

Abstracts

Continuity or Rebirth: The Role of Memory in Post-Holocaust Religious Thought

Arye Edrei

This article deals with the differences between Holocaust memorial in the religious and secular communities in Israel. The article contends that there is a significant difference between these two groups in their accepted understandings of the concept of remembrance. The difference manifests itself both in the content and the methods of remembrance — in what is being remembered and how it is remembered. In an allegorical manner, one could describe the disparity as the distinction between “remembering the destruction of the Temple” (*zekher le-hurban*) and “remembering the Temple” (*zekher le-mikdash*). Secular Israeli remembrance of the Holocaust during the years discussed in the article focused on the destruction; the catastrophe, the death camps, and the helplessness of the Jews in confronting this evil. In this context, the State of Israel was perceived as a response to the Holocaust, a new reality that would protect the Jews from such catastrophes in the future. As part of this approach, the emphasis on the ghetto rebellions served as a bridge to the new and better world to be built. In contrast, the *haredi* world emphasized the loss — not the Holocaust itself, but the vibrant spiritual world that had been destroyed. The chasm between these two approaches flows from fundamental differences in their perspectives.

A fundamental claim of traditional religious society is its connection to previous generations. It envisions itself as a vehicle for continuity. The break caused by the Holocaust between the religious world that had preceded the Holocaust and that which remained in its wake threatened the very foundations of the community. The rabbis therefore diverted the remembrance from the destruction and the destroyers to the memory of the world that had been destroyed. This article contends that religious society was intensely involved in memorializing the Holocaust, but in a manner that

was totally different than the method that was accepted in the secular society in Israel. The rabbis refused to designate a day of remembrance for the Holocaust, for their goal was not to memorialize but to restore. *Haredi* remembrance of the Holocaust was characterized by the rebuilding of *yeshivot* that had been destroyed, the publication of Torah insights that had been lost, and the restoration of Hassidic communities. The restoration of the world that had been destroyed was a necessary condition for building a new world, which would be a continuation of the world that had existed prior to the Holocaust. At the same time, as in any act of memorial, this remembrance included forgetting, at times intentional and conscious. It failed to include aspects of society that had existed outside the parameters of the *yeshivot* and the Hassidic communities, and also excluded the perception of Jews as helpless in their exile. In addition, the destruction itself did not play a significant role in this remembrance, recalled only when relevant to understanding the values of the Jews prior to the Holocaust.

In contrast, secular Jewish society in Israel sought to emphasize the rupture between the Jewish world that had existed before the Holocaust and the new world that was to be rebuilt in its wake. Their remembrance of the Holocaust accentuated the qualitative difference between the new world and the old. In their perception, the new world was a world in which such horrifying events could not take place. As in the religious remembrance, the secular Israeli Holocaust memorial also included forgetting. It tried to overlook the fact that the Jewish world prior to the Holocaust was primarily a religious world that was spiritually and intellectually creative and vibrant.

The conflict over Holocaust remembrance can serve as a window on the contemporary values conflict between these two societies. At the same time, in spite of the fundamental and substantial differences reflected in this issue, there is also a common denominator between these two approaches to remembrance. Both express a strong commitment to the collective life of the Jewish people, and a commitment to the continuity of Jewish existence and history. They share a common goal — the building of a new Jewish world. This, however, does not blur the unbridgeable chasm between them regarding the content of Holocaust remembrance — whether it should foster the building of a totally new Jewish society, or the restoration of a world that was lost.

The Beautiful War — Representations of War in Israeli Culture, 1967–73

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri

The focus of this research is the war discourse — its shapers and evolution — conducted within Israeli culture in the years between the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War. The article points to the existence of a double-faced war discourse, which enabled Israel to preserve a traditional imago as a nation of peace, as well as the imago of being a victor. The latter imago, as conveyed by the discourse, is referred to in the article as: “the Discourse of Beautiful War.” The discourse of “the beautiful war” is the product of choosing the practice of violence and adopting it as a preferred policy. It functioned as a psychological mechanism, which enabled one to grasp the War of Attrition (1969–70) and terrorist actions, while minimizing opposition and neutralizing “public exhaustion.” The examination of war discourse pertains to two components: “the beautiful War” — the idealization of the war and the construction of “war” as a positive value, and “the beautiful identity” — beautifying the identity of all the participants in the war.

The article opens with a presentation of the historical roots of “the Discourse of Beautiful War” in Hebrew literature, and positions the study within the broader context of the study of militarism. The examination, understanding and mapping of the concept of “war” have been done here through a diversified corpus, which contains over two hundred items from the years 1967–73, including speeches given by leaders, canonized literature and children’s literature, press articles, poems and songs from this period, especially those sung by the military entertainment corps. The article concludes with a proposal to examine the existence of “the Discourse of Beautiful War” in periods and contexts that exceed the period discussed in the article. For example, the potential contribution of the existence of such a discourse to the shaping of public opinion regarding the two Lebanon Wars.

Post-Zionism in the Religious-Zionist Camp: The “Jewish Leadership” Movement

Motti Inbari

The article discusses the “Jewish Leadership” movement. This organization was created in the aftermath of the crisis following the Oslo process, and has its origins in the mass demonstrations against the Israeli government as part of the *Zo Artzeinu* (“This is Our Land”) movement. After the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1995), the movement changed both its name and its methods, and became involved in parliamentary politics.

The movement’s manifesto seeks to realize the vision regarding a mass movement of redemption that will lead to the establishment of a theocratic regime in the biblical Land of Israel. This ideological platform was drafted by Motti Karpel, the spiritual leader of the movement.

“Jewish Leadership” seeks to realize its “religious revolution” through its involvement in the Likud party. The movement joined the Likud en bloc, and began to sign up large numbers of new party members. As a result, the movement has acquired political power within the Likud Central Committee, enabling it to play a significant role in the Israeli political arena.

This is a dynamic and active movement with a growing membership. Of all the movements on the religious right wing in Israel, “Jewish Leadership” is one of the few whose platforms openly advocate a theocratic ideology. Virtually no significant opposition has been seen to the methods and platform of “Jewish Leadership” within the religious Zionist circles, even though its subversive principles threaten Israel as a democratic state.

Shall We Remember Them All?

The Exclusion of the Etzel (National Military Organization) and Lehi (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel) Fallen from the “Narrative” of Statehood: On Bereavement, Memory and the Theory of De-legitimization against Herut

Udi Lebel

This article discusses the sphere of bereavement and memory, a significant component in the activities of political actors attempting to acquire power and delegitimize rivals. It also seeks to illustrate the connection between political investment in past self-image and the transference of that image to contemporary and future political standing. This conceptual framework is employed to reveal the efforts of the ruling political party, Mapai, during the first decades following the foundation of the State of Israel, to shape a sphere of state bereavement and memory. This sphere excluded the fallen soldiers of the dissident underground, Etzel and Lehi, while including the fallen of the Haganah, the underground military wing of the establishment, during the struggle for political independence. On the other hand, the behavior of the political opposition, Herut, appears consonant with research descriptions of groups excluded from state memory who seek inclusion, and thus political legitimacy, in order to appear fit to hold state office in the future. Entrance into the circle of official memory transpires in direct relation to the degree of public legitimacy the outside contender amasses.

The article opens with a theoretical framework that clarifies the central concepts employed in the course of the analysis, focusing especially on the linkage between memory, bereavement, domination and political de-legitimization. This is followed by an account of the dynamics emerging from the interaction of the aforementioned factors in the various public spheres (political, historiographical, geographical, political communication), through identifying the political negotiating stances over memory that occurred in each of these between Mapai and Herut representatives over the underground fallen.

The article seeks to show that the field of memory is a product of political engineering geared to political interests and strategies, which often finds its sharpest delineation during the period of state-foundation and state-building when hegemony issues are most salient.

Barriers: Liminal Thresholds in A.B. Yehoshua's Ethical Geography

Avidov Lipsker

A.B. Yehoshua's writings function as a kind of Jewish itinerary. As a whole, his literary work sketches the most detailed atlas drawn up by any modern Hebrew writer, with the exception perhaps of Agnon. As a literary atlas, Yehoshua's works contain an exceptionally specific geography, which can be termed "multinational geography under shrunken skies"; that is to say, a secular human spaciousness. Wandering in such geography is led by the vagabond himself, with utter autonomy generating extremities that question the citizenship of the postmodern drifters in their habitual wandering in liminal regions.

Yehoshua's writings reflect two different civic-geographic patterns with two iniquitous possibilities occurring in these liminal zones: one possibility is characterized by Heinrich von Kleist's fictional world — a *world of law that is orderless*; the second possibility is characterized by Kafka's fiction — a *lawless world of civil order*.

The characteristic location of these threshold regions is the barrier. Yehoshua mobilizes his wandering energies within the barrier, which, moreover, embodies a heterotopy in which the natural course of life is blocked. Despite this blockage, these energies regroup to create a greater form of energy, something like a dam.

At the same time, this peculiar cartography almost unwillingly denies any kind of celestial mapping. When Yehoshua wishes to include such a place of religious blockage within his cartography, for instance, the Western Wall in Jerusalem, as a well-known site of Jewish pilgrimage, he portrays it as a place of total occlusion — a blockage from which one can only turn to secular, ethical and political thought.

Voting for Shas — The Rational Answer to Emotional Distress

Avi Picard

The Shas party is a phenomenon in Israel's political arena. A party representing a small section of society succeeded, in one decade, in becoming one of the major

forces in Israeli politics. It has further succeeded in maintaining this position for more than a decade since. In addition, Shas is described and represented as an ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*) party, while the majority of its voters do not belong to the ultra-Orthodox population.

In trying to solve this puzzle, political analysts have tended to focus on circumstantial explanations. But these explanations can easily be refuted, and the need for a different explanation for each election suggests that something deeper is at work. Social activists ascribe Shas's success to the social services it provides, from formal and informal education to hot meals for the poor. But this cannot explain the dimensions of Shas's support. Other explanations have dealt with Shas as representing the national identity.

This article will argue that Shas has gained its support due to its cultural agenda. For many years, the culture of Jews from Islamic countries was discriminated against and denied in Israel. The descendants of Jews from Muslim countries, who immigrated in the 1950s and '60s, the *Mizrachim*, are overrepresented in the lower classes of Israel's socioeconomic scale. One aspect of this representation is the cultural issue. These "second-class Israelis" were ashamed of their parents' culture and heritage. In voting for Shas, they found a remedy for their feelings of inferiority. Focusing on the tradition of Sephardi Jewry, Shas has empowered many Israelis of Sephardi origin. Shas gives pride where there was once humiliation, and touches on the most painful and longlasting aspects of the Sephardi-Ashkenazi tensions in Israel.

Conscientious Objection and Jewish Tradition

Avi Sagi

This article focuses on the status of conscientious objection in the Jewish tradition. In order to address this question, the first section is devoted to an analysis of the meaning of the term "conscientious objection."

Upon analysis, conscientious objection is found to mean a refusal to perform an action required by law, because of a contradiction between that action and a central component of the objector's core identity. The objector finds himself forced to object because, were he not to do so, his basic identity would be severely damaged.

Can the Jewish tradition, as a normative tradition grounded in divine command, recognize damage to an individual's identity as justification/reason for failure to perform normative obligations? Critical discussion of a wide variety of halakhic (Jewish normative) sources leads to the conclusion that Jewish canonical sources do not include texts that justify or support conscientious objection. Nevertheless, the article indicates that, within the Jewish tradition, there is potential for developing a position that recognizes the validity of conscientious objection.

Book Review

**Alexander Yakobson, and Amnon Rubinstein,
*Israel and the Family of Nations***

Gidon Sapir

The last few years in Israel have seen rising controversy regarding the justification for the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. It occasionally appears that in the academic world at least, those claiming a lack of such a justification for a Jewish state are the dominant voice. Zionist intellectual circles have begun recently to mount a counter attack, and Yakobson and Rubinstein's book is one of the first harbingers of this offensive.

The authors rely on the comparative claim as the basis of Israel's right to be constituted as the nation-state of the Jewish people. In so doing, they almost totally avoid any discussion of the normative justifications for a nation-state. Nor do they assess the relevance attaching to the unique circumstances of the Jewish people for such a discussion. They claim that discussion of these two issues is not essential to the success of their undertaking. In the article, I challenge this claim. I explain why it is impossible to avoid the value-laden discussion and the unique circumstances of the Jewish people, and delineate the preliminary contours of this kind of discussion.