



Rosh HaShana Insert

The Sublime Wonder of Living

Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Among the many things that religious tradition holds in store for us is a legacy of wonder. The surest way to suppress our ability to understand the meaning of God and the importance of worship is to take things for granted. Indifference to the sublime wonder of living is the root of sin.”

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 1955, p. 43

Why is “indifference to the sublime wonder of living considered “the “root of sin”?”

How does Jewish tradition enable us to not to take things for granted? In your view, is the existence of Israel a wonder? Why? Why not? Does it matter?

The Life You Have Yona Wallach

The life you have
Is the life you've lived
Look back with understanding
Find the starting point
The creation
Create yourself
That's the best world
The only one you'll be able to create
It's all within you
Uncover it

Start from the beginning
Look at your life
As a bad lesson
About things that were
As a punishment
Banishment
Standing in the corner
A knockout in the first round
Fix it
As one who has recovered
As one who has fallen ill

Yona Wallach, *The Life You Have*, in: “Mofah,” *Hakibbutz Hameuhad*, 1985, p. 32.

What themes are common to Yona Wallach's poem and the thoughts that preoccupy an individual on the eve of Rosh Hasahana?

The Goals of Zionism At This Hour

David Ben Gurion

“Zionism as an idea and vision is as old as Jacob the Patriarch. Zionism as a movement and enterprise is new, a child of the last three generations, and constitutes a novel shift in the history of the Jewish people and in its thoughts and practices. It is a shift in the people’s desire to shape their own destiny and fulfill the act of its redemption through a prudent and purposeful effort.

Because of Jewish history, the Zionist vision is fixed and remains unchanged. But the Zionism that executes it out undergoes change and variation and is dependent on time and place-related circumstances. The factors underlying Zionist fulfillment, the needs that Zionism is required to provide, the obstacles found on its path, and the strengths on which it relies – are embedded in the Jewish, Land of Israel and universal essence, which time and again revitalizes itself. Our era is replete with changes, and the hour is an hour of world war, and Zionism at this hour is completely different than the Zionism that existed until now.”

“Bema’aracha”, Volume 4

Are Ben Gurion’s words, which were written in 1942, still relevant today?

• What is “Zionism at this hour” and how is it different than “the Zionism that existed until now”?

What does “the naivety of faith – is the mother of all great deeds” mean?

• Do we perhaps lack the “naivety of faith” today? Why?
• What can be done to ensure that our dreams are not viewed as an unattainable utopia?

A New Beginning Yaacov Hazan

“...Socialist and pioneering Zionism viewed aliyah (immigration) as just the first stage of Zionist fulfillment. It was clear that if the Zionist revolution would end with that – Zionism would have no future. The Land of Israel would turn into a congregated Diaspora. The second and crucial stage of Zionist fulfillment entailed a fundamental change of our people’s entire social and economic structure and a regeneration of everything comprising our moral and cultural world.

The task seemed to be entirely in our own hands. “If you will it – it is no dream.” And we did will it and we did fulfill it. In our eyes, it was not utopia. And who knows whether we would have had the strength to embark on this journey had we seen then the whole path that was still ahead of us. The naivety – the naivety of faith – is the mother of all great deeds.”

Excerpts from The Zionist Revolution



Zionism as a Perpetual Revolution

Shlomo Avineri

“...That is why it is necessary to understand that the Zionist revolution is not yet over. It did not end with the establishment of the State, and not with a victory in any of the wars. It is not over and will not be over even if complete peace is achieved with all the Arab nations. That is because the Zionist revolution is very basically a permanent revolution: a revolution against those powerful forces in Jewish history, existing at least partially within the Jewish people, which have turned the Jews from a people who are economically and socially self-reliant and assume responsibility for their destiny, into a community living at the margin of and sometimes living off alien communities. Zionism is a revolution against the natural forces of Jewish life that prompt large congregations of Jews to seek good and relatively easy livelihoods – which actually stems from the Jewish people’s ability to take action, a practice they adopted in the midst of their exiles and sufferings – rather than address the need to build a national society, which means bearing the burden of the community as a whole and not only attending to the individual....Zionism is a revolution against those trends in the Jewish people, trends which enabled Jews to accommodate as individuals even to the harshest realities of exile, and even in the absence of a sovereign existence. Zionism is an attempt to restore the supremacy of the public, communitarian, social and national aspects to the Jewish people, at the expense of personal ease, bourgeois comfort and the good life of the individual.

For this reason the Land of Israel is bought with pain, for this reason the Zionist revolution must also be a far-reaching social revolution, and for this reason Zionism is a revolution against Jewish history. Hence, a laissez-faire economy, which means that the individual unloads his responsibility towards the community as a whole, also means bringing Exile back to the Land of Israel. So there can be no revival for Zionism without a revolution that shuns the Jewish mores which perpetually seek to crystallize and take form while adapting to reality, rather than taking control over it. Consequently, the State of Israel will continue to constitute the focus of the Jewish people, in all their diasporas, only if it will be different and be more radical and extreme than those diasporas themselves.

That is the significance of the Zionist revolution, and that is why it will never come to an end. Because revolutions that have ended, start belonging to the kingdom of the past;

So whoever believes that the Zionist revolution has a future, must remember that it has only begun – and its everlasting test will be to what degree it releases the Jewish people from those historical inclinations which in the past confined them to the Diaspora. From this perspective, there is profound historical truth in the saying that the Exile is perpetuated out of forgetfulness, and remembering it is the secret of redemption.”

Excerpts from “The different shades of the Zionist Idea: Chapters in the Chronicles of the Jewish National Thought.

Why in Avineri’s opinion is the secret of redemption inherent in remembering the Exile?

Why does he believe that “the Zionist revolution is very basically a permanent revolution”? Why must it not belong to the “kingdom of the past”?

