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Prof. David Ohana: They did not like us at Neve Dkalim referring to the town of Gush Katif, Gaza, evacuated in Israel unilateral disengagement plan which was proposed by Ariel Sharon and removed all Israelis from the Gaza Strip on August 2005. The result was a disaster, a destruction. They say: 'We have no love for the Arabs. We have no love for the IDF, we have no love for the state. All the Arabs understand is force.' Gadi, A teenage settler, is not shocked when Muslims gravestones are being vandalized in the cemetery behind the house of contention nor does he care that Palestinian civilians are being hurt and army property destroyed. Last Independence Day Gadi had a serious clash with his father and mother after they hanged the flag from the house and went to the synagogue to recite Hallel the prayer of thanksgiving. Gadi: 'This country has performed a transfer of its people. It is planning to do a transfer here in Hebron in Judea and Samaria. What connection do I have to this country? Why do I have to be happy here? Why do I have to respect its symbols or its policemen or its soldiers or its laws? Does it respect me? The morals of the state of Israel are the morals of gentiles of Western culture. When being asked about future elections in Israel he answered: Nothing will come out of this Knesset'. In Hebron we have witnessed a phenomenon which can be defined as politics of political despair.

The pathology of cultural criticism, to use the historian Fritz Shtern's expression, has many variants but the common denominator is the despair of the universal objective and general sphere in politics. Many faces are there to the escape from the political. Since Aristotle and Plato's virtue or the general good we have seen the general will to be in the public sphere. Politics were always directed to the whole society, to the universal and not to the particular, to the objective and not to the subjective, to the general and not to the private. The events of Hebron and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip are stages in the process of sectoralization of the settlers that wish to break loose from Israel's secular democracy. The acts of Baruch Goldstein and Yigal Amir after the Oslo agreement in 1993 can be seen as precedent to this kind of behavior. There was something in the arrogance surrounding Yigal Amir and about the pilgrims to the grave of Baruch Goldstein. It was a mistake to see their actions, the murder of Rabin and the act of terror at the Machpela as limited objectives. Their attainment of which was their final purpose. These objectives were only the tip of the iceberg of the wider manifestation of revulsion at the political and cultural establishment as such. Animosity towards decadent secular culture, contempt for the hedonistic consumer society and distrust of democratic rules. The total animation of these people from contemporary Israeli society resembles that of the students and the intellectuals of the Bader-Meinhoff terrorist group in Germany or the Red Brigades in Italy in the early 1970's. By setting fire to the department stores, hijacking planes, revolting against public institutions they hope to shake up the general affluent society and to create a

provocation that would cause hysteria among the media. Behind all this lay a deep despair. The basic assumption of Ulrika Meinhoff that one has to challenge Facism in society in order that it should be made visible to all led to an affirmation of nihilism for, in her words, one cannot change the world by firing a gun. One can only destroy it. The same applies to Goldstein, Amir and some of the radical settlers of Hebron. One cannot change the secular and the democratic nature of the state of Israel. Ulrika Meinhoff distorted interpretation of Marxism resembles Goldstein's and Amir's interpretations of Judaism. The common denominator was voiding the content of its original significance, the deterioration of values, the failure to distinguish between means and ends, and seeing the reality of conflict as all that mattered. Thus their actions are revealed not as ideological phenomenon but as politics of cultural despair. Their idealism became nihilism and their politics became terror. Political nihilism rises when faith in politics and ideology have been lost. Baruch Marzel one of the leaders of Hebron settlers gave a good account of the process of radicalization of his friend Goldstein. He despaired of politics in the country, he says. The ideological despair of Dr. Goldstein caused him to perform a nihilistic act with a political message. As if to say: 'I do not believe in the democratic process, rational acts or decisions by the majority'. His murderous act was intended to awaken the dormant Israeli consciousness after the Oslo Agreements.

Goldstein and later Yigal Amir conformed to the model of political theology put forward by Karl Schmitt. Schmitt politics has continual confrontation between enemies and friends. A belligerency that cannot be resolved. Karl Schmitt's political theology is contradictory. Schmitt thought that sovereignty did not reside with the people or the law but with the person or group able to take a decision. The modern constitutional state had been stripped of its theological assets. Political theology has an attempt to overcome the crisis of liberalism by finding a replacement for the political order. Schmitt wanted to recreate the Gordian Knot that held together theology and the state because he held that the weakening of the central government and the breakdown of authority derived from the crisis of secularism. The same problem has been confronted by Hans Blumberg and Habermass about the crisis of legitimacy. Schmitt's disciple from Kiyat Arba near Hebron, Baruch Goldstein thought that the confrontation between Jews and Arabs was eternal and historical. The Arabs, he said, are like a plague. They are a sickness that infects us. In an interview that he gave to the journalist Tom Roberts 9 days before the massacre he declared that the Israeli army sins against the Jewish people in preventing us from taking vengeance on the Arabs. We have to expel them. In the mystification of his image that took place on account of the place the Machpela Cave and the time proving Goldstein was seen as a mythical sacrifice that hastened the redemption. A Jew murdered for the sanctification of God as was written on his grave.

The climax of political nihilism in Israel was the three shots of Yigal Amir's revolver. In his testimony to the Shamgar commission that investigated the circumstances that led to the murder of Rabin, Amir claimed that only after he despaired of legitimate political activity he decided to murder Rabin. His political actions in the settlement Efrat and in weekends organized by students in the territories had no effect on the inhabitants of Israel. He saw the students as materialistic people who were on interested in greed and career. This was a personal admission that the murder of Rabin was mold of political protest. It was the culmination of cultural and political despair. In this respect the murder of Rabin was also a dual murder. It was a murder once as a

representative of the Oslo Agreements and once as representative of Israeli secular and democratic culture. Amir participated in the demonstrations of 'Zu Artzenu' a group by Moshe Feiglin that use aggressive and violent tactics in their protest against the Oslo Accords. Although Feiglin is now a candidate to the Knesset he still believes in taking initiatives in order to construct the third Temple and to establish in Israel a Messianic political culture. He suggests transferring the Palestinians if they will not accept Jewish sovereignty. Moti Karpel the author of the book *The Face Revolution, the Fall of Zionism and the Rise of Face Alternative*, and the ideologue of Jewish leadership Feiglin's political faction within the Likud party, predicts that when the crisis of Zionism will reach its climax Feiglin will be there. Goldstein, Amir and the hilltop youth are test cases for the limits of tolerance in the Israeli democracy. They seek to prove that individuals or militant minorities have the power to change the course of event through a violent act. Through shock treatment. They wish to destroy the tolerance illusion in their opinion of bourgeois society which they see as regressive tolerance. When it sees that all possible paths of deliverance have brought violence it raises its head and presumes to awaken the sleeping. All that is required is to pull the trigger of a revolver. Combined with the absolute political imperative this is a recipe for disaster. As soon as cultural pessimism is combined with political theology the justification is created for a strategy of violence. They wish to impose their own agenda. As said there are many faces to the escape from the political. Political theology is one of them. There is no such thing as political theology. There only political theologies.

In Zionism the national movement of the Jewish people in the modern age, there have been 4 stages of political theology. The first stage appeared with the writings, speeches and contentions of many of the founders and initial supporters of Zionism who saw it as a secular and universal form of Messianism. Similar to Romantic National Movements in Europe, Kishinev in Hungary, Miskolc in Poland, Mazzini in Italy. The second stage arose in Palestine in the 1920's and in the 1930's when Rabbi Avraham Hachohen Kook chide rabbi of Palestine developed a messianic political theology that in a dialectical manner mobilized socialist secularism for the purpose of establishing a renewed Jewish independence. The third stage arose in 1948 with the establishment of the state of Israel, the third Temple which religious thinkers and David Ben Gurion too described as the beginning of our redemption. The fourth stage appeared in 1967 after the Six Days War with the conquest of the greater Israel, with the messianic euphoria that greeted the reunion of the theological with the military and with the other activities of Gush Emunim, the religious national settler movement. Thus political theologies in Israel include 4 manifestations which have taken from theory to practice in the Zionist movement, in the state in the making, in the new born Israel that has been founded and in post 1967 Israel .

Jewish intellectuals from the early stages of the state of Israel had warned of the dangers lurking in the minds in which the theological and the political came together. Or in the words of Jean Asman explaining the concept of political theology in the ever changing relationships between political community and religious order, in short between power and salvation. David Ben Gurion the founder of the Israeli state and the first prime minister on the one hand and Rabbi Kook on the other hand are good examples of different varieties of political theology. In some ways they were on opposite sides of the fence. The former a political leader did not hesitate to appropriate the sacred to mobilize and harness to the task of building the state. The

latter a religious mentor did not hesitate to appropriate the profane to mobilize Zionist pioneers and to harness them to mystical speculations concerning the coming of the Messiah. Each had essentially different starting point from the other but the common denominator between them was the raising of the profane to the level of the sacred. The movement became a sacred vessel of Judaism and an essential element in the process of redemption. For a short while there was a kind of meeting between these two opposite outlooks but from that time onwards their paths again divided. Rabbi Kook turned into transcendental messianism which derived from the ruler of the universe. And Ben Gurion turned to Promethean messianism which will abide by the sovereignty of men. In both cases there was a defined fusion between the world of the sacred and the world of the profane. And both men had a clear political theology but Ben Gurion was the most extreme expression of a secular messianism and worked for politization of the theological while Rabbi Kook was the most extreme expression of religious messianism and worked for theologization of politics.

In founding the state Ben Gurion had made the most significant attempt at nationalization the Jewish messianic concept. Zionism was an historical experiment of nationalizing religious concepts and metamorphosing them into a secular sphere. Ben Gurion brought the matter to its ultimate conclusion in his attempt to nationalize the Bible and messianism. Ben Gurion act of nationalization in many spheres of life was a broad comprehensive and multifaceted secular ideology which took hold of religious myths and harnessed them to a project of statehood. In the middle between Rabbi Kook and Ben Gurion were the religious and secular intellectuals who were repelled by the political theologies of both these giants. The religious intellectuals saw politics with the messianic idea was likely to become. They proceeded the secular intellectuals and moved onward at early stage against Ben Gurion's messianic vision because this challenge has been imposed on them even earlier when they were exposed to the explosive interlacing of words in the political theology of Rabbi Kook. They had been there before. They felt that Ben Gurion was playing with fire. And the fact that this did not frighten him did not make it any less dangerous.

At the beginning of the period of nationalism of Israel three essays appeared by orthodox intellectuals concerning the dangers of mixing the theological and the political. The three articles were published in successive years. They were Akiva Ernst Simon's 'Are We Still Jews' in 1951, Baruch Kurzweil's 'The Nature and Origins of the Young Hebrew Canaanite Movement' 1952 and Yeshayahu Leibowitz's 'After Kibyah' 1953. In all three articles religious thinkers warned against the situation where Israeli nationalism held the sacred tongue. The world of the radical effects of the Israeli national secularism which extended even to Canaanite culture and thus expressed the fear of a rise of a territorial of Canaanite messianism. Canaanite culture and messianism are on the face of it opposites. Canaanite culture is a national geo-cultural ideology in which a certain piece of land defines the collective identity of its inhabitants. Messianism is a religious belief that at the end of history all human contradictions will be resolved. Canaanite culture is a secular concept based on a myth. Messianism is founded on non human and historical words. Canaanite culture embodies the physical basis, the place. Messianism represents the metaphysical basis the place in Hebrew it is the Makom, the word for God. Canaanite culture promoted Hebraism as a territorial nationalism while messianism laid emphasis on the universality of the Jewish religion. However the rise of Gush Emunim after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 introduced a new type of political theology that could be called Canaanite Messianism. In

Rabbi Kook Akiva Ernst Simon saw a mixture of concrete messianism as he called it and an original approach to the relationship between the sacred and the profane. Zionism in Rabbi Kook's religious philosophy restored that the equilibrium between the sacred and the profane. Simon's attitude toward messianic political theology could be summarized as follows: Give the next world the Messiah and give this world the expectation of a Messiah. The Kabala scholar Rivka Shatz one of the intellectuals who supported Gush Emunim thought that the messianic phenomenon is greater than can be understood with the tools of scholarship we possess. Rather than a principle that can be described it is a language through which hidden desires are revealed. It is the ultimate depth, she says, it is the hope where the dreams are stores which are not revealed in history. In other words messianism for her is a language that reveals the ultimate depth of humanity and it is something greater than those that created it or those that use it. This concept is a retreat from political Zionism which depends on the free will of sovereign human beings and a return to non-human structures, a transcendental messianism. The culture critic Baruch Kurzweil at an early stage analyzed this phenomenon of return to a transcendental systems greater than man or man's capacity to explain them. In his expression the structure of the archetype Kurzweil himself a product of European culture, was referring to the transcendental school of thought which interpreted history in terms of the deterministic non-human force. One of his theories was that of Ludwig Klages who developed an anti rational approach focused on the conscious creation of myth and the belief that reality itself and not its representations consists of symbols on expressions. The world view of Oswald Spengler was characterized by this interpretation of reality as a symbol. In his opinion the significance or morphological forms is that form rules all the life by means of symbols and metaphors. It is they which create the social reality and not human beings with free will. This aesthetic and metaphysical approach to history includes many intellectuals at the beginning of the century, George Sorrel's Myth, Clager's Aauora, Spengler's Morphology, Yunger's Geshtalt and mythical non-human concept of the post modernist era such as the structure of Claude Levi Strauss or Michel Foucault. The messianiam of this non-human structure was in Kurzweil's opinion also rightly to lead to a negation of human decisions and actions. It is like the idea that human actions are directed by mythical constructs like systems, structures should have priority over man and condition is action in history. The messianic myth of Kurzweil represented a moral and cultural relativism in which values changed in accordance with historical circumstances. The messianic end justifies the means. Kurzweil was critical of post modernist relativism with paradoxical possible result could be affirmation of fundamentalism. The transcendental messianism, messianic language cast aside the Promethean messianic heritage which was based on sovereignty of man. Critical observation was abandoned for a passionate defense of the irrational and the mythical. Kurzweil's intention similar to Yechezkel Koifman with regard to the Bible was to eradicate myth. The danger was not intellectual but a concrete one playing with Kabbalistic concepts of sparks in the room of politics could lead to a nihilistic theology.

The peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians and the possibility of evacuating the settlements in Judea and Samaria led Yisrael Harel, a settler leader and a father of a Hilltop youth, to write in his article: 'unlike the crusaders, Baath circles in Syria at the time and other Islamic groups have foretold for some time that our fate would be similar to that of the crusaders. Judging by strength and fortitude which was demonstrated in recent years our spirit and behavior the comparison is an answer to

the crusaders. The crusaders at least succeeded in preserving in difficult conditions, isolation and insecurity of the Middle Ages for some 200 years'. Yisrael Harel's desperation suggests that the decent of the settlers' messianic vision of redemption to the medium of defeatism is something so disastrous that the Israelis may be compared to crusaders. Indeed what Yeshayahu Leibowitz meant when he foretold that the first immigrants would be the settlers in the territories. Yisrael Harel aims to what I have tried to say today- the escape from politics through political theology leads at the end of the day to the politics of political despair. In the post modern era transcendental messianism has come back into our lives through the front door. It is active in the world of the post enlightenment, that is to say the world after the attempt to raise man to the level of God. Fundamentalism has internalized the Promethean initiative in order to increase its strength. In the pre-modern era men waited with longing for the appearance of God. But they waited passionately and passively. In the modern era they took their faith into their own hands and obliterated the traces of God. In the post modern era they have lost the humility and wrote God to summon up immediately. This era has armed fundamentalism with the Promethean self consciousness and the power of technology and the media. The reversal takes place and the secular is sanctified. Only the secular can bring God closer. Israeli fundamentalism has reconnected transcendental Jewish messianism with post modernist politics in order to escape from the political. Thank you.

Dr. Ishai Menuchin: David I did not understand why politics of despair. Because reading Moti Karpel or even Hai veKayam papers and even looking at Goldstein and others- Kiddush Hashem is not despair. Willing to die for a value does not mean automatically politics of despair. And in the rest of your presentation you really show us that there politics that have not hoped to change, so how does it come together with despair?

Prof. David Ohana: It is not despair, it is politics of political despair. It is not despair because they believe in Utopia. But they do not believe in the political order. It is despair of modernism. It is despair of democracy of rational discourse. It is a political despair of here and now. And of course it is like Bin Laden that despairs of modern age. It is the same fundamentalism. It is not the radical Right that fights under the rules of democracy by running to the Knesset. We shall see what will happen to the Feiglins because there is dialectics that politics be moderate not because he is a moderate man. Sometimes reality convinces fundamentalists to play by the rules of the game here and now and by this they are moderate. The main question will be the behavior of Feiglin inside the Likud and maybe who knows, he always said that he wants to be a prime minister. These radical fundamentalist streams will be directed through Feiglin. Let us hope that Danny will be there to fight in the Knesset.

Dr. Danny Filc: I wanted to continue Ishai's claim. I would say that instead of the despair of politics there is the make belief in the capacity of politics to change the world. Even so that it can modify the current democratic liberal form of doing politics. Instead of nihilism there is the absolute faith in values that are more important than the current rules of the game and it is much closer to the avant-garde Leninist form of doing politics where a group of a very convinced people whom the truth has been revealed to them and it does not matter if it is dialectic materialism or the Kabala they are so convinced that they can take upon themselves the challenge of completely modifying the rules of society. It is not the despair of politics. It is the

belief in another kind of world. We should understand what the settlers are doing. They think they would represent the belief in the capacity of politics as human agency to really modify the rules of the game, even at the cost of sacrificing themselves or the lives of others.

Dr. Ishai Menuchin: They know what is the general will that we do not know. It is others that do not know.

Prof. Yael Yishai: Politics of despair do you mean ideology, strategy, social inclusion or the combination thereof? The emphasis is ideology or do you include in this concept also tactics, strategies and social exclusion?

Prof. David Ohana: I will try to answer the three questions. There is a common denominator. I did not speak about the settlers as a political phenomenon or Yisrael Harel or about Gush Emunim. I spoke about Baruch Marzel, Baruch Goldstein, Yigal Amir, Hebron, pogrom instigators. They do not believe in Gush Emunim, nor in the politics of the Knesset. They even do not believe in demonstrations to settle in the hearts, This was the term used by Rabbi Binur suggested as a strategy to Gush Emunim after the evacuation of Yamit from the North Sinai. There were two alternatives in 1982. One was to settle in the hearts, the moderate way, the pedagogical way. And the other was the Jewish underground that murdered some Palestinians. The murder of the Palestinians in 82 was of course a political act but it was not tactics for some end that you believe when you act in the democratic game. I compared them to Bader-Meinhoff group. Ulrika Meinhoff is not a Marxist. She does not believe in Marxism at all. She is not a Leninist. Because all the content, all the values of liberalism, of democratic conviction she does not believe in this world. She wants to destroy the world as does Yigal Amir and Baruch Goldstein who did not believe at all in the state of Israel. This is something new, radical. They of course appeal to the terrorist way. And we do not know where it will lead. There is no content but action for its own sake. They do not have neither ideology nor Utopia. Political ideology does not believe in ideology in politics, in democracy. I read all the protocols of Yigal Anir where he gave testimony of the night in Tel Aviv. He said 'look, I tried politics. I tried convincing people in Bar Ilan University and I despaired'. Political despair is not my term. It is a term used by Fritz Stern who wrote about intellectuals in the Weimar Republic.

Prof. Gerry Stoker: I am interested in the idea maybe you are saying two things at the same time. The first one is that settlers' violence needs to be understood in terms of the ideological commitment and faith and beliefs of a particular group but also I kind of detect psycho-social symptom of a malaise affecting the social and political whole. Whether we think of this as an inability to find a place within the system or the expression of a particular of social, political and communal energies which are necessarily repressed by any kind of political order and which finds expression in the writings of Freud for example in his Civilization and Discontent there is some kind of moral of what is happening here, and the way of political theologians. They may be in a sense a particular ideological form that those symptoms of an overall malaise take. Arguing secular violence is symptomatic of more general malaise in Israeli politics in a way that perhaps Bader-Meinhoff gang could be interpreted as a symptom of a malaise in the politics of Germany. Malaise of democracy creates conditions for extreme groups.

Prof. David Ohana: I agree. This is a revolt against all the bourgeois order as was in the thirties in Europe. Bin Laden now is not only against Wall Street but against the symbol of hedonistic consumer secular democratic order. The settlers do not believe in the state of Israel as it is. They do not believe in secularism or capitalism. There is more democracy when there is a separation between religion and power. With this everything begins. The human rights and so on. Political theology as was conveyed by Karl Schmitt. He himself was disillusioned with Weimar Republic and this was the crisis of legitimacy. And these religious intellectuals, Kurzweil, Simon and Leibowitz saw it at the very beginning of the state of Israel, already in 49,51,52 about what will bring forth national secularism. Because this is the alternative to nation state. Secular nationalism was the answer to Jewish beliefs. Oldsry wrote after 67 the same conclusions that they saw already in the fifties. They saw that this secular state will not live forever.

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