a truth that cannot be changed and must not be blurred. Rabbi Kook describes the complex dialectic as follows:

> We must always walk the road between difference and similarity and process opinions in such a way that it will be possible for each and every person to find his unique spirit within those opinions while at the same time partaking of the quality of similarity, which brings everything together in a single unit.[39]

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[31]. *SQ* 1, par. 343, pp. 119-120.
[32]. Loc. cit.
[33]. BT *Eruvin* 13b.
[34]. *SQ* 1, par. 498, p. 160.
[35]. Loc. cit.
[36]. S. Sharlo, *Zaddiq yesod olam: ha-shelihut ha-sodit ve-ha-havayah ha-mistit shel ha-rav quq* [The *tzaddiq* is the foundation of the world : Rav Kook's esoteric mission and mystical experience] (doctoral dissertation, Bar-Ilan Univ., 2003); S. Ben-Zvi, *Ha-dimui ha-azmi shel ha-rav quq: qeri'ah hadashah le-or pirsum shemonah qevazim* [R. Kook's self-image: a new reading in light of publication of *Eight Files*] (master's dissertation, Hebrew Univ., 2003). האם הכותים האנגליים הם המופיעים בשער האנגלי של העבדות? – אכן כך מופיע בכותרת עבודתה של שרלו; בעבודת בן צבי אין כותרת אנגלית; בדקתי ותיקנתי את שם משפחתה של שרלו כפי שהיא כותבת.
[37]. Kook, *Orot ha-qodesh*, 3, p. 307; *SQ* 1, par. 575, p. 182.
[38]. Loc. cit.
[39]. *SQ* 1, par. 24, p. 8.

The Vital Return to Corporeality: Land and Politics

Israel's return to its land, according to Rabbi Kook, is a process that is vital to fulfilling its potential for the entire world.[40] Israel's severance from its land, from its physical body[41] and its political body, had offered some advantages[42] but has now become a hindrance. Israel's return to its land is necessary for its own self-realization[43] but also for the nations of the world, who, as noted, are sustained by the spiritual kernel that is Israel. (Statements calling for the reversal of Israel's severance from the physical appear in Rabbi Kook's philosophical[44] and halakhic writings[45] alike.) Israel needs a state that will afford it physical and political strength[46] and a vital social order that will serve as a source of inspiration for all nations.[47]

Against Violence and the "Sin of the Golden Calf"

Israel's ability to influence the world and to return to its land without political struggle or violence both depend on its recognition of the weighty spiritual and cultural assignment it bears. It must not succumb to a form of the "sin of the golden calf"[48] that prevented it in the past from realizing its historical destiny. Kook argues that if Jews will "call on God's Name," they will not need weaponry to establish their state, for the other nations will recognize the vital nature of Israel's contribution.[49] Rabbi Kook's political vision with respect to the State of Israel thus excludes warfare, and that is why, in his view, Israel remained in exile until the state could be established without the use of force. Leaving politics behind – that is, being in exile – is negative but also has a positive aspect, for it allowed for Israel's spiritualization and its removal from "the dreadful sins involved in running a government in bad times." Now, however, "a time has come… when the world is improved and… it will be possible to conduct our state on a foundation of goodness, wisdom, uprightness, and clear divine illumination… It was not proper for Israel to be involved in government at a time when it entailed bloodshed and required a talent for wickedness."[50] Israel, then, must establish a state and a polity that do

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[40]. A.I.H. Kook, "Israel's Destiny and Nationhood", in M. Y. Zuriel (ed.), Otzrot Ha-Reayah [*An Anthology of Writings by Rabbi Kook]*, Sha`alvim: M. Y. Zuriel, 1988, p. 693 (Hebrew).
[41]. A.I.H. Kook, *Orot*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1982, p. 80; *SQ* 3, par. 273, p. 100.
[42]. Idem, *The Sabbath of the Land*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1979, p. 12 (Hebrew); see also Idem, *Eder Yaqar*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1967, p. 128 (Hebrew). An interesting further "contribution" of the Jews' life in exile is the demise of the territorial concept of the divinity. See Kook, *Orot*, p. 115.
[43]. For numerous sources on this point; see Rosenak, *Prophetic Halakhah*, pp. 150-152.
[44]. A.I.H. Kook, *Arpelei Tohar*, Jerusalem: Rabbi Z.Y. Kook Publications, 1983, pp. 2-3 (Hebrew); *SQ* 2, par. 6, pp. 294-295; *Orot Ha-qodesh* 2, pp. 290-291; *Olat* 1, p. 39; *Letters of Rabbi A.I H. Kook*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1981, p. 58 (Hebrew); *Rabbi Kook's Articles* 1-2, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1984, pp. 94-99, 234-235, 401-411, etc. (Hebrew).
[45]. For example, in the context of preserving bodily cleanliness, A.I.H. Kook, *Mizvot re'ayah*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1985; Idem, *Orah hayyim* 2:6, p. 17b; of the link between physical health and the ability to serve and know God, see *Orah hayyim* 6:1, p. 33a; of the sanctity of the body and the duty to bury a miscarried fetus see *Orah hayyim* 526:10, p. 81a); and of the duty to avoid demeaning the body see ibid., p. 81b.
[46]. Kook, *Orot*, pp. 80-81; *Letters* 1, p. 185.
[47]. Kook, *Orot*, p. 104; Idem, *"Iqvei zon"* in: *Eder Ha-Yakar*, (note 42 above) p. 136 תן מראה מקום מלא - בבקשה.
[48]. "But for the sin of the golden calf, the nations dwelling in the Land of Israel would make peace with Israel and acknowledge them" (Kook, *Orot*, p. 14).
[49]. *Olat* 1, p. 233.
[50]. *Orot*, *Ha-milhamah*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1982, par. 3, p. 14. כן - האם "המלחמה" זה פרק ב"אורות"?

not require "the stormy spirit" of war but will, rather, "cause the divine sanctity spreading through the light of Israel to make its way calmly and moderately, in slow steps."[51]

Praise of War and Disparagement of Christianity

Israel's redemption, to be sure, was taking place in the shadow of the Great War and against a background of terrible violence that represented, in Rabbi Kook's view, the Hegelian[52] epitome of the defining trait of the nations of the world.[53] But, paradoxically enough, Rabbi Kook saw something positive in a process that emphasized, in the context of world war, both the differences and the unity of the nations in general[54] and of Israel in particular.[55] These warlike statements appear against the background of his harsh criticism of Christianity as a system that fails to recognize the complexity of existence and offers a utopian and moralistic vision. In his view, Christianity is not sensitive to the contradictions and tensions that exist without exception throughout the world. He holds Christianity responsible for the unrestrained outbreaks of violence that grow out of its lack of complexity and its failure to understand the importance in the world of the body and the material.[56]

> Heresy [that is, Christianity] began by declaring grace and love and asking how to tithe straw, how to tithe salt, how to repay good for bad and how to bless one who curses. But it culminated in sword and blood, cruelty and murder, endless bloody war, and profound hatred between nation and nation, tribe and tribe, man and man. It is as our rabbis said regarding the secret of the holy: the evil side [*sitra ahra*, lit., "the other side"] begins in unity and culminates in separation; the holy side begins in separation and culminates in unity.[57]

The Vision of Peace and Its Conditions

After the Great War's dust had settled, the reshaping of Europe and the transfer of the Land of Israel to the Jews should have made it possible "for humanity to unite in a single family, putting an end to all the skirmishing and all the bad qualities that result from divisions among nations and their boundaries."[58] That hoped-for peace – possessed of a utopian quality but also the object of the establishment of the State of Israel – depends, first of all, on the nations' recognition of Israel's role. That recognition, in turn, will bring about the nations' acceptance of Israel's vital contribution and the truth contained within it. Peace and the end of bloodshed,

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[51]. *Olat* 1, pp. 315-316, 233.

[52]. On R. Kook's Hegelian thought, see S. Avineri, *The Zionist Idea*, Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1980, pp. 216-226 (Hebrew).

[53]. *Letters* 2, p. 306.

[54]. *Orot*, 15; *SQ* 6, par. 152, p. 53.

[55]. *Orot*, p. 15; *SQ* 6, par. 165, pp. 57-58.

[56]. R. Kook's comments against "heresy" give voice as well to his concept of the close ties among "the act," "the spiritual idea," and "the soul of Israel." See A.I.H. Kook, *Orot ha-emunah*, Jerusalem: 1985, p. 90 האם זהו חלק מ"אורות", או ספר נפרד שצריך מראה מקום מלא? – זה ספר נפרד-הנה פרטיו-חסר ציון המוציא לאור and the parallel remarks in "*Shemen ra`anan*," *Ozrot Hareayah*, M.Y. Zoriel (ed.), Tel Aviv: Yeshivat SHalabim, 1988, vol. 4, p. 31 (Hebrew). For sharply critical comments about the damage caused by heresy's severance of thought (that is, *aggadah*) from act (*halakhah*) and its harmful effects, see *Orot ha-emunah*, pp. 11-14; A.I.H. Kook, *Ain Ayeh*, *Berakhot* 1, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1987, p. 64, sub-par. 162 (Hebrew); cf. a different view in sub-par. 161. On this issue, see Ehud Luz, "*Halakhah* and *Aggadah* in Rabbi Kook's teachings", *Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies* 11 (1986), Hebrew section, p. 8.

[57]. *SQ* 5, par. 177, pp. 280-281.

[58]. Kook, *Orot*, p. 151.

then, are achieved not through concessions and compromises but through a realistic insistence on each nation's unique role and on that of Israel in particular. Only this inner clarity will lead nations to recognize the damage caused by warfare. Hanan Porath has written of the way in which Rabbi Kook's disciples translated these ideas into contemporary discourse:

> Peace and the prevention of bloodshed will never come unless "all inhabitants of the world will recognize and know that to You every knee will bow and every tongue will swear loyalty." In a profound sense, there can be no peace without this element of "all inhabitants of the world will recognize." This does not mean that we need not make the effort, in the world in which we now find ourselves, to prevent bloodshed as much as possible, even at the cost of partial settlements. But in doing so, we must never compromise, Heaven forbid, the course that represents the redemption of the world.[59]

We see, then, that Rabbi Kook's teachings include a doctrine of peace having a radically pluralist yet not relativist potential; a doctrine of peace that sees the speck of truth implicit in varied particularist truths; a doctrine of peace that sprouts within a religion that is "Catholic" in its perception of God's universal immanence and of the ubiquity of religious obligation; and a doctrine of peace based on a metaphysics grounded in the kabbalistic doctrine of the spheres and embodied in the "doctrine of the unity of opposites." The doctrine posits, on the one hand, a duty to transform all of humanity into a single family and to establish the State of Israel in a spirit of pacifism; on the other hand, it posits a need for the existence of war to prepare the way for the vision of the end of days. It sees a spark of something positive in Christianity;[60] but, in the same breath, it disparages Christianity's understanding of the world – an understanding that secularized the world and transformed it into a violent and war-like place lacking, from a Christian perspective, dense contact with the divine.

III

Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel[61]

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[59]. H. Porath, "Each Eye will See God's |Return to Zion", *Petahim* 2, 32 (1975), p. 8 (Hebrew).

[60]. Hasidism, in Rabbi Kook's view, took from heresy its sting and the sparks that were within it. See *SQ* 7, par. 138, pp. 201-202. So, too, in a manuscript: "From the side of folly but excess love came one who wanted to confuse the world, broadening the area of the Torah's influence to a place in which it could never be established because of the element of evil there. Only after many generations is it possible that it may be established through Israel's exaltedness." (Is this your translation? Give details of the ms – this is my translation – שים לב, בהערה הראשונה כתוב: **Avinoam Rosenak's portion of this article was translated from the Hebrew by Joel Linsider. Except as noted, translations from Hebrew sources there contained are by the present translator)** אני יודע, אבל תן פרטים של אותו כתב-יד שאתה מצטט – אין לי פרטים הוא הגיע אלי ונמצא אצלי כקובץ.

[61]. This part of the article is a new and expanded version of A. Isaacs, "Zionism as an Apolitical Spiritual Revolution in the Teachings of Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel", in A. Sagi and D. Schwartz (eds.), *A Century of Religious Zionism* vol. 1, Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003, pp. 287-306 (Hebrew); Idem, "A Socio-Cultural Inquiry into the Link between Jewish and General Culture in Light of the Teachings of Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel", in Y. Amir, (ed.), *The Way of the Spirit: Festschrift in Honor of Eliezer Schweid* vol. 1, Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and the Hebrew University, 2005, pp. 409-438 (Hebrew). Discussion of the topic has been expanded and enriched by E. Holzer, *Military Activism in Religious Zionist Thought*, Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2009 (Hebrew).

The second rabbi whose position we wish to examine is Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel, who served as Chief Rabbi of Tel-Aviv during the 1930s and 1940s. Rabbi Amiel – a student of the Telz Yeshiva and disciple of Rabbi Hayyim Soloveitchik and Rabbi Hayyim Ozer Grozhinsky – came from a Lithuanian background with a quite different perspective than Rabbi Kook's immanent and kabbalistic approach. His writings include halakhic and meta-halakhic works (such as his treatise *Middot le-heqer ha-halakhah* [Principles of Halakhic Study])[62] as well as philosophical and contemplative works (such as *Li-nevukhei ha-tequfah*[63] and *Ha-zedeq ha-sozi'ali ve-ha-zedeq ha-mishpati u-musari shelanu*).[64] His library leaned toward philosophical works and he reacted to them in his own writings. In 1920 he was appointed rabbi of Antwerp. He immigrated to the Land of Israel in 1936 and served as Chief Rabbi of Tel-Aviv.

Amiel was an important and active Zionist thinker who critically examined the ideas of Zionism's leaders and of his own party (The Zionist Religion Party – *Ha-Mizrachi*). He noted the spiritual dimensions concealed behind the "materialist" commitments of both Zionism and European nationalism. In his view, secular Zionism could be seen in part as derived from modern secular nationalism and therefore suffering from its flaws. Zionism needed to regroup, to recognize the spiritual dimensions it had unconsciously drawn from secular nationalism, and to reestablish itself on Judaism's distinct religious basis. Without this unique stance, Zionist culture might easily have become violent and callous about the value of human life. The Western commitment to human rights would have been a pale substitute for the deep set conviction to peace that lies at the heart of Jewish thought. In order to illustrate this point, we shall survey the ethical distinctions – most specifically in terms of attitudes to war and peace – that Amiel draws between Western and Jewish cultures.

Law, Morality, and Torah

In distinguishing between law as practiced by other nations and Israel's Torah, Rabbi Amiel also noted the dissonance between "law" and "morality." Law is based on rules and the actions of society as a whole; underlying it is the desire for social order and a properly functioning state. Morality, in contrast, deals with worldviews – with the beliefs, intentions, and opinions of people (individually or collectively).[65]

European jurisprudence, Amiel argued, suffers from the subordination of morality to conventional social norms, which have the power to sway the view of the judge. It follows that concepts of good and evil are fluid,[66] and the "conscience in one's heart"[67] is often recast by accepted practice. Jewish law, in contrast, expresses eternal, divine morality, "the voice of God moving about within man";[68] it is not subject to society, to time, or to place.[69]

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62. M.A. Amiel, *Principles of Halakhic Study*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1939 (Hebrew).

63. M.A. Amiel, *To the Perplexed of the Age – Essays on the Essence of Judaism*, Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1943 (Hebrew).

64. Idem, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, Tel-Aviv: Torah Va-Avoda Movement, 1936 (Hebrew). See: *Encyclopedia Judaica* 2:846-847; Y.L.H. Fishman, "A Giant of Thought in *Halakhah* and *Aggadah*", in Y.L.H. Fishman (ed.), *Festschrift Presented to Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel*, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1943, pp. 1-12; K.P. Tekhorsh, *Rabbi M.A. Amiel's Teachings on Halakhah and Aggadah*, Jerusalem: Religious Publication Society and Mosad Harav Kook, 1943 (Hebrew).

65. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 4.

66. "Yesterday's absolute justice becomes today's total evil" (ibid., p. 3).

67. Ibid., p. 4.

68. Ibid., p. 5.

69. Ibid., pp. 7-8; Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 113-114.

An Aptitude for Morality

Amiel, also, points to "Israel's unique aptitude" (with a nod to Rabbi Judah Halevi),[70] but that characteristic is not ontological. Israel is not a joining of being and essence (as it is for Rabbi Kook); rather, it is possessed of a unique quality in its moral-cultural sensitivity. For that reason – and in contrast to Halevi – Amiel has great fondness for converts: a convert's spiritual-moral decision elevates him to the highest possible level, and he becomes the elect within the Jewish group (as we shall see below).[71]

Between the Collective and the Individual

The uniqueness of Jewish morality lies in its enhanced sensitivity to the individual. Secular nationalism, in contrast, often harshly subordinates the individual to the collective – Amiel was thinking of Socialism and various twentieth-century totalitarian and ideological movements – and that attitude toward the individual is what differentiates the Jewish vision of the state from the secular-nationalist idea:

> For them [the nations of the world] the collective is primary, but they mean by that only the proletariat. They would be pleased if the others had never been created, and, faced with their having been created, they treat them as if they hadn't been. What all the nations of the world have in common is their shared belief that the individual is like clay in the hands of the collective potter, in whose discretion the individual is allowed to live or is put to death. For that reason, even the most enlightened and excellent governments find it just and proper, entertaining no doubts, to send individuals off to the battlefield, to kill or be killed in wars of necessity or discretion, defensive or offensive wars; and those who are unwilling to go are uniformly put to death. For it is conventionally agreed among them that the individual who does not fulfill his duty to the collective loses thereby his right to live on earth.[72]

The roots of this approach go back to ancient Greece. There, sons sent their parents to die in the mountains and weak children were exposed to death, all for the sake of social utility.[73] Western society was guided not by abstract Platonic ideals[74] as much as by a system of interest-based and egocentric ties grounded in fear of social anarchy.[75] As Amiel sees it, that is the basis of Western culture and of European religion and morality. But the morality in

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[70]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 169; Halevi, *Ha-kuzari*, I:95.
[71]. *Ha-kuzari*, I:116.
[72]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 54.
[73]. Ibid., p. 52.
[74]. This assessment might be taken to blur his distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish thought, for it suggests that the nations of the world fail to follow the ideas of their own philosophers – ideas that, if followed, might lead them to positions resembling more closely those suggested by Jewish thought. A full discussion of that issue is beyond the scope of the present article. On Rabbi Amiel's complex interaction with general philosophy – a philosophy that he rejects as non-Jewish thinking – see A. Rosenak, **"**General and Jewish Culture in the Thought of Rabbi M.A. Amiel: A Socio-Cultural Model", in Y. Amir (ed.), *The Path of the Spirit: The Eliezer Schweid Jubilee*, Vol. I, (*Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, XVIII), Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, pp. 409-438 (Hebrew).
[75]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, pp. 32, 92; Idem, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 75, 92-97, 124.

question is like a procrustean bed (used, in rabbinic lore, by the people of Sodom): "All the beds were of one size… and if the guest was larger than the bed, they would cut off his legs. Conversely, if he was too short, they would stretch his legs until they were severed from their place."[76] Abraham, in contrast to the practice in Sodom, "would provide a bed suited to the guest's size." But the advantages are not without their downsides: among the nations of the world, "justice is forgone in the interest of order"; in Judaism, order is forgone in the interest of justice."[77]

Affirming Zionism; Negating Territoriality

Amiel supported the psychological and political revolution embodied in the Zionist movement. In his view, it was necessary for Jews to take control of their own fate. He deemed it a duty to conquer the Land[78] and to participate actively in history and he believed that Zionism renewed the commandments "between man and his nation."[79] Those commandments are in addition to those "between man and his fellow" and "between man and God"; their fulfillment is obligatory even at the cost of one's life, if necessary; and one who gives his life in their fulfillment is considered holy.[80] Nevertheless, he belittled the Mizrahi (religious Zionist) movement as the "night watchman" for secular Zionism[81] and had serious reservations about Zionism's elevation of "place" over "time," contrary to his understanding of Judaism's priorities.[82] Suggesting that too much importance was being assigned to the Land[83] to the detriment of the Torah, he recalled the maxim that "our nation is no nation except through the Torah."[84] In his view, an exclusive focus on "the Land" linked Zionism to the Enlightenment movement with all its apostasy and assimilation.[85] Territorial nationalism

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[76]. Ibid., p. 71.

[77]. Loc. cit.

[78]. For example, he says the following about members of the religious kibbutz movement, participants in the enterprise of conquering the Land: "The great heroism of these Jewish heroes is incalculable – the heroism of these dear sons of Zion, more precious than gold, who give their lives for the sanctity of God's name and of the Land. All of us are obligated to honor them, to kneel before them" ("*Al ha-me'ora`ot ve-al ha-havlagah*," Ha-Zofe 27.8.1938, p. 3). He supported the Zionist *Yishuv* notwithstanding his strong opposition to Zionism's cultural atmosphere: "And yet, 'let the accuser be silent and the defender take his place,' for even this form of nationalism contributes to the growth and progress of the Land of Israel. The actions themselves – settlement and building of the Land of Israel – are mighty actions" (*To the Perplexed*, p. 304). See also D. Schwartz, *Faith at the Crossroads*, Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1996, pp. 255-256 (Hebrew).

[79]. M.A. Amiel, *The Sabbath Queen: Essays and Speeches on the Sabbath*, Tel-Aviv: Mizrachi Publication, 1937, p. 22 (Hebrew).

[80]. See *To the Perplexed*, pp. 278-280.

[81]. M.A. Amiel, "On the Ideological foundations of Mizrahi", Ha-Tor, Vol. 3 (1935), p. 23 (Hebrew).

[82]. Amiel, *The Sabbath Queen*, p. 17. See also D. Schwarz, *The Land of Israel in Religion Zionist Thought*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publication, 1997, pp. 160-169 (Hebrew). It is interesting to compare Amiel's feeling for time to its parallel in the teachings of Abraham Joshua Heschel. See A.J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951, pp. 3-10; D. Bundy, *How*? Jerusalem: Shalem Center, 2008, pp. 279-283.

[83]. Amiel saw within Zionism two separate and competing power centers – the secular and the religious – and was concerned that the latter was shrinking to the point of disappearance. See *Ha-yesodot ha-idiologiyyim shel ha-mizrahi*, p. 23.

[84]. M.A. Amiel, "More on the ideological foundations of Mizrahi", *Ha-tor* 16 (1935), p. 7 (Hebrew). See also *To the Perplexed*, p. 282; R. Sa`adyah Ga'on, *With Perfect Faith: The foundation of Jewish belief* [*Sefer ha-emunot ve-ha-de`ot]*, J. David Bleich (ed.), New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1983, Part III chap. 7.

[85]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 282-285; *Ha-yesodot ha-idiologiyyim shel ha-mizrahi*, p. 8; Z. Zohar, "'On the Basis of Judaism in its Entirety': Rabbi Amiel's Polemic against the Enlightenment, Secularism, Nationalism,

"is felt by a donkey as well"; it is a feeding trough dressed up as a homeland that becomes primary and determines of everything: "a feeding trough is small and a homeland is very large, but the difference is one of quantity, not quality."[86] Zionism did not come into the world to add another territorial and particularist state, defined in the way animals mark out their territories; rather, its goal is to call "to all the nations of the world that the Name of the Lord is upon you … and you will be the father of a multitude of nations."[87]

At the same time, of course, there is the commandment to settle the Land, central to the set of commandments "between Israel and its nation."[88] Fulfilling the commandment allows one to return to a life that brings body and soul together[89]- a blending denied in the past by Diaspora Jews' withdrawal from the material[90] and denied in the present by the Zionists' emphasis on the material.[91] Both states of imbalance are a form of idolatry.

Jean Jacques Rousseau set up a tension between his call to renounce society and culture and find happiness as an individual emulating the "noble savage" and his intense loyalty to the "social contract" to which each individual, overcoming egocentricity, freely commits himself.[92] A similar tension can be found in Amiel's writings. On the one hand, he attributes high importance to the commandments between man and his nation and recognizes a duty to sacrifice oneself for the greater good. On the other hand, he emphasizes the nature of Jewish law and moral justice, which have an anti-governmental streak and are sensitive to the individual even at the expense of the community and the nation.

International Zionism and Anti-Racism

In the light of Amiel's analysis the distinction between the immanent violence in Western political culture and the inherent peacefulness in Judaism becomes clear. Amiel called on Zionism to avoid isolation and alienation from other nations,[93] arguing that "nationalism is the means and internationalism is the end."[94] Isolation and alienation from the "Other" are rooted in hatred[95] and in the idolatrous notion that each nation and state had its own god.[96]

Mizrahi, and Agudah", in N. Ilan (ed.), *A Good Eye: Dialogue and Polemic in Israeli Culture*, Tel-Aviv: Ha-Kibutz Ha-Meuchad Publications, 1999, pp. 313-348 (Hebrew). See also Schwartz, *The Land of Israel in Religion Zionist Thought*, p. 163.

86. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 111.

87. Idem, *To the Perplexed*, p. 243.

88. Ibid., p. 280.

89. M.A. Amiel, *Darkhei Mosheh* vol. 2, *Darkhei Ha-qinyanim* (Warsaw: Neta Krohberg Printers, 1931, "*Darkah Shel Torah*," p. 4.

90. Ibid., pp. 5, 12.

91. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

92. See the introduction by Hayyim Judah Roth to the Hebrew translation of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984, p. vii.

93. "Zionism began… in the time of Abraham… of whom it is said, 'lover, indeed, of the people' (Deut. 33:3)", *To the Perplexed*, p. 289. See also Schwartz, *The Land of Israel in Religion Zionist Thought*, pp. 165-166.

94. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 238; Schwartz, *The Land of Israel in Religion Zionist Thought*, p. 165.

95. Amiel, *Ha-yesodot Ha-idiologiyot Shel Ha-mizrahi*, p. 9.

96. Amiel's statements on this matter are difficult. Secular Zionism, in his opinion, "flows from the source of nationalism in the spirit of the gentile nations – a nationalism whose foundation stone was laid by Bismarck and whose housewarming was celebrated by Hitler; a nationalism that is entirely idolatrous. Does it have any resemblance at all to the religion of Israel, which is entirely holy and entirely pure?" (*Zionism's Spiritual Problems*, Tel Aviv: The Mizrachi Organization, 1937, p. 41 [Hebrew]). Amiel here is writing in the 1930s, unaware of the horrors on the horizon.

Monotheistic Jewish nationalism,[97] in contrast, asserts a universal vision, looking beyond nationhood.[98] Assembling nations in separate states is a necessary but transient means; its purpose ultimately is to assemble all humanity under the wings of the all-embracing God.

Amiel was aware of the many statements and strains in Jewish literature and thought that seem to run counter to that view:[99] marriage with a non-Jew is forbidden; the Torah declares Israel to be God's "cherished possession";[100] the rabbis state that "we are the chosen stock" and "others are entirely removed from the category of man."[101] One often finds discrimination against gentiles; examples include the laws related to interest on a loan,[102] excess profit, court testimony, and purchase and sale. The lands of the non-Jewish nations are declared impure[103] as is the air above them,[104] and non-Jewish bread, oil, and wine are forbidden.[105] Moreover, the rabbis declare that "proselytes are as difficult for Israel as a rash,"[106] and "a Jew, though he has sinned, remains a Jew"[107] (that is, there can be no conversion from Judaism). On the face of it, at least, it would appear that "Judaism takes a national-racial perspective to the extreme."[108] Nevertheless, Amiel goes on to paint a very different picture of the Jewish faith:

> Judaism's worldview is pure, even extreme, internationalism.[109] When all is said and done, our history begins not with the patriarchs but with primeval Adam... Our Torah does not satisfy itself with nationalism alone; rather, it sees before it the world as a whole, and humanity as a whole precedes our ancestors. According to tradition, God courted all the nations, Torah in hand… before revealing it to Israel…. All of our festivals, including the Sabbath, have not only a national aspect but also an aspect pertaining to mankind as a whole…; they are based not

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[97]. This form of nationalism "draws its nurture from the one God, the Eternal One, whose house 'is a house of prayer for all nations.' Our nationalism is meant… to bring about internationalism and 'repair the world under the kinship of God'" (*To the Perplexed*, p. 287).

[98]. To prove his point here, Amiel relied on both Judah Halevi and Maimonides, despite the divergence between their views: "Both of them… try to show as well the revealed portion of the Torah…. The *Guide*, which speaks to the perplexed among our people… offers general human thinking. R. Judah Halevi, in contrast… writing for the gentiles, offers authentic Jewish thinking" (*Darkhei Mosheh*, p. 11).

[99]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 242.

[100]. Ex. 19:5; Dt. 7:6; 14:2.

[101]. BT *Yevamot* 61a; BT *Bava mezi`a* 114b; BT *Keritot* 6b. Though writing in 1943, here, too, Amiel seems unaware of what was happening in Europe.

[102]. Dt. 23:21. See also BT *Bava mezi`a* 70b; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Malveh* 5:1. Give details of an English version – אין לזה משמעות בהקשרים של ספרות קלאסית כזאת. On the efforts of Amiel's contemporary Rabbi Simeon Shkop to deal with these issues, see A. Sagi, "A Study in Rabbi Simeon Shkop's Halakhic Thinking", *Da`at* 35 (1995), pp. 99-114, 102-104 (Hebrew).

[103]. BT *Shabbat* 14b-15a; JT *Pesahim* 6b; JT *Ketubbot* 50a.

[104]. BT *Nazir* 54b. See also *Tosafot* on BT *Nazir* 20a, s.v. *leima be-ha*; *Tosafot* on BT *Nazir* 15b, s.v. *ve-a-avira litlot*; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Tume`at met* 11:1-2. Give details of an English version – אין לכך משמעות בספרות קלאסית כזאת.

[105]. BT *Yevamot* 46b; BT *Avodah Zarah* 31a; Maimonides, *Mishneh torah*, *Hilkhot Ma'akhalot asurim* 11:4, 6. Give details of an English version – אין לכך משמעות בספרות קלאסית כזאת.

[106]. BT *Yevamot* 47b, 109b; BT *Qiddushin* 70b.

[107]. BT *Sanhedrin* 44a.

[108]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 235-236.

[109]. Amiel emphasizes the difference between Jewish internationalism, which flows from love of God's creatures and consciousness of God's unity, and the internationalism of the gentile nations, grounded, like their nationalism, in hatred of the Other and alienation from him. See Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 114.

> only on national historical events but also on nature, shared by all who live on earth… the spring festival… the harvest festival.
> Even the Sabbath is given two rationales in the Torah – the nationalist rationale of the Exodus from Egypt and the human rationale of "in six days the LORD made heaven and earth"… Similarly, our New Year (Rosh Hashanah) celebrates primarily not our new year, which takes place at the new moon of the month of Nisan, but their new year…. When King Solomon built the Temple, he did not build it solely for his people; rather, he expressly prayed "Or if a foreigner who is not of Your people Israel… comes to pray toward this House, oh, hear in Your heavenly abode …."[110] Our prophets felt themselves to be prophets not only to the Israelites, and they knew their role to be "a prophet [to] the nations"[111] They felt the woes of each and every nation.[112]

Unlike racism, Amiel argued, Jewish nationalism means Israel takes on duties,[113] not privileges. The purpose of nationalism is the person (it was Pharaoh who first called Israel a "nation").[114] Notwithstanding the sources noted earlier, he maintains that Israel does not oust the rest of humanity from the category of "human." Very much the contrary: the Israelite nation establishes the linkage among all people under the rubric of "Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?" (Mal. 2:10).[115] Jewish nationalism is directed toward peace among nations, and in the Temple we prayed that "My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples." If they do not heed our prayer and do not come to our house, we nevertheless sacrifice "seventy bulls, corresponding to the seventy nations."[116]
Israel cherishes proselytes, and the rabbis argued that "the Holy One blessed be He exiled Israel among the nations only so they would gain proselytes".[117] The statement about proselytes being as difficult as a rash is meant "in praise of proselytes, who are more punctilious in observing the commandments than are [native-born] Israelites, causing accusations against us [in the divine court]".[118] Maimonides' epistle to Obadiah the Proselyte[119] takes the normative view.[120] The proselyte is a member of the nation while the apostate is a stranger,[121] and it is no by happenstance that the Messiah will be the descendant of a Moabitess.

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[110]. 1 Kings 8:41.
[111]. Jeremiah 1:5.
[112]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 236-237.
[113]. Ibid., p. 241
[114]. Ibid., p. 239.
[115]. "There is only one nation in the world, the nation of Israel, that highlights the first human and links its own ancestors to that first human as the specific is linked to the general" (ibid., p. 243).
[116]. Ibid., p. 111.
[117]. BT *Pesahim* 27b; Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 111, 133.
[118]. (*Tosafot* to BT *Qiddushin* 48a); Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 111, 133.
[119]. Maimonides, "Letter to Obadiah the Proselyte," in I. Twersky (ed.), *A Maimonides Reader*, Springfield: Behrman House, 1972, pp. 475-476.
[120]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 112.
[121]. Ibid., p. 113.

The Culture of the Sword vs. the Culture of the Pen

Amiel attacked the philosophical, secular and Christian ideas regarding the morality of war;[122] in all of them, he identified a strain of violence against the "Other." Philosophy's monistic and narrow "knowledge of the truth" brings with it an ethics of aggression that imposes on the Other the "good" as defined by whoever is possessed of might or authority. That was how the Inquisition was justified, "for Christian morality… wanted to cram what pleased it into the Other… The Christians wanted to bring the souls of the others into Paradise, and if doing so required that they be burned alive, that did not matter."[123] "Moral" and violent monism of this sort appears as well in the secular approach, which Amiel sees as afflicted by the sin of eating from the "Tree of Knowledge," that is, as imprisoned within its technology and its pursuit of quality of life.[124] Secular, technological modernism makes a person's life more pleasant and comfortable but simultaneously produces killing machines that can subject humanity to greater disasters than those associated with the medieval Crusades.[125] Even worse, society's degree of comfort depends on the capacity to kill that is available to the rulers.[126] War is the impetus to technological creativity that pampers its beneficiaries, which in turn fans the warlike spirit as the cycle recurs.[127] That, in his view, is the logic underlying the great wars of the twentieth century.[128] The West ate from the Tree of Knowledge, but the Jewish idea of peace involves eating from the Tree of Life embodied in pursuit of law and righteousness[129] embracing mankind and nature.[130]

Amiel also contrasts Amalek and Israel. "Amalekism despises the weak; Judaism despises the mighty. Amalekism is concerned about the pursuers; the God of Israel is concerned about the pursued." Judaism does not believe in confronting force with force – "The accuser does not become the defender. We cannot extirpate evil from the world through the use of evil itself. We cannot eliminate terror from the world by terrorizing from the opposite side, and we therefore do not make war against physical might by the use of physical might." Rather, "war against the sword" should be waged "through the book. The book of paper or parchment… will prevail over all the swords." [131] This has always been Israel's way.[132] The nations of the

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[122]. Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 4:5. Amiel places his criticism of Christian culture and secular-Western culture under a single rubric, but he also differentiates between them, favoring Inquisitional Christianity over the secularism that gave rise to the world wars. For all its horrors, the Inquisition involved a conflict "for the sake of Heaven." In contrast, the conflict with factional and secular political thought no longer made use of a religious mask (*To the Perplexed*, pp. 137-138). Beneath the secular ideology, he thought, there festered the worst form of racism.

[123]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 33.

[124]. *Darkhei Mosheh*, p. 22.

[125]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 135.

[126]. On the contradictory nature of these trends, see ibid., p. 136.

[127]. Ibid., p. 137.

[128]. *Darkhei Mosheh*, pp. 19-20.

[129]. Ibid., p. 22.

[130]. Amiel, *The Sabbath Queen*, p. 24.

[131]. M.A. Amiel, *Discourses to my People*, Warsaw: Hacefira Publication, 1943, part 3, p. 134 (Hebrew).

[132]. In *Discourses*, pp. 135-136 he cites precedents in that regard going all the way back to Joseph's appearence before Pharaoh and continuing with Joshua confronting Amalek, Simeon the Just before Alexander of Macedon, and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai before Vespasian and Titus. After citing the *midrash* at BT *Yoma* 69a, he adds: "Simeon the Just waged war against Alexander of Macedon; we confront military garb with priestly garb". See further on the power of the book, ibid., p. 137.

world regarded this aspect of Jewish culture as so bizarre, Amiel suggests, that blood libels ensued on the premise that Jews must engage in some form of bloodshed.[133]

This does not mean, however, that Israel should never take up the sword:

> The Israelite nation has an extreme hatred for war, defensive war included. If they sometimes are compelled, having no choice in the matter, to apply the undisputed *halakhah* that "if one rises up to kill you, kill him first," they do so with profuse sorrow and grief, for they are the descendents of Jacob, who was more fearful of having to kill than of being killed.[134]

The loathing of war,[135] then, flows from fear of taking the lives of others, and war is used, if at all, only to avoid a worse war.[136] But spilling of innocent blood can never be the "price" paid for Israel's redemption, for we are dealing with the prohibition of "You shall not murder." "In my opinion," Amiel argues, "even if we knew that by doing so [that is, waging war], we would achieve the full redemption, we would be duty-bound firmly to defer that 'redemption' rather than be redeemed through blood."[137]

Zionism and Secular Socialism: A Clash of word-views

The governments of states and the law of the Torah represent two clashing word-views. According to the Torah, "The collective contains nothing that is not in the individual"; accordingly, "each and every human individual is an entire world in himself. Socialist justice, however" – the polar opposite of the Torah – "is a successor to ancient idolatrous justice, which saw the individual person as important only insofar as his existence was useful to society."[138] Socialism, then, is based on the egotism of the group, the preservation of its might, and the fulfillment of its desires. The Torah's justice, in contrast, focuses on the individual, his troubles, and his will.[139] One seeking true equality, Amiel argues, should choose the Jewish approach, which differs from the socio-centrism that transforms the individual into an object serving the collective. Jewish equality is absolute, drawing no distinction between rich and poor: "you shall have one law"[140]. Contrary to what political

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[133]. "Not without due consideration did our enemies accuse us with blood libels, for their minds could not encompass how a nation could differ from all other nations and exist in the world without drawing blood. According their theory, they had no alternative but to suspect us of drawing blood in secret instead of openly as they do, spilling blood as water" (ibid., p. 137).

[134]. Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[135]. "For the sword has brought us, and brings to all the world, only the Ninth of Av [that is, mourning] and only graves" (ibid., p. 71).

[136]. "Because it [warfare] is extremely repugnant to us, and we engage in it only when necessary to end warfare" (ibid, p. 70).

[137]. M.A. Amiel, "The Prohibition of Murder with Respect to Arabs", *Tehumin* 10 (1989), p. 148 (Hebrew). According to Amiel, the negative Tree of Knowledge is the father of technology that is born or and nurtured by the desire for war. See *Darkhei Mosheh*, "*Darkah Shel Torah*," p. 22. On his attitude toward and critique of the policy of restraint in the face of Arab provocation, see his "On the Disturbances and on Restraint", *Ha-zofeh*, 28 Tammuz 5698 [summer 1938], p. 3 (Hebrew).

[138]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 86; *To the Perplexed*, p. 94.

[139]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, pp. 91-92. "All of Judaism's principles… pertain to the individual will, until it becomes second nature within the Jewish nation, while all the principles of socialist justice are built exclusively on the collective will" (ibid., p. 87).

[140]. Leviticus 23:22.

logic might suggest, the Torah commands "nor shall you show deference to a poor man in his dispute";[141] regarding the wealthy, it directs "you shall show no partiality."[142] Judaism grants absolute liberty to each individual; socialism, in contrast, enslaves individuals.[143] Socialism considers equality – and history and culture overall – through the narrow lens of "gut and bread alone"; in Judaism, meanwhile, the concept of the "image of God" inherent in man is the basis on which man assumes a higher standing.[144] Socialism promotes culture's decay into a barbarism holding that "the lower a person's standing on the ladder of development, the greater his ties to society."[145] Its governing principles are fear and egotism: "protect me and I will protect you" and "but for the fear of government, a man would consume his fellow man alive." Its family structure is similarly afflicted.[146]

Zionism, in contrast, can be expected to establish a system of governance based on the centrality of the individual. A Jewish ethics demands "honoring one's parents" even when doing so runs counter to social utility; and the Jewish duty to love mankind applies universally. As he recognizes, the approach is not without its weaknesses and can sometimes allow for "bad and difficult" events; an example is the biblical story of the Gibeah concubine, in which we see the application of the idea that the standing of the individual (in this case, the concubine) outweighs the large number of people who were killed.[147] Rabbi Amiel was aware of how the ideal challenges the actual social structure.

Jewish Trends Interfering With the Jewish State

This individualistic character of Jewish ethical doctrine rebuffs every form of governance and social order. Disorder is typical of Israel and it is embedded in the individualistic system of moral governance. The individual's lack of subordination to the collective generates an irresolvable tension with the efforts of "social governance" impose discipline on one and all.[148] In this spirit, Judaism requires the giving of charity to anyone who requests it, even a fraud or a loafer, "for it is better that the collective suffer in order to sustain those few people who are poor and not frauds."[149] As a result, and contrary to conventional sound economics, begging and idleness become more prevalent in Israel. The emphasis on individualism can also lead to gratuitous hatred growing out of the lack of inner discipline, as people refuse to yield to the group's leaders. "Each person judges his judges and builds himself a platform, without accepting the authority of the collective"; as a further result, factions become more numerous in Israel.[150]

This rebelliousness enabled Israel to survive the Exile ("in no way do we become self-effacing despite the majority standing against us") but makes it harder for it to maintain an independent state.[151] Amiel emphasizes how prophecy always took stands that challenged the

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[141]. Exodus 23:3.
[142]. Dteuteronomy 16:19
[143]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 87; *To the Perplexed*, p. 94.
[144]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 89; *To the Perplexed*, p. 95.
[145]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 95.
[146]. Ibid., p. 92.
[147]. "Indeed, the results were very bad. An unprecedented civil war raged… until they themselves saw that they had gone too far 'and they raised their voices and wept'" (Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 69-70).
[148]. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
[149]. Ibid., p. 72.
[150]. Loc. cit.
[151]. And this is "the downside of the foregoing trait … that every individual refuses to submit even to the will of his own collective, the Jewish collective itself" (Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, pp. 78-79).

accepted economic order and reasonable notions of security. In that regard, he cites its stance against those who accumulated wealth and oppressed the poor and its corresponding support for the lowly;[152] the commandment to observe the sabbatical year;[153] the abandonment of Israel's borders on each of the three annual festivals when the nation gathered in Jerusalem; the establishment of a single law for citizens and aliens alike;[154] and the exemption from military service, rather than the punishment or intimidation, of those who are fearful or tenderhearted.

Subservience to God as the Solution to the Moral Paradox

There is an obvious tension, of which Rabbi Amiel was well aware, between a moral vision and a political, economic, and social reality. He argued that prophecy looked toward "the return to Zion" and the establishment of an improved "kingdom of Israel," yet it placed that reality under the rubric of "What I see for them is not yet, what I behold will not be soon" (Num. 24:17), as something reserved for "the end of days".[155] The social, economic, moral, and political vision that anticipates a state in which "nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war" and "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb" – conditions for realizing Jewish morality – requires "deferral of the kingdom of Israel to the end of days". That deferral "does not result, Heaven forbid, from lack of love for the Israelite nation that is deteriorating in its Exile and is oppressed by endless torments; rather, it is the consequence of 'our legal and moral justice,' which is one of our traits, a trait of our soul."[156]

Amiel identifies a paradoxical "unity of opposites" in the words of the prophets and believes it something we should seize on. On the one hand, we should maintain an individualist morality that opposes all subjugation and all governance by the collective – an objective that accounts for Israel's continued exile from its land.[157] On the other hand, we should see within that vision a moral objective of absolute liberty that can be fulfilled through Israel's return to its land. "But how is it possible for these two opposites to coexist in a single subject, with the cause remaining in force but the effect – the bad result – not ensuing?"[158]

This paradox can be resolved only through the subservience of the individual to God: "This is the 'yoke of Torah,' which is superior to both the 'yoke of government' and the 'yoke of sound conduct.' Instead of the authority of the collective, there is the authority of the One who said 'they are My slaves, not slaves of slaves.'" The difference is that "even the authority of the collective is a sort of subservience and enslavement, while the authority of the One who said 'they are My slaves' is in no way enslavement, for there is no alien or external factor; there is only subservience to God, who is the essence and soul of man."[159] That subservience identifies man with the "spirit of the world," which establishes the moral ideal.

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[152]. Ibid., pp. 102-103.
[153]. Amiel, *To the Perplexed*, p. 214.
[154]. Ibid., p. 215.
[155]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, pp. 83-84.
[156]. Loc. cit.
[157]. On this approach, exile was something positive; see Amiel, "Exile and Redemption", *Ha-mizrahi* 49 (1920), p. 6 (Hebrew). In exile, he believes, Israel was liberated from the bonds of nationalism and became the people of the Torah. See also his "The Jewish Idea of Redemption", *Ha-boqer* 19 (1939), p. 2 (Hebrew).
[158]. Amiel, *Social Justice and our Legal and Moral Justice*, p. 84.
[159]. Ibid., p. 85.

And yet, from a realistic perspective, the ability to establish a moral government requires "conditions in which 'the land shall be filled with devotion to the LORD as water covers the sea' and 'all your children shall be disciples of the LORD.'" For it is clear that

> When all is said and done, the world is the same all over, and it is impossible for one state to be an exception differing in the extreme from all others, like a small island in a great sea; for in that case, it would be fated to be uprooted and eliminated from the world. It is impossible for one state to exist as a state of mercy alone when the entire world does not want to recognize even the quality of justice... It is impossible for one state to exist solely under the yoke of Torah when the entire world deals only with the yoke of government and the yoke of proper conduct… It is impossible for one state to exist under the attribute of kindness exceeding the law when the whole world fails to pay attention even to what is obligatory… And, of course, the latter days are still far removed from us. Still, every infinite ideal… has stages and degrees by which its summit can be approached, but all those stages must be directed toward the top of the ladder.[160]

Conclusions

The articles by Amiel and Kook that we have discussed seem to present two significant and separate critiques of Kant. They suggest an alternative to his political notions of the secular state on the one hand, and to his secularization of the grounds for universal knowledge on the knowledge. Both Amiel and Kook point out the vitality of an approach to the problems of the secular state that is rooted in a religious metaphysical discourse.

We wish to suggest that the very secularism that is inherent in the notion of the state is not necessarily the best safeguard of civil liberties. Indeed it seems that religious thought might be drawn upon for articulating visions of Statehood and of co-existence that aspire to a higher degree of tolerance and acceptance than anything ever accomplished in liberal discourse.

However, perhaps more importantly, it seems clear that the almost axiomatic assumption that religion is an obstacle to compromise and therefore – by way of extension – that the opinions of religious people are an obstacle to peace must be reconsidered. The knee-jerk response that dominates so much of the international discourse about peace rejects religious thinkers and fails to appreciate how religious thought might contribute powerfully to the articulation of a peaceful vision for the future. We wish to suggest that a philosophy of peace that is mindful of religious metaphysics, if constructed with careful attention to the subtleties and depths of the Jewish tradition, might stand a chance of winning not only the support but perhaps even the enthusiasm of those who seek to build a Jewish life in the State of Israel full of theological and mystical meaning.

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[160]. Ibid.